HUNGER AS BIOPOLITICAL CONDITION:

RHETORICS OF RISK, EQUITY, AND

ENTITLEMENT IN

FOOD SECURITY

DISCOURSES

by

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ABSTRACT

Food encapsulates the entire circuit of production that connects field to fork. The biological necessity of food is always already enmeshed within complex relations of capital. Access to a safe, nutritious, and socially acceptable food supply co-conditions how food is grown, processed, exchanged and transported, and ultimately consumed. Discursively, food security signifies relations of sustenance via flows of comestible capital, subjectivating populations through regimes of governmentality, vulnerability, and visibility that exploit the biopolitical insertion of bodies into the late capitalist economic machine. As an issue of environmental justice, food security reveals the disparate impacts of foodways, regimes, and practices on marginalized groups, and the limitations of late capitalism in accounting for environmental degradation.

This dissertation theorizes food security by tracing its articulation in farm/food policy, living wage activism, and anti-hunger advocacy discourses. My first chapter frames, via Marxian political economy, Foucauldian biopolitics, and articulation theory, the relations of sustenance by which this project is driven. In my second chapter, I take up the Marxian concept of *social metabolism* to consider the ways the farm bill arranges the circuit of comestible exchange. Analysis of Congressional deliberations reveals how, in an entrenched agriculture/nutrition war of position, food security is articulated as risk, valorizing the fertility of agribusiness and re-employing the wasted poor. Chapter III explores the subjectivation of the working poor; tipped restaurant workers' living wage

activism functionally antagonizes the hegemony of employment-based notions of food security. In Chapter IV, the Food Stamp Challenge is taken up in terms of a bio/politics of visibility, and considers how food operates as an element in class relations. My fifth and final chapter brings themes across all of the chapters into sharper focus. It directly addresses my research questions about food security and (bio)political economy, explicates the rhetorical dimensions of food security across policy, activism, and advocacy contexts, and concludes with implications for critical praxis.

"Hunger is a political condition…We have the resources to end it. We have the food. What we lack is the political will to solve this problem once and for all."

-Senator Jim McGovern, "Let's Declare Hunger Illegal," June 23, 2014

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I will be forever grateful for the experience and opportunities afforded by the 5 years I have spent at the University of Utah and in Salt Lake City. My love for food was honed long ago, but my commitment to food justice was fashioned here. Some say you have to follow a recipe like a formula to make the best product. Yet my process was more free-form, like the casseroles my mother used to make: a little of this, add a dash of that, taste along the way, throw in lots of cheese, and remember to be patient. The best ones never turned out as we originally thought they would.

My process toward my PhD has been much the same – trying different things meant I wasn't following a recipe, and I did not know what the finished product would look like. Coordinating a compost program on campus, facilitating a monthly lecture series, volunteering and co-managing farmers markets, and teaching social justice forged a commitment to engaged scholarship, community praxis, and experiential learning. This dissertation is the culmination of those questions, musings, ruminations, and whims that have inspired (and sometimes plagued) me in pursuit of a better food system.

This project would have eaten me alive without the unwavering support of my family and friends, and community members, and fellow students. In particular, I would to thank my Chair, Kevin DeLuca, and my committee members, Danielle Endres, Marouf Hasian, Jr., Rob Gehl, and Minqi Li. I am eternally grateful for the mentor I have in Steve Depoe, who initiated me into the environmental communication community and

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PREFACE

Hunger exists amid a web of contradictions. Global food production is near an all-time high (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2014) while an estimated 600 million people live in poverty in 2015 (Chandy & Gertz, 2011). Though 46.5 million people currently live in poverty, there is no shortage of food supply in the United States (Denavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2013). The average US household wastes nearly 25% of all food and beverage purchased (Bloom, 2010), while nearly 1 in 7 people are enrolled in US federal nutrition programs (Bread for the World, n.d.). Although the US provides food assistance to citizens who qualify, sends aid abroad during shortages and other crises, and participated in adopting the 1996 Rome Declaration of Food Security, this country does not recognize a right to food.

In the 21st Century, hunger is not a condition of resource scarcity, but rather a function of late-capitalist political economy. Food is essential for human life; we cannot escape the biological necessity for sustenance. Yet shortages, famines, food deserts and swamps, grocery store redlining, and other disparities of access are more often the results of the organization of distribution channels, supply chains, trade agreements, and other economic incentives. As Senator Jim McGovern suggests in the epigraph, hunger is an issue of *political will*. If the resources (environmental, technological, material, and so on) exist, our question is not, *why are people hungry*, or even *why does hunger exist*, but rather, *how is hunger enabled and constrained via relations of sustenance*?

It is with these stakes in mind that hunger can be taken up as a political condition within late capitalism. Considering hunger in this way brings critical attention to the function that hunger serves in maintaining a particular political economic structure and the food system such a structure entails. Articulating hunger as a political condition is a signifying move beyond simplistic moralistic appeals to "help the poor," but rather to more deeply consider the systemic and co-conditioning function of hunger within circuits of capital.

My concern in this dissertation project is not hunger *per se*, but rather food security. These terms are explicated in more detail in Chapter I. In the simplest terms, hunger generally refers to sensations associated with food deprivation and deficiencies in satiety. Though once the primary signifier for antipoverty and economic development discourse, hunger cannot capture the systemic implications of physiological experiences of consumption. In contrast, food security more fully encapsulates what the provision of a food supply entails, including its physical availability, capabilities of access, consumption practices, and stability over time (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2008). Articulated as satiety, hunger more readily associates with individual needs, drawing narrowed attention to discrete instances of scarcity, for example, the almost stereotypical image of the starving child in Africa, and sustaining surface-level modes of charitable intervention, such as foreign food aid in times of crisis, or sympathetic donations to food pantries during the Thanksgiving/Christmas holiday season. Individuals are certainly subjectivated into capital via food (what I will mobilize in later chapters as *alimentary subjectivity*, yet the concept of food security carries with it the referential weight of the complexity of food and food*ways*.

Food intricately and intimately weaves nature and sociality through a set of relations that bind cultural practices to processes of environmental decision-making. Agricultural practices organize the engineering, planting, and harvesting of comestibles, providing for the creation of what have become multinational and resource-intensive industries. State and international policy set up trade, aid, and other pathways for the distribution of foodstuffs around the world, with environmental entailments. For example, food ranks among the top five energy-consuming industries, that together account for 60% of total energy consumption worldwide (US Department of State, 2010). Tradition, nutrition, and other dietary discourses structure the consumption of comestible capital, instantiating alimentary practices like cooking, and constructions of what gets chosen for consumption (what is eaten, what is thrown away), how it gets utilized (soup kitchens, dumpster diving), and where to get it (grocery store, restaurant, home garden). As relations of power mediate all of these processes, some groups are always already privileged while others are marginalized. In this way, I suggest, food security can be articulated with environmental justice. I expound in more detail on this in Chapter I, and mobilize each case study to demonstrate food justice criticism.

Research increasingly demonstrates the impact of factors like income, employment, geographical location, access to transportation, and child-care on individuals' ability to access healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010; Nestle, 2007; Patel, 2007; Winne, 2008). These factors exist as cultural nodes or articulatory connecting points whereby subjects become positioned within webs of political economic practices. Nodes intersect, overlap, and conflict with one another, imbricating labor, wage, and class processes and implicating these with relations of sustenance that make demands on the environment. Furthermore, as these factors

modulate food access, they necessarily implicate the body. Widespread evidence of the close correlation between food insecurity and health disparities, particularly in terms of rates of obesity and diet-related disease, attests to this (Crawford & Webb, 2011; Larson & Story, 2011; Walker, Keane, & Burke, 2010).

Indeed, it is in reference to our tethering to systems of capital via biological need that I deploy the term *relations of sustenance*. Referring to the sets of conditions that structure the provision and utilization of food toward satiety and nourishment, these relations configure subjects' positionality within the food system. Indeed, for example, that some consumers purchase more produce than others is more than simply a function of these items' availability and affordability in the grocery store (which, to be sure, is conditioned by food policy and trade regimes), but also subjects' access to transportation, time, food literacy and dietary preference, and quality of housing. This concept is used throughout the chapters that follow to signify the food security's entanglement within systems of discourse and modes of articulation.

This dissertation specifically and strategically articulates food security as a *bio*political condition. The invocation of *bios* is an obvious reference to Foucauldian biopolitics, bolstering my argument for alimentary subjectivity and signifying the ways by which bodies become enfolded by and within the economic apparatus. This is a deliberate move to renounce McGovern's premise in the epigraph. The "problem" of hunger is more than a lack of "political will" – that is too easy an answer. Furthermore, emphasis on "willingness" reifies moralistic articulations of hunger that function to disguise the deeper contradictions of capitalism that the continued prevalence of hunger demonstrates. In response, this dissertation provides a necessary intervention into hunger discourse, by exposing the utility of food security under global capitalism.

While I expand on this theoretical concept in Chapter I and through the case studies presented thereafter, it is important to note now that the inflection of biopolitics made throughout is meant to be more than just an indicator of the corporeal entailments of food security. Foucault (1990) writes that "capitalism is the age of biopower," requiring new modes of tracking, monitoring, and the (re)imbrication of bodies as they are inserted into the economic machine (p. 141). The shift from hunger to food security in economic development and policy discourses occurred concomitantly with the transition into late-capitalism, cementing the latter's articulation as a condition of the postmodern political economy of food. As a mechanism of the biopolitical, food security heightens awareness of the ways by which food enters and leaves, structures and conditions, inserts and mobilizes bodies into and with circuits of comestible capital. As a biopolitical *condition*, food security provides a lens for considering the intricate manifestations of these imbrications, for example through state agriculture and nutrition programs, welfare paradigms and restaurant patronage, and methods for meeting dietary and nutritional needs. With this in mind, food security cannot be examined outside the circuits of capital by which it is co-conditioned.

Food justice, a paradigm of equity across the food system, motivates this dissertation. Like environmental justice (EJ), this approach is concerned with the social justice implications of social-environmental practices, systems of decision-making, and modes of public participation. Yet, importantly, while EJ has traditionally maintained a narrow focus on tactics of activism and grassroots organizing, food justice entreats engagement with the productive and repressive practices. Indeed, such an approach complicates the boundary that demarcates the privileged and marginalized, as the case studies will demonstrate.

Explicated in more detail in Chapter I, food justice seeks a "language and set of meanings" (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010) for the myriad, complex, and disparate experiences of alimentary *in*justice. This dissertation seeks to contribute to this "set of meanings" by mapping food security discourse. The focus on discourse (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) enables simultaneous consideration of both the material (for example, hunger pains) and symbolic (such as policy documents) aspects of food and foodways. Indeed, hunger is more than simply a rhetorical condition, but is implicated in discourses that enable and constrain subjects' alimentary power.

Case studies examine ramifications of food justice by attacking food security's confrontation with labor, wage, and class processes. Seemingly disparate arenas like public policy, wage equity activism, and anti-hunger advocacy are linked through their mobilization of food security and articulations of alimentary subjectivity. Valuations of labor, position in and between wage regimes, and alimentary privilege construct the kind of food system that is co-conditioned by subjects, enabling and constraining food availability, access to resources, and utilization (all of which are criteria for food security, as codified by the Food and Agriculture Organization). Engaging different facets of food security, this dissertation performs a multiperspectival approach that demonstrates various articulatory contestations of food security.

In doing this, the concept of food security is itself complicated. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) codifies four key criteria, articulating the achievement state and household food security with the availability, access, utilization, and stability of a food supply. Yet, as my case studies demonstrate, each of these categories is contingent, constructing a late capitalist food system by producing and repressing alimentary subjectivity. For example, farm and food policy such as the Farm Bill

regulates the production, distribution, and consumption of comestible capital. Subsidy regimes prioritize particular commodity crops, trade drives prices, and nutrition programs condition food access with employment. While these practices seemingly articulate food security with food supply, Chapter II argues that the Farm Bill utilizes a rhetoric of risk to disguise the insertion (metabolization) of labor into the food system. Organized resistance to the tipped wage disarticulates the late capitalist logic that income (<work>) provides food security. Chapter III examines how restaurant waitstaff use a rhetoric of equity to antagonize their subjectivity as the working poor, complicating food security by questioning practices of food provisioning. Finally, anti-hunger advocacy tactics like the Food Stamp Challenge— a week-long simulation of a Food Stamp (SNAP) budget— highlights how food security is demarcated across class lines. Dietary and consumption practices signify relations of access that co-condition subjects' economic capabilities. Challenge participants demonstrate how food entitlement articulates with both alimentary privilege and hardship, revealing how food security can entrench social stigma.

What follows thus interrogates the notion that hunger can be solved simply by the provision of food. By interrogating food security, this project contributes to understandings of the communicative and rhetorical dynamics of food, critical/cultural implications of food security and its biopolitical articulation, and the relationship between food and environmental justice. Indeed, hunger is not conditioned *by* political will per se, but is a condition *of* late capitalist discourses of food security, discursively deployed to sustain a food system that feeds on subjects as we all require food to feed ourselves.

CHAPTER I

THEORIZING FOOD SECURITY AS RELATIONS OF SUSTENANCE: A CRITICAL FRAMEWORK

"Life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself" –Marx, German Ideology

"Civilization as it is known today could not have evolved, nor can it survive, without an adequate food supply." –Norman Borlaug

Food is essential for human life; food security is discursively mobilized through the circulation of comestible capital. Referring to access to an adequate supply of food, food security engenders critical consideration of agricultural practices, distribution and supply chains, and dietary and consumption habits. In short, the term *food security* encapsulates the political economy of food (Carolan, 2013; Lawrence & McMichael, 2012; Maxwell, 1996; Schanbacher, 2010). This dissertation theorizes food security in terms of *relations of sustenance* to signify the web of relations in which much of the world's population is bound for nourishment and satiety. Co-conditioned by discourse, these relations articulate the symbolic and material practices of food security at the interstices of nature and culture.

Food is a biological condition for life. With few exceptions, organisms (including human and more-than-human) require food to sustain their living existence in this world. Yet as Stormer (2015) notes, the rhetorical tradition – and, I would add, critical/cultural

studies and environmental communication – has not adequately considered the complexity by which the body, food, and foodways are entwined via the affective experience of hunger (p. 101). Indeed, rhetoric has tended to privilege the fed body, the sated rhetor, with hunger drawing critical attention "when public action is taken to feed the poor or when gazing on their suffering exposes capital's cruelty" (Stormer, 2015, p. 99). Food has (slowly) entered into rhetoric, environmental communication, and cultural studies with growing interest in its discursive deployment in media and pop culture (Lindenfeld, 2011; Shugart, 2008), gardening and farming (Seegart, 2012, Singer, 2011), practices of eating and consumption (Click & Ridberg, 2010, Hahn & Bruner, 2012), and social identity (Counihan & Van Esterik, 2008).

Food security – a term that both includes and exceeds hunger, as I review in the sections to follow – is not guaranteed, despite many countries' recognition of a right to food. But, like hunger, food security is "a distinctive, intolerable condition for humanity…[and] a condition of the rhetorics that humans inhabit" (Stormer, 2015, p. 100). Thus, through relations of sustenance, this project seeks to invoke the ramifications of alimentary availability, access, utilization, and stability, to bring critical attention to the ways that food, hunger, and foodways are enfolded by rhetorical and articulatory practices, enabling and constraining subjects who are inextricably bound to the global late capitalist food system.

Through the analyses that follow, my dissertation theorizes food security by tracing its articulatory force as it circulates through federal agriculture and nutrition policy, subminimum wage activism, and anti-hunger advocacy discourse. To do this, I take up several broad research questions: How is food security discursively deployed

within a biopolitical economy? How does food security articulate subjectivity across these contexts? How might food security illuminate the discursive limitations of late capitalism? What does food security reveal about environmental justice? To begin exploring these complex questions, my dissertation bridges the gap between food system paradigms currently operating outside the communication discipline with a theoretical orientation I situate within Post-Marxist political economy. This perspective is critical to navigating the rhetorical battlefield of food justice, and for invigorating economic criticism, environmental communication and environmental justice, and praxis-oriented scholarship. First, the Farm Bill represents a central site of governmentality through which comestible capital circulates, disposing (of) labor via agriculture and nutrition policies. Second, by inhabiting the space of food in/security instantiated between time and piece wages, tipped workers' living wage activism antagonizes the hegemony of late-capitalist efforts to suture food security with employment. Finally, anti-hunger advocacy reveals how food security binds class relations through tactics that reveal the dual reality of economic hardship and the unsavory nature of hunger. Together, these case studies demonstrate the function of food security within late capitalist relations of sustenance by underscoring how "the provision of food is irreducibly critical to the polis" (Stormer, 2015, p. 101), yet its discursive deployment is always destructive and constructive.

In this chapter, I begin by articulating food security as an issue of environmental justice, developing a discourse of food justice. Then, I outline the theoretical lens that informs this dissertation study, drawing on insights from Post-Marxian political economy, Foucauldian biopolitics, and articulation. With my frame in place, I outline my methodological approach, a *bricolage* of qualitative/rhetorical texts that allows me to

texture the relations between food security and rhetoric by inventing a rich set of texts to draw on for analysis. Finally, I close with a preview of the remaining dissertation chapters, providing brief abstracts of the three case studies.

Defining Concepts: Food Justice and Food Security

Food security is necessarily embedded within (indeed, a condition of) a political economic system that manages the production, distribution, and consumption of comestible capital. Interdisciplinary efforts to theorize food security along these lines have followed two paradigms: food justice and community food security. Food security research recognizes the implications of food and foodways betwixt and between nature/culture, with food justice articulating these with social justice. These concepts galvanize a systems approach to food security and advocate for praxis-based solutions that I consider as an intervention in environmental justice. I present these terms here to allow the reader a glimpse into the complex and incomplete conceptual arena within which food security operates. I begin by charting connections between food and environmental justice, reviewing work on community food security, and then presenting my articulation of food justice.

Food and/as Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice (EJ) is at its core committed to equity in the distribution of risk and benefit of environmental practices (Bullard, 1990, 1993; Cole & Foster, 2001; Gottlieb, 1993); thus, EJ re-articulates the discourse of environmentalism with human rights and social justice. Historic events like the protests at Love Canal, New York (1978), and Warren Wilson, North Carolina (1982); the passing of the Superfund Act in

1980 (in direct response to Love Canal); the publication of the General Accounting Office (1983), and Commission on Racial Justice for the United Church of Christ (1987) reports correlating toxic sites with population and demographic patterns; drafting of the Principles of Environmental Justice at the first National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit (1991), and the signing of the Executive Order for Environmental Justice (1994), shed light on perceived elitism in the environmental movement, illuminating other issues pertinent to environmentalism, like human health (Bullard, 1990, 1993; Gottlieb, 1993). Since these events, EJ has emerged as both a movement and area of scholarship, represented in work across the academy (Walker, 2012). In Communication, EJ has been galvanized as a mode of criticism for rhetoric and environmental communication, mobilizing critical exploration into tourism practices (Pezzullo, 2001, 2007, 2010), nuclear and other waste siting decisions (Endres, 2009, 2012; Peeples, 2013), legal and policy implications (Cox, 1999), activist groups and local movements (DeLuca, 1999a; Delicath, 2004; Hunt, 2014; Peeples & DeLuca, 2006; Schwarze, 2007), and in international contexts (Sowards, 2012).

However, Environmental Justice, as movement and scholarship, has been slow to engage with food and foodways. Though the debate to ban pesticides like DDT galvanized the environmental (justice) movement in many ways, pesticides' distinct articulation with food (via agricultural production) has been minimal and marginalized at best (Allen, Daro, & Holland, 2007; Carson 1962/2002; Cole & Foster, 2001; Faber, 2007; Gottlieb, 1993). More recently, some scholars have begun making linkages between food and EJ. When food is taken up within an environmental justice frame, however, it is typically limited to issues related to agriculture and agribusiness (Faber,

2007; Wenz, 2007), local and urban gardening and uses of greenspace (Foust, 2011; LeGreco & Leonard, 2011), and climate change (Walker, 2012). Although it is promising that food ranks among the topido environmental justice issues (Benford, 2005), it is imperative that scholarship widen its consideration of the environmental and social implications of the late-capitalist food system. As noted above, food is always already at the nexus of nature and culture, and relations of access are necessarily bound within relations of power. In this way, I suggest, environmental justice must more explicitly and thoroughly account for food and foodways. Food justice (FJ) offers a convenient ally for, and I argue a necessary intervention into, extant EJ praxis and scholarship. I present the first half of this argument here, and take up the latter in the dissertation's conclusion.

Food justice has piqued interest in the public sphere through the proliferation of food system criticism as exemplified by authors like Marion Nestle and Michael Pollan, and award-winning films like *Food, Inc.*, *King Corn,* and *A Place at the Table.* Like EJ's commitment to advocating for the equitable distribution, benefit, and risk, vis-à-vis systems of environmental decision-making (Bullard, 1990, 1993; de Chiro, 1996; Gibbs, 1982/2011; Gottlieb, 1993; Harvey, 1996), food justice articulates social justice with environmental practices. As a broad philosophical frame, food justice: "ensur[es] 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" (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010, p. 6). As a critical lens, food justice interrogates inequity as it systematically permeates the entire circuit of comestible capital.

Importantly, Gottlieb and Fisher (2010) also conceptualize food justice as a discursive project that "identif[ies] a language and a set of meanings…that illuminate

how food injustices are experienced and how they can be challenged and overcome" (p. 6). This dissertation contributes to this effort by tracing manifestations of food justice through articulations of food security. Each case study offers insight into constructive and destructive tactics used to articulate food security, sketching the ways that food entwines with social and environmental justice.

Like EJ, food justice interrogates food system practices that unfairly target marginalized communities along four paths: the connection between environmental degradation and social justice; a central focus on humans' experience in their immediate, lived, and local environment; trends demonstrating systematic and disparate exploitation; a commitment to community empowerment for policy change (Bullard, 1990, 1993; Gottlieb & Fisher, 1996, Winne et al., 1998). Environmental concerns over pesticides, farming practices, natural resource use and climate change converge with social issues like equitable pay, toxicity, and peasant rights (Holt-Giminez, 2011). Humans cannot escape the need to consume food; it is one of the most mundane everyday practices. Employment with a living wage, housing, access to green space and transportation, and the distance between one's home and grocery stores are all factors of food security (Patel, 2007; Winne, 2008). Just as environmental justice is not limited to the inner city, food justice traverses the rural suburb and the global village. Importantly, local injustices represent instances of broader inequities in systems of decision-making, excluding or marginalizing groups with diminished capacity to be heard. Finally, like environmental justice, food justice emphasizes capacity-building and community empowerment for transformative system-level change.

With its emphasis on justice and equity, food justice is often articulated with

human rights discourses. Originally promulgated in Article 25 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (1948), food is included in the right to "standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of [a person] and his family." The universal right to food was officially codified at the 1996 World Food Summit as, "the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food…and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger" (FAO, n.d.). It is important to note that although 22 countries have constitutionally "enshrined" a right to food, implementation is variable and (often) minimal. Furthermore, the United States does not recognize a right to food (e.g., Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund, case number 5:10-cv-04018).

As one paradigm for critical food systems analysis and praxis, food justice represents a broad rubric for conceptualizing systematic injustice built into the capitalist food system. Food justice galvanizes my theorization of food security by providing a lens to think about how practices of food production, distribution, and consumption impact subjects' discursive capacities. Ultimately for this dissertation project, I treat food justice as the conceptual umbrella that articulates environmental communication and social justice onto a rhetorical plane of comestible political economy.

Food Security

Food security captures the entire circuit of comestible capital, interweaving food justice across alimentary production and consumption by emphasizing an adequate provision of food. Operationalization of the term articulates food security either with technical measurements of the availability of a food supply, or with the allocation of resources within a localized food system. To better contextualize my use of the term *food security* throughout this dissertation, I briefly review these conceptions here.

The most prevalent conceptualization of food security is utilized within policy and development contexts. The 1974 World Food Conference is cited as the generative starting point for defining food security in terms of food supply: "[The] availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices" (quoted in FAO, 2006). The four dimensions of food security, as identified by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2008), indicate its flow through circuits of capital. First, food security exists when there is adequate physical availability of food, determined by factors like levels of global food production and stockpiles, and net trade. Second, achieving food security requires economic and physical access to food, concerning factors like incomes, markets, prices, and proximity to culturally appropriate food resources (such as grocery stores). Food security also references adequate nutrition via consumption and dietary practices, preparation, and intrahousehold distribution of food, conceptualizing utilization as the third dimension. Finally, stability of the other dimensions over time is the final element of food security as factors like employment status, political stability, weather, and other economic factors can unexpectedly disrupt the provision, distribution, access to and use of a food supply. The case studies presented in this dissertation project will respectively tease out and complicate each of these dimensions.

The difference between hunger and food security is integral to the framing of this dissertation project, and therefore deserves some explication. Hunger, simply put, refers to food deprivation – that is, the "uncomfortable or painful sensation caused by insufficient food energy consumption" (FAO, 2008, p. 3). Specifically, although hunger is most certainly related to food insecurity, the latter more broadly references an

"economic and social condition of limited access to food" (USDA, 2015). Hunger, therefore, signifies the experience of a biological/psychological/gastronomical condition on the individual level. Thus, while individuals who suffer from chronic hunger are also food insecure, food security is not measured or experienced on the basis of satiety. As Poppendieck (1998) explains, food security more readily "gets us beyond the issue of sensations, and allows us to focus on the social situation…of people who do not have a reliable and secure source of food" (p. 79).

In this way, food security articulates with the political economy of food via production, distribution, and consumption. As a tool for assessing the experience and depth of poverty, international and domestic government agencies measure food security in terms of the availability of an adequate food supply. That is, the degree to which a country's citizenry has "physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 2008).

Importantly, the paradigmatic shift from hunger to food security, initiated by the 1974 World Food Conference, represents a movement away from individual experience to systems of access, with specific articulation with late-capitalism (Carolan, 2013; Lawrence & McMichael, 2012; Maxwell, 1996; Schanbacher, 2010). Indeed, food security promotes a market-oriented approach that seeks the intensification of the production of comestible resources. Such an approach externalizes environmental impacts (such as pollution, deforestation, as well as drought and other effects of climate change), thereby neglecting a crucial link between a deteriorating global environment, increasing population and food demand, and efficient mechanisms for food provisioning

and distribution (Lawrence & McMichael, 2012).

As an issue of US public policy, food security is statistically tracked at the household level, measuring access to an adequate amount of food within the most recent 6-month period. The Food Security Questionnaire, administered through the US Department of Agriculture, is designed to "capture the various combinations of food conditions, experiences, and behaviors that, as a group, characterize each such stage [of food security severity]" as experienced at the household level (Bickel, Nord, Price, Hamilton & Cook, 2000 p. 2).

Maxwell (1996) provides a comprehensive analysis of food security assessment paradigms since 1974, noting shifts from "a discussion largely concerned with national food supply and price," to considerations of livelihood, and "understanding how people themselves respond to perceived risks and uncertainties" (p. 160). In the contexts of public policy and international development, food security is explicitly focused on the immediate experience of food provision relative to the supply of food.

Indeed, this view of food security has informed the anti-hunger agenda in the United States in significant ways (Hamm & Bellows, 2003; Winne, Joseph, & Fisher, 1998). Locating food security at the individual or family/household level privileges policy and advocacy strategies that address immediate food needs, primarily through emergency food mechanisms (such as food banks, pantries, and shelters) and the social safety net (federal programs like SNAP/Food Stamps, and school breakfast/lunch programs). Issues of agricultural production are primarily considered in terms of surplus commodity distribution (coordinated through federal policies like The Emergency Food Assistance Program, abbreviated TEFAP). Thus, the broader political economic structure

of the food system is largely ignored.

One effort to place food security within a food systems context is the conceptualization of *community food security* (CFS). This framework has had slow and sporadic theoretical development since the mid-1990s, in fields ranging from nutrition (Anderson & Cook, 1999; Hamm & Bellows, 2003), to public policy and planning (Gottlieb & Fisher, 1996a, 1996b; Maxwell, 1996). As second orientation for the operationalization of food security, CFS links the philosophy of food justice with an explicit advocacy agenda (Gottlieb & Fisher, 1996a, 1996b; Winne, Joseph, & Fisher, 1998). Specifically, CFS emphasizes access to nutritious, available and affordable food, locating individual/household command over resources within a community-level food system (Winne et al., 1998). In this context, the community food system includes the range of negotiations that "unites food production, distribution, consumption, and sustainability" including local and state policy, agricultural viability, and the region's cultural traditions (Hamm & Bellows, 2003, p. 38).

As a theoretical and practical heuristic, the most widely cited definition of CFS is that codified by Hamm and Bellows (2003) as, "a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice" (p. 37). In this way, food security is more explicitly connected to the philosophy of food justice discussed above. Through an emphasis on justice and rights, the advocacy goal of a sustainable food system is articulated with a commitment to self-reliance and community development.

Community-level analysis, grassroots empowerment, and intervention into the

food system conceptualizes food security beyond the technical measurement of an immediate need, viewing food security as "a *product* of wide social issues and policies" (emphasis added, Hamm & Bellows, 2003, p. 39) including income and transportation (Gottlieb & Fisher, 1996a, 1996b). Thus, unlike the prototypical food security paradigm's "medical model" of treating existing conditions of food scarcity and hunger, CFS takes a preventative approach to food system planning and capacity-building (Winne et al., 1998).

CFS is widely implemented through community food assessments, nutrition education initiatives, coalition-building and policy advocacy, urban greening projects, and the direct marketing of CSAs and farmers markets (Anderson & Cook, 1999; Gottlieb & Fisher, 1996a, 1996b; Winne et al., 1998). Through the mid-1990s, CFS became institutionalized by the creation of the Community Food Security Coalition, and advocacy efforts that successfully passed the Community Food Security Empowerment Act as part of the 1995 Farm Bill (Gottlieb & Fisher 1996a, 1996b).

The focus on food security accomplishes two important things that benefit this dissertation project. First, food security can be taken up as to explore the complex negotiations by which the food system is constructed and resisted, including state policy (i.e., the Farm Bill), food service work and living wage activism, and tactics of anti-hunger advocacy (such as the Food Stamp Challenge). This project views food security as rhetorically constructed and co-constitutive within a capitalist political economy. Food has immanence (per Marx), inserting the circuit of global capital into the bodies of consumers, and informing policy and practice. Food security becomes a social and environmental justice issue when modes of production and distribution leave particular

groups exploited and marginalized, particularly in the US where there is no shortage of food. Thus, food security entwines production and consumption, with contingent rhetorical capacities and constructive and destructive relations (Stormer, 2015, p. 103).

Second, by recognizing food security as a product of the political economic system, theoretical space opens to considerations of rhetorical productions of subjectivity (Greene, 2009). For example, as the first case study reveals, farm/food regimes embodied in public policy like the Farm Bill disposes (of) subjects by valorizing agricultural labor and re-employing the economically wasted poor. The working poor is rhetorically produced from precarious positioning between food in/security, as I discuss in the second case study. Finally, although it reveals the comestible subjectivity we each (typically unconsciously) embody, the Food Stamp Challenge also articulates food hardship as abject lack.

With an eye toward relations of sustenance, we can begin charting the ramifications of food security, as well as its implications for social justice and critical praxis. I turn now to outline the elements of my theoretical orientation. From there, I present my methodology, justifying its appropriateness for a study of food security within the context of biopolitical economy.

Articulating Food Security in a Biopolitical Economy

My dissertation explores the food security by charting articulations of food security through policy, advocacy, and activist discourses. As noted, a major thrust of the food justice and community food security paradigms reviewed above is a critique of capitalist production, drawing parallels between concomitant social and economic processes organized by and through the global food system. Injustice, then, is endemic to

a capitalist food system, as its impact is disparate across social groups. Food security illuminates the functioning of said system through a pointed interrogation of the circulation of comestible capital, the role of the state, and systemic and differential impacts on subjects. My critical engagement with these issues is orientated by a Post-Marxist theoretical perspective of political economy that views the economy as a biopolitical discourse (re)produced through articulation. This perspective allows me to theorize food security by putting elements of Marx, articulation, and Foucauldian power/knowledge into conversation with one another. These perspectives allow me to explore "how foodways participate in material ecologies of rhetoric, folding and refolding want and satisfaction together to create relations between subjects and objects, taste and need" (Stormer, 2015, p. 105).

Post-Marxism and Political Economy

Post-Marxist theory operates as a response to the gap between the realities of contemporary capitalism and traditional Marxist theory. As Marx originally conceptualized the downfall of the capitalist mode of production through class struggle, 20th-century thinkers have had to grapple with the failure of that teleological narrative not only in that the proletarian revolution did not happen, but also in terms of the explosive growth of modern capitalism. Thus, Post-Marxism has emerged as a distinctive theoretical approach to deal with issues pertinent to traditional Marxism, but as they have been experienced in the contemporary moment. Importantly, the *post* in Post-Marxism should not be read in a revisionist sense, but an expansive one, such that Post-Marxism represents "a process of re-appropriation of an intellectual tradition, as well as the process of going beyond it" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. ix). Post-Marxism "reactivates"

traditional Marxist theory by displacing some theoretical categories and developing new ones (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Laclau, 2006; Hall, 1996b).

Marx revolutionized political economy by his emphasis on the connections between economic production and social relations (Engels, 1880/1978). Post-Marxism rejects the economic determinist ontology on which this is built, revising it as a relationship of dynamic integration. Yet, the traditional Marxist conception of political economy provides a foundation for theorizing how sets of relations operate systematically to instantiate political struggle, and how those sets of relations are embodied in even the simplest of economic elements, the (edible) commodity. Marxist social theory rests on a duality between relations of production (economic organization, the base) and social forces (socio-cultural organization, the ideological superstructure). Indeed, as presented in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,* social change occurs through changes in the 'economic foundation' on which the superstructure rests and is thus concomitantly transformed. By initiating the critique of capitalism with an analysis of the commodity, *Capital, Volume I* demonstrates how economic relations of exchange incur particular social relations, such as worker exploitation through wages and the length of the workday.[1]

Post-Marxism "reactivates" conceptions of the social field to better account for the conditions of (re)production, conceiving it as discursive space comprised of social relations (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Rejecting the model of an essential unifying principle of sociality, so-called "society" is open and thereby constituted through sets of contingent relations. These relations are variable, contingent, and overlap and intersect. What cultural agents experience as "society" is not a self-defined totality with an essential

character, but rather a field of differences articulated through links between discursive elements that constitute an object's identity. Articulation, then, a concept I return to later in this chapter, is the practice by which social relations are constituted; patterned and reified articulations give "society" a concrete appearance.

From this perspective, there is no duality between relations of production and relations of sociality, per the traditional Marxist base/superstructure model. The identity of particular sets of relations (i.e., "The Economy," for example) is the domestication of relations between those elements, articulated onto a *field of discursivity*. Indeed, per Laclau and Mouffe (1985) this term, "indicates the form of its relation with every concrete discourse: it determines at the same time the necessarily discursive character of any object and the impossibility of any given discourse to implement a final suture" (p. 111). Thus, if discourse "is the necessary terrain for the constitution of every social practice," (p. 111) 'late capitalism,"[2] for example, is necessarily a discursive object, integrated to and co-constitutive with social relations. For the purposes of my dissertation, such a view allows me to theorize the discursivity of comestible capital. Food security, then, becomes an object articulated through sets of econo-social relations embodied in public policy (like the Farm Bill and wage policies), federal nutrition programs (like SNAP/Food Stamps), and social practices (like activism and advocacy).

In this way, discourse is both material and symbolic. Indeed, the distinction between these two dimensions is moot as "every object is an object of discourse" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 107); the system of relations socially constructed between particular objects is modulated by the discursive totality (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). The force of discourse is evident in social practices, institutions, rituals, and other elements linked

within a struggle for constant co-constitutive (re)production. It is this conception of discursive relations that allows me to explore the uptake of biopower through the instantiation of capitalism, and the articulatory force of an economic discourse to produce subjects. I take up both of these themes in the remaining subsections of my theoretical orientation.

Biopolitics

Foucault (1990) conceptualizes capitalism as an "era of biopower," referring to the controlled insertion of the economic apparatus into the body politic. The Foucauldian view of power as both noun and verb (Biesecker, 1992) is that it is both practiced but also diffuse, investing the body in a matrix of discursive relations. Biopolitics, then, refers to the specific configuration of power relations endemic to late capitalism, informing the uptake of particular techniques of discipline and governance.

Foucault (1977, 1990) presents a theory of power as it manifests within a network of relations, is embodied in sets of knowledge, and is inscribed on human bodies. Power is organized through a matrix of relations (macro material conditions of discourse) and deployed through a microphysics of power that represents the specific sets of techniques that serve as weapons, relays, and communication routes that subjugate the human body into an object of discourse.

What is at stake in these networks of power relations is the body; through interaction with institutions and state apparatuses the body encounters power. The body exists between the macro relations and microphysics of power described above (Foucault, 1977). It is through this microphysics of power that the matrix of power relations can "mark, train, torture" the body – instantiating what Foucault calls a "political investment

of the body" (p. 27). Thus, though material, power is not a property possessed by a political subject, but is instead “exercised based on social position” (p. 27), and is *both* repressive and productive.

Foucault most prominently situates these concepts in case studies of the penal system (1977) and sexual practices (1990). The Industrial Age initiated in the 18th and 19th centuries becomes a key period in which the macro network of power relations “adjusted” (1977, p. 77) toward new regimes of power/knowledge, transforming paradigms of punishment and governance. For example, prior to capitalism, a sovereign institution of power (the monarchy) governed by means of juridical power through the appropriation of subjects’ wealth; crimes were an affront to the sovereign, requiring punishment by revenge (1990). With industrialization requiring “a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them” (1990, p. 136), biopower emerges as the means for regulating a steady reserve of workers to complete the economic tasks of the state.

Indeed, as biopower seeks “the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes” (Foucault, 1990, p. 141), it has been integral to the functioning of the modern global economy. Efficient utilization of state resources, i.e., the labor power immanent in the human body, becomes essential to the accumulation of capital wealth. Thus, states have a direct interest in an ‘investment’ of their population, taking up discursive technologies that track “birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation” (p. 25).

In terms of food security, biopower illuminates how comestible capital is

configured as a discursive investment in the nation's population, particularly those whose labor power might otherwise be wasted (i.e., "the poor"). As the case studies demonstrate, food security not only evidences biopolitical discipline through controlled insertion into the economic machine, but the concomitant insertion of that machine into the body itself. Indeed, the exchange process engenders the consumption of labor through agents' commodification (that is, my own labor is commodified via production), and *their* consumption engenders the commodification of more labor (i.e., when I eat, I am consuming the labor immanent in my food). At once, we consume and are consumed through biopolitical tensions that operate on and through our bodies. I turn now to an explication of the final element of my theoretical orientation.

Articulation

Post-Marxist scholars (Laclau, 2006; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) "reactivate" the Marxian view of the social field through articulation. Revising Marxism's discrete one-way movement from economic base to ideological superstructure, Post-Marxism instead recognizes "society" as a field of differences articulated through rhetorical practices, giving it a concrete appearance. Such a move acknowledges the economy as *a* system of power/knowledge relations, even if it is not *the* base of such relations. Thus, 'capitalist economy' becomes a discursive identity constructed by, and simultaneously constructing, social practices and producing subjects. Specifically, food security exposes antagonistic relations within a capitalist discourse through the rhetorical production of The Working Poor as the new face of poverty.

Referring to the practice of creating a discursive structure organizing social relations, articulation is a political struggle for the formation of concepts (Angus, 1992;

DeLuca, 1999b; Hall, 1996a, 1996b; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Elements are floating signifiers dispersed within an ensemble of structural positions in the discursive field; positions are not fixed, enabling and constraining articulatory power in differential ways (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Rhetorical practices bring discursive force and link them through contingent and partial relations in an effort to fix their meaning and context (DeLuca, 1999b). Thus, articulation theory is critical to my dissertation study for its "reactivation" of the Marxist social totality through discourse discussed earlier, as well as its theorizing of discursive subjectivity as an articulatory practice.

The embeddedness of subjects within systems of discourse is a critical ontological assumption that grounds my orientation in the case studies that follow in this dissertation. It is through a matrix of discursive relations that social agents become *subjects* of discourse. Subjectivity acknowledges the positionality of social agents within the discursive field, recognizing them as a nodal point of articulations (DeLuca, 1999b; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Importantly under this view, subjects are not the origins of social relations, as they are positioned in ways that (re)articulate those relations. As positions are not fixed, subjects have enabling and constraining articulatory power; social agents are subject to the same overdetermination as discursive systems.

Articulatory subjectivity orients the analysis of my case studies in four important ways. First, through the specific political economic frame presented in my discussion of Post-Marxism, my case studies necessarily take the capitalist discursive field as a critical focal point. Second, through the emphasis on contingency and partiality, this view rejects the impulse to essentialize discursive identity. Third, discursive subjectivity eschews notions of *class* as a static and stable entity; this is perhaps one of the most significant

Post-Marxist "reactivations" of traditional Marxian social theory.[3] The subject always exists in relation to others, including economic, cultural, and environmental conditions; reality is created through sensuous activity, demonstrating how existence is a social activity and the subject is always in flux (Marx, 1844/1978; Marx, 1846/1978). Therefore, subjectivity more appropriately points to the sets of relations that position and articulate agents' discursive identity.

Finally, discursive subjectivity is predicated on a view of articulation as a practice, which emphasizes the active process by which subjects are constructed within a discursive field. Per Greene (2009), rhetorical production emphasizes the materiality of rhetoric by focusing on articulatory processes of defining/legitimating/resisting what counts as knowledge, as well as relations of power within a discursive formation. In this view, grounded by a Foucauldian conception of the subject, rhetoric is a 'technology of deliberation' that transforms and governs subjects, that is, the subject is the effect of rhetoric. For my analysis of food security, this view allows me to trace the rhetorical production of subjectivity across policy, advocacy, and activism contexts. By triangulating Post-Marxist political economy, Foucauldian biopower, and articulation, my critical theoretical perspective provides me a foundation to question the antagonisms of late capitalism as instantiated through rhetorical circulations of food security. I turn now to present my methodological approach.

Bricolage: Methodological Articulation of *Making* Do

In this dissertation, I explore food security by tracing its articulation in policy, activism, and advocacy discourses. To do this, I have assembled a *bricolage* of qualitative/rhetorical (field) work that allows me to texture the relations between food

security and rhetoric by inventing a rich set of texts for analysis. In this section, I first present the rhetorical perspective that drives my methodological approach for this project. From there, I describe how bricolage allows me to make linkages among discursive fragments to compile my data set. Texts assembled for this project are then delineated and justified. Finally, I describe the analytical approach employed in the three analyses.

This project mobilizes rhetoric to frame both theory and practice. Rhetoric is viewed as the persuasive tactics within a contingent discursive field. Under this view, rhetoric is necessarily the realm of the political, the corporeal, and practice. Rhetoric is co-constitutive of identity and meaning; it is at once a product of and (re)produces discourses As such, it is contextual and carries the potential to transform social struggles (Hartnett, 2010; McKerrow, 1989; Ono & Sloop, 1992). Thus, rhetoric is more than just words, it is embedded in social practice. In terms of food security, this perspective allows me to consider the ways that food is constructed, circulates within, transects, and is mobilized toward discourses and structures of power/knowledge. As a discursive interventionist, the critical rhetorician unpacks discursive structures, and searches for alternative ways of deploying discourses, and possibilities for alternative ways of being in the world.

As a critic, I embrace the emancipatory impulse of critical rhetoric. Attention to how rhetoric is deployed by subjects positioned by discourse requires the critic to demystify and intervene in matrices of power (Crowley, 1992; McKerrow, 1989; Wander, 1983, 1984). Critical rhetoric explicitly takes up this issue through a commitment to praxis; that is, from this view, critique itself operates as and within political action to affect change in the world. This project is thus carried out as an

intervention into the politics of the circuit of comestible capital as my contingent *telos* (Ono & Sloop, 1995).

Following the Post-Marxist theoretical frame outlined above, this project accepts the contingency of the social field and subjects' positionality. As such, the methods employed herein are used with the recognition that researcher herself operates in the same field in which her research is completed (Madison, 2012; Ono & Sloop, 1995, Wander, 1983). Indeed, I am conditioned by food security and subjectivated by its discourses: I, too, eat, patronize restaurants and am served by tipped workers, participate in anti-hunger advocacy activities, and have a political stake in Congressional food/farm policy deliberations. As a critic, the methods I employ, and the texts *I* create through analysis, necessarily operate as articulatory practices that actively reify and resist particular discourses.

With this in mind, this project reflexively affirms the inevitability of rhetorical production. If the rhetorical critic invents texts through the piecing together of discursive fragments (McGee, 1990), enacts methodological negotiation through data-gathering strategies, and interprets texts through a perspective conditioned by her own positionality, that critic is necessarily participating in practices of meaning-making. Thus, the concept of *bricolage* is central to understanding the articulations of food security I put forth in each case study. Bricolage is typically used to describe the ways a cultural critic "makes do" with the tools available, deconstructing and reconstructing formations of culture (de Certeau, 1984; Derrida, 1970/1993; Levi-Strauss, 1966). Critical scholars have drawn from this concept in consideration of research activities, primarily data-gathering. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) and Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) have championed this view in

qualitative literature, framing the *bricoleur* as, respectively, an "improviser" and "methodological negotiator," because the researcher must contextualize her methods within the research scene, "making do" with the tools she has available and what is appropriate for that scene. This typically takes the form of using multiple methods to configure a richer data set, as well as the limitations of method/apparatus. In this way, I suggest, the bricoleur makes *do* with tools and techniques for data gathering, but she also *makes* do through the *production* of the data set and its discursive identity.

Embracing this view of *bricolage*, data for this project are drawn together to assemble a text suitable for criticism. Each case study mobilizes texts to sketch discourses that exert the rhetorical force of food security. These include transcripts from the Congressional Record, commentary and videos posted to social media sites, and field notes, reflections, and semistructured interviews. These data span several years (for example, 6 months of congressional deliberations before the passage of the Agricultural Act of 2014), and are gathered at multiple sites (including electronic archive; social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube; and multiple interview locations).

Making do with these textual fragments means that I must make negotiations about interpretive techniques (the use of qualitative coding software, for example) that allow me not only to organize such a large amount of data, but also account for their variety (textual versus audio/visual, in the case of YouTube videos of wage equity rallies) as each case study traces articulatory practices that (re)produce food security. In doing so, however, I also make do in two ways. First, making decisions of what to include, how encounters/sites/subjects are written up, and what gets left out is a power-laden activity

that delimits the data set in important ways (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991). Second, the critic makes choices to tune in to her sensory experience in particular ways, and this is itself filtered through the researcher's socio-ideological self; the critic can never fully capture the multidimensionality of the research subject as some elements will be emphasized while others are obscured (Conquergood, 1992). For the analyses embodied herein, I have *made* do by constructing a particular assemblage of case studies toward the strategic objective of demonstrating ramifications of food justice discourse. These are not random choices, but assembled to construct a partial sketch of the biopolitical economy of food security.

Chapters Preview

The chapters that follow unpack the rhetorical dynamics of food security by tracing its articulation(s) within public policy, living wage activism, and anti-hunger advocacy discourses. Each case study illuminates, and extends, a particular element of the theoretical frame outlined above. Together, these analyses demonstrate ramifications of food security, constructing it as a condition for relations of sustenance under late capitalism.

Chapter II

Chapter II presents the first case study, in which I focus on the rhetorical construction of the 2014 Farm Bill. Passed into law on February 7, 2014, the Agricultural Act of 2014 endured protracted debate, several rounds of revisions, and even a move to split the agriculture and nutrition titles into separate bills. Specifically, I analyze floor speeches, extended remarks, and news media interviews during a particularly intense

period of these deliberations (July 2013-February 2014) to characterize the articulatory practices that enabled and constrained food/farm policy programs. I take up the Farm Bill in terms of the Marxian concept of *social metabolism*, arguing that labor is ultimately metabolized through its direction of (global) food practices. As it arranges and manages our food system, this bill operates as a technology of deliberation, managing labor through a governmentality of disposability. Agricultural labor is valorized through favorable policies aimed to sustain the fertility (productivity) of this economic sector; the always already wasted labor of those who seek nutrition assistance is re-employed through tightened education and training requirements for recipients.

Chapter III

In the second case study, I address the contradiction of food *in*security in the context of employment. The restaurant industry thrives on the provision of a subminimum wage to tipped workers; these laborers face some of the highest rates of workplace health and safety risks, including sexual assault. Chapter III interrogates this wage regime against the backdrop of "workfare," an approach to social welfare programs that stresses the provision of food assistance on the basis of paid labor. The working poor, a subject position situated within the "absent fullness" (Laclau, 2006) of food in/security, presents a necessary antagonism to hegemonic attempts to suture food security to employment. Through analysis of social media coverage of tipped workers' demonstrations, I argue that these workers' placement betwixt and between time and piece wages instantiates their vulnerability to food in/security. Their activism re-articulates food security to notions of food safety, public health, and workplace conditions.

Chapter IV

Chapter IV presents the third and final case study, which critically considers the implications of the Food Stamp Challenge (FSC) as an anti-hunger advocacy tool. As it simulates the experience of food hardship by limiting participants' food budget to that of the average Food Stamp (SNAP) benefits, the FSC aims to raise awareness of food security and poverty, as well as the political economy of food access. Yet, as this chapter argues, the FSC may actually contribute to the reification of deleterious stereotypes of hunger and the poor by its ability to reveal to participants the unsavory aspects of food hardship. This case study mobilizes the Food Stamp Challenge to theorize food access as a set of class relations. Analysis of participants' reflections during and after several 2012 campaigns reveals how participants experience a comestible subjectivity articulated as abject lack. Through a biopolitics of visibility, the Food Stamp Challenge reveals how food (via access) articulates with the class process.

Chapter V

Finally, Chapter V returns to the theoretical problematic of articulations of food security across policy, activist, and advocacy discourses. In this chapter, I synthesize findings from the three analyses to develop the relationship between food security and food justice. In returning to the research questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, I chart the project's contributions along three lines: biopolitical economy, food and/as environmental justice, and critical praxis.

Endnotes

[1] Many have noted the use of deterministic language throughout Marx and Engels' writing (Hall, 1996b; Resnick & Wolff, 1987), that they proffer a conception of the social field (indeed, a social totality) grounded first in the economic, producing social relations that reflect it. Indeed, these scholars levy this critique on the basis that the mode of production is the means by which humans (re)produce their own existence. However, Marx also explains the dialectic between these two systems that "interweaves" the socio-political with economic as each are sets of relations (Marx, 1846/1978).

[2] Throughout this dissetation, the phrase "late capitalism" is deployed with Mandel's (1999) conceptualization of the term in mind. Specifically, this phrase references the post-World War development of the capitalist mode of production. From the perspective of articulation, late capitalism signifies a particular mode of production operating discursively to produce particular subjectivities.

[3] I want to suggest that reducing traditional Marxism to an objectivist view of class is itself essentialist. Indeed, while Marx uses determinist language to conceptualize class struggle, we cannot treat Marx's body of work as if it were a complete and coherent theory. Such a view has, to date, largely ignored the elements of Marxian theory indicating a decentered and relational subject. Some Post-Marxist thinkers, including many heterodox political economists and sociologists (Poulantzas, 1973, 1974; Wright, 1985) and critical rhetorical scholars (Cloud, 1994, 2001) have retained the "vulgar" character of traditional Marxism by over-emphasizing the objectivist, determinist, reductionist elements of Marx's original theory of class, to the neglect of the early theorizing of a relational subject also evident in Marx's work.

CHAPTER II

GROWING FOOD TO FEED PEOPLE:
METABOLIC RELATIONS
IN THE FARM BILL

"Eating is an agricultural act." –Wendell Berry, "What are people for?"

"When you think of farms and you think of agriculture, you mean to tell me it isn't about food?" Rep. David Scott, July 11, 2013

From prices to surplus distribution, conservation to foreign food aid, agricultural subsidies to nutrition assistance, regulatory policies negotiate the production and consumption of food products. As an act of omnibus legislation, the Farm Bill sets critical guidelines for implementing food policy, directing the domestic and international circulation of comestible capital through the food system. Codifying rhetorical judgments about the state's role in food security, the Farm Bill is an historical site for regulating the production and consumption of US comestible commodities, grounding the framework from which anti-hunger advocacy operates and fueling the current struggles over an adequate living wage. In this chapter I engage in analysis of US food policy discourse to ascertain the function of food security within state governance, and the implications of that for food justice.

In this chapter, I conceptualize the Farm Bill as a set of metabolic relations (Marx,

1867/1977), regulating the social order by directing food practices toward capital accumulation. As such, the Farm Bill operates as a site of biopolitics, transforming labor from the sphere of exchange into the sphere of consumption. I suggest that food policy has a co-consuming function, by which I refer to the dual insertion of the food system into bodies, and bodies into the food system. Thus, the Farm Bill represents sets of rhetorical judgment (Greene, 1998), ultimately revealing the meaning food *security* not as a strategy for mitigating the risk of a diminished food supply, but rather securing that the supply of food is used toward economically viable ends. The most recent Farm Bill, the Agricultural Act of 2014, food security articulates with risk management- securing agricultural producers against the risks of the market (volatile prices, production failures), and managing food assistance programs toward the benefits of the market (employment). Thus, in terms of its agriculture and nutrition provisions, the Agricultural Act of 2014 rhetorically mediates human/nature interaction by securing against rifts – or interruptions, conceived as hindrances to agricultural production or unemployed food assistance recipients – in a metabolic cycle that includes food. In managing circuits of comestible capital, the Farm Bill structures relations of sustenance.

Specifically, I analyze a period of intense deliberation occurring during the construction of the Agricultural Act of 2014. Within a context of significant recession and slow economic recovery scarce budgetary resources demand the careful allocation of funds, setting a trajectory for the metabolic relations embodied by the Bill. The agricultural subsidy and nutrition program reforms promulgated by this Act secure the rhetorical metamorphosis of labor into a consumable use-value. That is, by re-articulating key tropes typical of welfare discourse, such as appeals to a safety net and fear of fraud,

food security is ultimately taken up as a rhetorical technology valorizing[1] productive labor and re-employing economic waste.

This chapter begins with a presentation of the aspect of my theoretical apparatus to which I bring to bear on this case study. I then contextualize my analysis of the Agricultural Act of 2014 by presenting a brief history of the political economy of the Farm Bill and overview of the most recent, and to date the most protracted and partisan, farm policy debate. From there, analysis of Congressional deliberations proceeds by demonstrating how the Farm Bill is recognized as a set of metabolic relations and site of biopolitics. With that in place, my analysis turns to the rearticulation strategies used throughout in this debate. The chapter concludes with a discussion of implications for food justice and environmental praxis.

Metabolizing Labor, Governmentality, and Disposability

This section demonstrates how the Marxian concept of *social metabolism*, referring to the circulation of capital, is an always already biopolitical process. I offer social metabolism as a useful framework for exploring the rhetorical dynamics of food policy, structuring the conditions by which labor-power is transformed (indeed, metabolized) into a commodity form (use-value) traded and distributed worldwide. From a policy perspective, food security is less about ensuring the production of an adequate domestic food supply, but rather instead is mobilized as a "technology of deliberation" (Greene, 1998) directing the flow and distribution of comestible capital toward economically viable fields of practice. In this section I explore how the circuit of production is a rhetorical process of biopolitical exploitation, establishing the framework of co-consumption through which food security is articulated in the following analysis of

the Agricultural Act of 2014.

Marx's earliest use of the phrase "social metabolism" appears in the *Grundrisse* (1939/1973) in reference to the cultural exchange of commodities as reflected in the circulation of money. Later explicated in *Capital, Vol. I* (1867/1977), social metabolism names the mediating force between nature and culture by which the political economic conditions of society under any historically situated economic regime are regulated. In other words, social metabolism is a set of nature/culture interactions co-conditioned by economic and social practices, structuring the (re)production of the circuit of production/consumption, and is itself also (re)structured by this very circuit. In the context of a capitalist economic regime, social metabolism is the force by which labor exploitation is made manifest, and is therefore, an always already biopolitical process.

To unpack this claim, it is necessary to more fully elucidate the Marxian concept of "the metabolic interaction of social labor" (1867/1977, p. 200). Specifically, metabolic relations are immanent to the circulation of money— what Marx refers to as "society's productive organism" (p. 202) — that is, they are the catalyst by which the transformation of commodities from exchange-value into use-value is realized. The process of exchange is accomplished through the metamorphosis of commodity-into-money-into-commodity (C-M-C). In the first half of this process, an owner receives money (via price) for selling a commodity (for example, linen), moving the value (or, per Marx, the "shape") from the original commodity into the money-form. The money gained by the original owner of the linen through its sale can then be used for the purchase of "[an]other means of subsistence and of production," that is another commodity (for example, a Bible) that carries a use-value of interest to the original owner. In this way, a

circuit of exchange is formed through the constant shape shifting of commodities as they crystallize and dissolve from use-value to exchange-value to use-value again.

Thus, the circulation of commodities discursively co-constitutes "a whole network of social connections" (p. 207) that link economic subjects across the production/consumption circuit. Returning to the linen-money-Bible example, all labor required in farming the wheat and weaving the linen, to pulping the wood and making paper to produce the Bible, make up the metabolic relations immanent to that microcircuit of exchange. Thus, it is through these sets of relations that microexchanges are tethered to the macroeconomic structure, thereby moving (metabolizing) labor in the process. The development of the full-scale trade of commodities, or "the production of commodities and their circulation in its developed form" (p. 247), creates the conditions for capital accumulation. As trade is organized via national policy, these texts embody the social metabolic relations immanent to the circuits of exchange they regulate. Citing Hayward (1994), Bellamy Foster (1999) suggests "institutionalized norms governing the division of labor and distribution of wealth" indeed operate as metabolic regulators (p. 318). Thus, as public policies, such as a Farm Bill, structure and regulate the distribution of agricultural commodities (and, thereby, the labor they carry), these policies direct the social metabolism in ways beneficial to the state.

Marx's discussion of the exchange process in terms of changing the "identity" of the commodity suggests the rhetorical force (McGee, 1982/2009) of social metabolism. It is telling that Marx uses biological metaphors throughout his analysis of the circuit of exchange and discussion of social metabolism. For example, he explains that commodities are imbued with life (and we could argue, then, that their "life force" is the

labor they embody), and, as living things, have the capacity to "love" money (p. 202). Further, the process of commodity circulation "sweats money from every pore" (p. 205). These metaphors, I argue, are rhetorical moves made in Marx's writing that indicate the biological impact of the capitalist economic regime.

If, as Marx (1867/1978) suggests, labor is what gives a commodity its life, then social metabolism represents the commodity's life cycle. From a rhetorical perspective, then, metabolism functions as a discursive process by which human labor is commodified and carried through commodities' life cycles. Yet, "the commodity is useless if…it does not come out again as money," keeping the exchange process in perpetual motion (p. 208); labor becomes economically viable inasmuch as it can ultimately be transformed into a use-value. Exchange (or C-M-C) can be read rhetorically as a process of appropriation-alienation-(re)appropriation as products of labor are exchanged for products of labor, producing economic subjects that metabolize and thereby establish the value of (their own) labor. Thus, through social metabolism, labor is (re)articulated with use, producing a subject whose labor power is consumed by the system in which said laborer-subject is also a consumer of (in this case, comestible) products generated by/through the system of macroexchange.[2] In this way, social metabolism functions as a process of biopolitics articulating the economic apparatus with the body. This is exercised, as I will discuss later, via the art of government, as the state utilizes (food) security as a technology of biopower.

Social metabolism has become an effective heuristic for understanding the flows between nature and culture that co-condition social and economic practice as well as directly impacting the very environmental conditions that make those practices possible.

As it has been taken up in environmental sociology, social metabolism necessarily reframes what has historically been a paradigm of human exceptionalism toward "a view of society as…. depending upon continuous energetic and material flows from and to its environment" (Fischer-Kowalski, 1997). Thus, the *social* in social metabolism encompasses the economic, technological, and cultural conditions that articulate nature with culture. Thus, the labor process (and, by extension, exchange) is placed in a direct relationship with environmental practice, illuminating the (re)productive, or what I am calling co-consuming, force of social metabolism. In this way, social metabolism critically acknowledges the flows—and their consequences—between human and other-than-human elements of the biosphere as elements of political economy.

Bellamy Foster (1999, 2013) has been a major force in the theorizing of social metabolism, primarily in terms of the waste and crisis endemic to the antagonism made present by the environment to the capitalist economy. Social metabolism illuminates the sets of social relations by which the earth and the worker are duly exploited. The earth is "exhaust[ed]" just as workers are "enervate[d]," destroying the common source of their labor-power and further alienating human from environment, ultimately "lay[ing] waste and ruin[ing]" each (Marx cited in Bellamy Foster, 1999). Waste is relevant to social metabolism inasmuch as it must be reintegrated into (social-ecological) production in order to complete and maintain the metabolic cycle.

In *Capital, Vol. III* Marx (1894/1993) notes the critical importance of the "re-employment [of] the excretions of production and consumption" in both agriculture and industrial manufacturing (p. 134). To reuse waste products requires first a process for revealing the useful properties of such waste, as well as the ability to remake useless

"into a state fit for new production" (p. 133). In terms of my theorizing social metabolism as it pertains to pubic policy, these two conditions indicate the function of regulatory mechanisms such as those that organize agriculture and nutrition practices. For example, the complex mathematic and budgetary analyses necessary for standardizing and distributing subsidies, setting prices, and calculating exports, arguably represent the former; nutrition programs, such as emergency food distribution (whereby surplus commodities are purchased by the government and distributed to food pantries), and as my analysis will argue, food stamps, embody the latter.

Words like "re-employment" reference Marx's labor theory of value, recognizing the labor-power immanent to the production circuit (which itself becomes wast*ed* via "excretions of production" such as, for example, the tow commonly discarded from the processing of flax fibers). Waste products "remain[] a bearer of use-value" (p. 104) only if they can be transformed into something useful again, such as applying tow to a fire for kindling. Waste, therefore, is significant for an exploration of the rhetoricality of food security as it symbolizes that which is not (yet) consumed via social metabolism and a hindrance to the completion of the metabolic cycle. I suggest that the poor represent wasted subjects, or what Baumann (2004) terms the "collateral casualties of economic progress" (p. 39). As such, this surplus population must be reintegrated into the economic order; food assistance policy incentivizes food access by requiring their literal re-employment. As a hindrance to the completion of the metabolic cycle, waste can produce a "rift," a concept to which I will shortly return. As my analysis of the Agricultural Act of 2014 illustrates, waste is articulated with risk management in terms of valorizing agricultural production via crop subsidies and securing employment for those on food

assistance, assuring the completion of the metabolic cycle through the (re)insertion of both agricultural workers and the poor via their labor into the economic apparatus.

As it represented central contradictions of the capitalist relation to the earth, lack of soil fertility became the "main ecological crisis of [Marx's] day" (Bellamy Foster, 1999, p. 373). Under capitalism, agriculture becomes larger in scale in order to trade surplus commodities among nation-states, necessitating the use of high-intensity chemical applications. Trade is a driving mechanism for the formation of (global) capital, and thus it also becomes the condition for what Marx conceives as an "irreparable rift" in the metabolic cycle. That is, practices that scale agriculture to industrial proportions-including ever-expanding acreage, high inputs (such as fertilizer and pest control), mechanization (tractors and the like), and cheap labor-disrupt natural cycles that ensure the return of nutrient elements such as nitrogen and phosphorus that contribute to rich soil. Instead, the application of artificial fertilizers produces short-term bursts of growth, but can leave land depleted in the long-term. Interestingly, Marx's critique of industrial agriculture captures the conditions of the American Dust Bowl, the experience of which (combined with the effects of Great Depression) necessitated the first Farm Bill. Evidence of an ecological rift related to global food security can be seen in terms of the amount of arable land that will be required for farming (0.6-2.7 billion hectares) compared to the world population (an additional 2.5 billion people projected out to 2050) (Schade & Pimentel, 2010). Indeed, "rift" in this case is indicated by the inequity realized by the fact that it will be those in the Global South, where agriculture is a greater share of countries' economies, than in the Global North, where more resources are consumed.

The concept of "metabolic rift" has been insightful in terms of considerations of

the ecological limits of capitalism, particularly as contemporaneously related to global climate change (Bellamy-Foster, Clark, & York, 2010). However, in theorizing something like the Farm Bill as a set of metabolic relations, discursively mediating nature/culture interaction related to the circulation of comestible capital, I propose an expansion of the meaning of this term. In terms of public policy, a rift is something the policy seeks to mitigate – or in the language of articulation, suture – such that the policy can provide desired economic (read: biopolitical) outcomes. In the case of the Farm Bill, I argue, rift considered in the traditional Marxian sense is presumed *a priori*[3]*,* yet Congressional deliberations articulate interruptions to the flow of US agricultural outputs as rifts. The risk of rift is taken up rhetorically in the construction of the Agricultural Act of 2014, as Congressional leaders seek the implementation of commodity subsidy programs the maintain the dominance of US agricultural production and enact strict work requirements that continually recycle "waste" products incurred via bloated food assistance rosters. That is, the labor on both the agriculture and nutrition sides of the Farm Bill is continually (re)metabolized vis-à-vis specific policies that keep the agricultural sector, as well as the poor, working.

The work of Bellamy-Foster and others necessarily re-articulates Marxian political economy with ecology and sustainability, rejecting that Marx had little regard for the environment. However, though the rootedness of social metabolism in Marx's labor theory of value is briefly acknowledged scholarly uptake of the concept has continued to be associated with issues of soil nutrients and fertilizers (Mancus, 2007), land use (Fischer-Kowalski & Haberl, 2007; Haberl et al., 2011), and global trade (Clark & Foster, 2009). Such work, though valuable in terms of Marxian ecology, obscures the

co-conditioning function of the social metabolism in relation to labor and the exchange process. As I am theorizing the Farm Bill as a regulator of the global food-metabolic cycle, it is important that labor/exchange remains explicit in order to parse out the rhetorical dynamics of food as it exists within circuits of capital.

Social metabolism provides a conceptual basis for understanding the biopolitical-economic process that is managed and directed as the finality of government (Foucault, 1994/2001). I suggest social metabolism functions as a process of biopolitics that articulates the economic apparatus on/into the body. As such, the social metabolism regulates the relations of sustenance by which alimentary subjectivity is co-conditioned.

I now turn to a specific form of rationality taken up by a government apparatus that makes particular populations visible while directing a program of intervention. What I am calling a governmentality of disposability uses food security as a rhetorical technology, allowing the state to "make judgments about what it should govern, [and] how it should govern" (Greene, 1998, p. 22). The Farm Bill, as US federal food policy, operates as a technology of security (Foucault, 1994) by which the food-metabolic cycle is arranged and a laboring subject is produced.

Per Foucault (1994/2001), the "art of government" refers to the "correct way of managing individuals, goods, and wealth" (p. 206). Conceived as a "complex composed of (a population) and things," a government is primarily tasked with organizing, by manner of implementing particular forms of power and mechanisms of control, the population and the "things" to which its individuals are imbricated. These "things" include "wealth, resources, means of subsistence," as well as "customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking," and even to "famine, epidemics, and death" (p. 209). Thus, securing

the welfare of its population is a clear political aim of the state.

That Foucault also mentions "irrigation and fertility" as other "things" managed by the state alludes to the social-ecological sustainability function of social metabolism as advanced by Marx. Recognizing this, I extend "fertility" to refer to eco/social re-production. That is to say, government has a stake in regulating its population to ensure effective metabolic interaction between nature and culture. Food is thus an integral element of the "art" of government, and, as such, gets deployed as a rhetorical technology of security.

As a specific mode of political-economic rationality, governmentality is the tactical engagement of particular technologies of power/knowledge to steer a population's actions toward particular economically viable modes of practice. Governmentality discursively links the pieces of the ensemble via circuits of economic (re)production. Governmentality is a specific regime of power/knowledge that discursively positions subjects, generates definitions of problems and modes of state intervention, and determines the "right manner" of managing the population, based on differentiated subjectivity (Foucault, 1979/2004). Discursive devices such as state policy codify and maintain particular arrangements of goods and resources, differentially subjectivating individuals by enabling and constraining practices and ways of being. Inasmuch as the "finality of government…resides in the things it manages and the pursuit of the perfection and intensification of the processes it directs," (Foucault, 1994/2001, p. 211), governmentality is, I suggest, the discursive means by which social metabolism is disposed. States' interest in subsistence and nutrition necessarily imbricates a secure food supply. Governmentality relies on techniques of rhetoric to "distribute discourses,

institutions, and populations into a field of action" (Greene, 1998, p. 22). Thus, food policy, such as a Farm Bill, operates as a tactic of governmentality, and as such manifests "the state's strategic role in the historical organization of power relationships and [the] establishment of global structures of domination" by organizing agricultural production, consumption practices, and global trade (Bröckling, Krasmann, & Lemke, 2011, p. 2).

Government, Foucault (1994/2001) states, "is defined as a right manner of disposing things," utilizing a particular regime of discursive tactics "to arrange things in such a way…[to ensure] that the greatest possible quantity of wealth is produced, that people are provided with sufficient means of subsistence, [and] that the population is enabled to multiply" (p. 211). I am using this definition to signify the specific form of government rationality that motivates my analysis of the Agricultural Act of 2014: a governmentality of disposability. By this, I am referencing the laboring subjectivity enabled and constrained through this Bill via rhetorical techniques that make possible a particular discursive arrangement of the food-metabolic cycle. My argument intentionally exploits the double meaning of *disposability* in this context, not only as a means of organization (as in, *disposing* to arrange, in the Foucauldian sense), but also displacement (as in, *disposing of,* such as one displaces waste by getting rid of it). Governmentality of disposability provides a rationality for the deployment of rhetorical technologies (food security, in this case) to secure against the risk of wast*ed* laboring bodies, either in the agricultural industry or in terms of the unemployed and dependent poor.

Governmentality depends on apparatuses of security as technologies for exercising its power; security becomes a procedural device by which the state shapes the behavior of its population (Bröckling et al., 2011; Foucault, 1994/2001). In terms of the

conception of governmentality of disposability advanced here, this not only provides a clever semantic allusion to *food security*, but also emphasizes the articulation of an apparatus of security with biopower. In other words, food security operates as a (rhetorical) technology of biopower inasmuch as the Farm Bill directs the flow of the population and makes "particular behaviors and populations visible so that a program of action can intervene" (Greene, 1998, p. 31). For example, by highlighting the struggles of the uncertain and risky business of farming, and fraudulence in food assistance, agricultural labor (use-value) is secured with a "safety net" of subsidy programs, while work (use-value) requirements condition SNAP eligibility. Thus, through the agricultural and nutrition policy reforms of the Agricultural Act of 2014, labor is the means by which economic subjectivity is articulated and labor is metabolized.

Metabolic Relations of the Farm Bill

This case study presents the Agricultural Act of 2014 as a site for the discursive regulation of the food-metabolic cycle. It is necessary to contextualize the following analysis in the Farm Bill's historical structure and function within the US economy. Here, I provide a brief overview of the historical evolution of the farm bill and its primary policy imperatives.

The Farm Bill has historically been promulgated as a regulatory bridge between food production and consumption, ensuring an adequate food supply can be grown as well as ensuring channels for its distribution (Dimitri, Effland, & Conklin, 2005; Johnson & Monke, 2010; McGranahan, Brown, Schulte, Tyndall, 2013; Winders, 2012). Reauthorized approximately every 5 years, producing the final act of legislation is a process fraught with conflict and competition, debate and deliberation. Farm bills are

constructed through complex and often closed negotiations between various stakeholders: Congressional Representatives and farming/ranching organizations (including the American Farm Bureau and National Farmer's Union), as well as environmental groups (like the Sierra Club and the Environmental Working Group), special interest and lobby organizations (such as those representing specific commodity crops), and religious (US Conference of Catholic Bishops) and anti-hunger groups (including the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) and Feeding America).

The first farm bill was precipitated by the confluence of several historical conditions including the Great Depression, Dust Bowl, and World War I. Comprehensive US federal government intervention into agricultural production became necessary to combat high rates of unemployment, rapid decline in rural infrastructure, as well as widespread and devastating environmental impacts from drought and erosion. Thus, the Agricultural Act of 1933 was originally promulgated as an emergency response mechanism to secure adequate domestic food production and distribution (Imhoff, 2007; Johnson & Monke, 2014; Winders, 2012).

Given its original impetus, commodity price and farm income supports have been, and remain, the cornerstone of the farm bill's "safety net" (Mercier, 2012). Although nutrition support programs were not codified in farm bill form until the 1960s, agricultural production has historically been connected to emergency food distribution via supply management mechanisms like government purchasing programs, since the first Farm Bill in 1933 (Winders, 2012). Through the application of Green Revolution technologies after World War II, like farm mechanization and more intense chemical inputs, agricultural surpluses emerged, requiring farm policy to shift toward the

integration of American commodities into the world market. By the 1970s, the USDA, under the charge of then-Secretary Earl Butz, farmers were encouraged to "plant fencerow to fencerow" and put as much land as possible into production for foreign export and international food aid; farmers received advantageous loans and direct government payments to incentivize overproduction (Imhoff, 2007; Winders, 2012).

Food policies have become key jockeying tools for Congressional leaders to win various regional votes (Imhoff, 2007; Winders, 2012). The farm bill regulates several nutrition assistance and emergency food distribution programs including, the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP); and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CFSP). Food stamps, promulgated by the Food Stamp Act of 1965, were officially integrated into farm bill policy when a nutrition title was added to the 1977 Food and Agriculture Act.

Environmental conservation became articulated with sustainable farm policy in the 1985 farm bill, at which time US farmers were experienced a drought reminiscent of the Dust Bowl, as well as a farm credit crisis that threatened many with default (Barnett, 2000). At this time, environmental groups heavily criticizing farm policy, lobbying for the inclusion of a conservation title to mitigate what was becoming extensive environmental damage. Direct payments became tied to conservation measures like "swamp-busting" and "sod-busting" programs that required producers to leave particular parcels of land fallow as a measure to stave off wetland degradation and curb fertilizer run-off (Cook, 1985a; 1985b).

Though brief, this concise history of the farm bill demonstrates its historical

function as support for domestic agriculture production and the (now global) distribution of US goods. Farm policy was originally constructed to mimic the historical structure of the American farm sector, primarily accommodating small farms growing traditional agricultural commodities like wheat, corn, and cotton (Dimitri et al., 2005; Johnson & Monke, 2010; Winders, 2012). As consolidation, vertical integration, and corporate and contract farming have significantly shifted the configuration of the US agriculture industry, support mechanisms like direct payments have been strongly criticized (Dimitri et al., 2005; Hanrahan, 2013). Nutrition programs, historically situated as dumping grounds for the distribution of agriculture surplus, now comprise about 80% of farm bill mandatory spending (Johnson & Monke, 2014).

Disposing Labor Through Farm and Food Policy

President Barack Obama signed the Agricultural Act of 2014 into law on February 7, 2014 after an entrenched and protracted partisan debate. This Act passed with significant changes to agriculture and nutrition policy, including the elimination of direct farm payments and greater reliance on crop insurance for agriculture support, as well as deep cuts to SNAP and tightened "workfare" requirements coupling employment with program eligibility.

For this chapter, I analyzed texts gathered from the Congressional Record from July 11, 2013-February 4, 2014 including transcripts of floor speeches, representatives' extended remarks, and letters of support and media items submitted by congressional representatives, from both houses of Congress. Secondary texts for this analysis include Representatives' interviews with C-SPAN correspondents, as well as commentary from USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and President Obama during this same period. The start-

date for collecting these texts was purposeful as it marks a significant impasse in what ultimately became a 5-year farm bill battle: the Republican majority of the House of Representatives proposed a 'farm only' farm bill stripped of all nutrition-related programs. Proposed on July 11, 2013, this move sparked intense debate over the scope of the bill and responsibility of the federal government, especially in the midst of the slow postrecession economic recovery. Although the Farm Bill had already been "languishing" (159, Cong. Rec. H4816, 2013) through several years of hearings, debate, failed votes, and other deliberations, focusing on this period allows me to make claims about the tensions between producing and consuming food, and the rhetorical tactics used to articulate food security through agriculture and nutrition policy reforms. These texts provide critical insight into the metabolic relations co-conditioned by this farm bill and the discursive circulation of comestible capital that it directs. I suggest that the policy reforms encompassed in the final bill strategically articulate *food security* with *risk management*, creating an arrangement of food-metabolic relations that protects agricultural production against market risks, while linking food assistance with market benefits, to secure against (potential) rifts in the food-metabolic cycle. Specifically, through a governmentality of disposability, agricultural labor is valorized as the fertile source of US economic security, while the unutilized labor of food stamp recipients is denigrated as waste. On both the agriculture and nutrition side of the Bill, though, labor is ultimately (re)metabolized through policy reforms.

Food security in this chapter operates on two interweaving planes of political economic practice: production (codified in agriculture policy) and consumption (embodied by nutrition policy). By regulating crop production, the Agricultural Act of

2014 insures a particular arrangement of the food supply based on the support of commodities sold in domestic and international markets; use-value is metamorphosed from the exchange of crop insurance. Through tighter management of food assistance programs, this Act secures the production of consumers; use-value is transformed through the exchange of work eligibility for SNAP benefits.

Suturing the Food-Metabolic Rift

On February 7, 2014 President Barack Obama signed the Agriculture Act of 2014 into law. In the speech he delivered at the signing ceremony, President Obama likened the Farm Bill to a "Swiss army knife" with "a lot of tools...[that] multi-tasks" (C-SPAN, 2014). Explaining that "despite its name, the Farm Bill is not just about helpin' farmers," Obama maps the areas that food traverses: "it is a jobs bill, an innovation bill, an infrastructure bill, a research bill, and a conservation bill" (C-SPAN, 2014). Even before the Bill passed, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack urged Congressional leaders as well as CSPAN viewers to "recognize everything that's in between…the commodity title and the nutrition title" (C-SPAN, 201b3) when debating farm/food policy reform. Although neither the President nor USDA make decisions about Farm Bill legislation, their statements indicate the complex ways food is woven into various aspects of economic activity.

I have suggested that the Farm Bill, operating as a technology of deliberation (Greene, 1998), codifies rhetorical judgments about the art of government. Indeed, Congressional Representatives – as they are the ones tasked with legislating the Farm Bill – also realize this function. For example, Representative Collings makes a clear appeal to governmentality in the following statement: "[the Farm Bill] is about political choices…it

is about political decisions that we make on where we're going to spend money and how we're going to do that and what we believe in with regard to jobs and how jobs are created" (159, Cong. Rec. H5676, 2013). The emphasis on making "political choices" indicates the deliberative judgments that not only steer policy in particular directions, but have discursive implications for ways of being in the world (i.e., labor vis-à-vis jobs).

Representative Pingree explicitly calls up the productive force of food policy when she implores the House of Representatives to "[get] serious about *creating* a food system that works for everyone" and pass agriculture program reforms (emphasis added, 159, Cong. Rec. H6696, 2013). Further, Representative McGovern notes how the Farm Bill budget "is a statement of our values" (159, Cong. Rec. H5663, 2013) and thus must be appropriated with care and conscience. Indeed in this same remark, McGovern cites the irony of proposing what he calls "draconian" cuts to the SNAP budget while simultaneously strengthening farm subsidies "for people who don't need it," indicating the disposability driving Farm Bill governmentality. Thus, it is clear that despite the attempt to split agriculture and nutrition policy into separate pieces of legislation, Farm Bill stakeholders recognize its function as a comprehensive bill that arranges and manages the US food-metabolic cycle.

The proposal to split the nutrition title from the Farm Bill was brought to the floor of the House of Representatives on July 11, 2013. Alleging that they had not had adequate opportunity to fully read the Bill, enraged House Democrats charged their opponents with intentionally stripping the nutrition titles as an exercise to eliminate food assistance programs entirely. Representative Frank Lucas, Chair of the House Agriculture Committee, repeatedly states that the intent in bifurcating the bills is to

accelerate the deliberation process, and get to Congressional Conference[4] so that farm and food policy could once again be considered together. This move toward a farm/food *rift* represents a gauntlet thrown in a discursive war of position.

Reappropriation of the Marxian concept of rift is purposeful in this context as the separation of agriculture from nutrition is indeed articulated in terms of a rupture in what are historically constituted sets of metabolic relations. This trope is evident, for example, when Representatives use phrases like "broken link," "severed tie," and "divide and conquer" throughout their speeches opposing what Representative Scott calls the "terrible mistake of divorcing, of segregating, of separating the most basic element of farm policy" (159, Cong. Rec. H4461, 2013). Operating on a nutrition/agriculture fault line (rift), Congressional leaders appeal to the "unholy alliance" of agriculture and nutrition policy as a rhetorical move to dethrone SNAP and cut what is seen as excessive spending on wasteful programs. To combat this, appeals to the "marriage" of farms and food seek to secure against this rift by articulating a unity of comestible relations.

At a time when the US economy continues to struggle with the vestiges of the Great Recession and an unprecedented federal deficit, it is not unreasonable to scrutinize budgetary appropriations. Championed by Representative Lucas as a "farm bill farm bill" (159, Cong. Rec. H4391, 2013), this proposal operates as a discursive move to reposition power relations between the agriculture and nutrition programs competing for tight resources. This bifurcation calls attention to what is viewed as an inequitable distribution of Farm Bill spending to re-articulate the "shape" of exchange (Marx, 1867/1977, p. 200) with agriculture. Letters of support submitted by the American Farm Bureau Association and many other farm stakeholders explain that "the purpose of splitting the agriculture

and nutrition pieces was to change the political dynamics that conspire to prevent true reform" so as to ensure that the use of taxpayer dollars is as "cost-effective, accountable, transparent, and responsive" as possible (159, Cong. Rec. H4391, 2013). Appeals to the efficient use of tax revenue illuminate how economic exchange (C-M-C) is what is *really* managed via food; food *security* in this sense is deployed as a rhetorical technology for directing food-related practices (Foucault, 1994/2001; Greene, 1998). Senator Lee explains, "the Farm Bill is really two bills- one that spends about $200 billion to subsidize the agriculture industry and another that spends $750 billion on the public assistance program previously known as food stamps" (159, Cong. Rec. S693, 2013). By calling out the disparate appropriations for farm and food programs, statements such as these signify the values reflected in the Farm Bill budget, and the sense of undue favor shown to the nutrition side.

Indeed, Chairman Lucas' primary rationale for splitting the bills was to provide the House with the opportunity to "consider food stamps and farm policy individually and on their own merits" (159, Cong. Rec. H5668, 2013). Describing the benefits of a farm-only farm bill as doing "appropriate and good things for people who *make a living"* (emphasis added, 159, Cong. Rec. H4394, 2013) and "*get things done* in this country," (emphasis added, 159, Cong. Rec. H4470, 2013) supporters of splitting the bills make a subtle reference to the waste created by those dependent on food assistance (that is, those who do not "get things done"), and the programs that have traditionally dominated mandatory spending appropriations under the Farm Bill. Specifically, productive livelihood is emphasized by constituting agriculture as an *industry* that "provide[s] this country with the agriculture and products it needs" (159, Cong. Rec. H4394, 2013),

indicating the use-value of farming. Thus, in the Farm Bill context that unfolds after this initial proposal, conceptions of the "merits" on which the separate agriculture and nutrition bills will be considered pivot on valuations of the labor metabolized via agricultural production and food assistance.

In contrast, appeals to the "marriage" of agriculture and nutrition suture a "relationship between those who produce food and those who eat food" (159, Cong. Rec. H4816, 2013). Words and phrases used throughout these deliberations like "symbiosis" and "partnership," as well as "historic coalition," "farming and feeding," and "balanced arrangement" operate rhetorically to constitute what Representative Clarke describes as "the connection shared between…urban and rural areas of America" (159, Cong. Rec. E1061, 2013). Indeed, these arguments rest on articulations of a "safety net" that links the dueling policies under a paradigm of government assistance. Senator Heitkamp clearly explicates this when she states: "Food stamps are there when people need them in the same way that farm disaster payments are there when farmers need them" (159, Cong. Rec. S6568, 2013). In terms of the government funding that is being fought over, agriculture and nutrition programs operate on the same plane of subsidized government assistance against "challenges" and "disasters" each side endures. Representative Sewell also invokes this analogy to illuminate the hypocrisy of strengthening crop insurance while decimating food stamps: "We cannot provide government subsidies to farmers without providing government assistance to people in poverty" (159, Cong. Rec. H4375, 2013). In other words, if both sides rely on a "safety net" for the certainty of food security, it is not equitable to bolster assistance to one and deny the other.

While those who support the agriculture/nutrition split castigate what they see as

an "unholy alliance" that instantiates waste*ful* spending and wast*ed* (nonagricultural) labor, those who seek to maintain this policy "marriage" highlight the inclusive and all-encompassing nature of the Farm Bill's food-metabolic relations. In other words, by use of this tactic supporters attempt to suture the rhetorical food/farm rift by constituting a seed-to-table metabolic cycle. For example, when Representative Brown refers to "all aspects of food production" affected by the Farm Bill, he completes the rhetorical metabolism by connecting "those who eat" with "those who produce" (159, Cong. Rec. H4465, 2013). Similarly, Representative Scott rather bluntly suggests this when he states, "When you think of farms and you think of agriculture, do you mean to tell me it isn't about food?" (159, Cong. Rec. H4460, 2013). Advocates for a farm/food policy "marriage" reference the interweaving micro-processes of economic exchange that are put into play by the Farm Bill, thereby recognizing the role played by consumption in completing the C-M-C cycle. Representative Clyburn puts this argument into even sharper relief by strategically acknowledging the arguments of the competing side, the value of agricultural labor, while also noting how that labor is conditioned by its very consumption: "For American farmers and the agribusiness industry to succeed, they need consumers to purchase the food they produce" (159, Cong. Rec. H5707, 2013). Although separate food and farm bills would certainly not disrupt the whole of US food consumption, this statement provides a stark reminder of the interdependence of agriculture/nutrition policy under the Farm Bill. Indeed, many food assistance programs rely on surplus agricultural commodities for distribution either to food pantries or directly to program participants.

These dueling constructions of the agriculture/nutrition policy relationship

demonstrate competing articulations of food security that play out through the duration of the Farm Bill debate. On the agriculture side, food security becomes mobilized as a technology that secures the circulation of fertile farm industry labor (since this is the labor that *really* matters, in this context), while on the nutrition side, food security becomes a technology of recycling waste products undeserving of a safety net. Maintaining a fertile supply of farm labor (that is, not letting this valuable labor go to waste) and recycling the always already wasted lives of those on food assistance (in terms of un/under-employment) instantiates dual articulations of food security via a governmentality of disposability.

Valorizing Production's Fertility in Agriculture

The move to bifurcate the agriculture and nutrition titles instigated a partisan war of positions between these elements of the Bill. In arguments regarding the function, scope, and reform of farm programs (the most notable of which became crop insurance), agriculture is positioned as a business deserving the support of a government safety net to mitigate production risks. By emphasizing the maintenance of a fertile agribusiness industry, food security articulates risk management, and farm labor is valorized as a productive subjectivity that should not go unmetabolized.

In the context of these Farm Bill deliberations, agriculture is a form of production akin to the glory days of American manufacturing. Analogizing farmers to "people who manufacture outdoors" like *National Journal* Contributing Editor Jerry Hagstrom did (C-SPAN, 2013a), appropriates the ideological weight of "Made in America[5]" rhetoric, attempting to discursively revive what has been a nearly defunct sector of the US economy since the 1970s. Considering agriculture as an industry, then, necessarily

constitutes farmers as business people who, accordingly, enact a business-like persona. For example, throughout their deliberations Congressional leaders make numerous pleas to pass a Farm Bill that will allow farmers to "plan" within a "predictable business environment," such that they can "make critical business decisions," "expand operations." In this way, farm policy is a tool for investment in and further development of a prosperous industry, and, importantly, secures that farmers continue to "have skin in the game" and "produce the most affordable and abundant food supply" (159, Cong. Rec. S6162, 2013). Emphasis on the *continued* support of farmers via Farm Bill rural development, recruitment, and subsidy programs suggests a need to rhetorically secure against the risk of losing such a viable production base. The Farm Bill must strategically dispose agriculture relations so as to maintain the fertility of the industry as it not only supplies American consumers with "the safest most affordable food supply in the world" (159, Cong. Rec. S5795, 2013), but must also remain competitive in the global market.

Thus, "market based risk management tools" becomes the moniker for "farm safety net policies," the cornerstone of which is the crop insurance program. Recognizing that farming is "an extremely risky business," farm policy provides "relief [in] difficult times," and "stability and security" so that farmers are not "left hanging." It is interesting to note the invocation of rhetorical tropes typical of food assistance discourse in this context. As noted earlier, many Congressional leaders who opposed splitting up the Farm Bill articulated both agriculture and nutrition support under a unified safety net. Entreaties to the provision of "certainty," "stability," and "relief," reappropriate welfare discourse to rhetorically position agriculture more advantageously in terms of Farm Bill spending.

I contend that through a governmentality of disposability, food security operates as technology that secures the fertility of the agriculture sector by disposing (arranging) favorable farm production practices. Throughout the deliberation process, Congressional leaders often relay stories of the numerous, disastrous, and potential risks farmers face as they operate their businesses. These include price fluctuations and market surpluses, as well as weather-related phenomena such as flooding/drought, heat/cold, and blight. For example, a snowstorm in 2013 resulted in significant cattle losses, the significance of which Senator Heitkamp explains: "One cow is not interchangeable. Many of these families over the years, through genetics and through selective breeding, have in fact built the herd- built a herd unique to their ranch- and they lost it all." (159, Cong. Rec. S641, 2013). Indeed, as Heitkamp also notes, "It is hard to imagine a business losing…its production in 1 year" (160, Cong. Rec. S720, 2014).

Obviously, when farming is positioned as a lucrative manufacturing industry, risks such as extreme weather become hindrances to production. In other words, the potentiality of occurrences such as volatile price futures, feed shortages, or input costs represents crises in a nature/culture interaction that disrupt so-called "natural" metabolic flows. To be clear, Marx's original conception of the "natural laws" whose fissure instantiates metabolic rift is rooted in essentialist notions of the environment and what is by now a taken for granted understanding of sustainable farming. Rather, I suggest the (potential) *rift* in this case is less about the depletion of soil nutrients, and instead an interruption of the agriculture sector's economic viability.

Specifically, the risks faced by agribusiness are constituted as events out of farmers' control, necessitating government assistance because this industry is susceptible

to forces for which it must plan and respond but cannot manipulate, such as "adverse weather [and] market conditions" (160, Cong. Rec. S725, 2014). For example, Senator Nelson's discussion of greening, a "devastating disease" faced by citrus growers, "[has] no cure and which kills the citrus tree within 5 years…[and] has already destroyed surrounding groves once it has been discovered" (160, Cong. Rec. S722, 2014). He continues to explain the scope of the disease's economic impact: "In a 2012 report, University of Florida researchers found that the disease cost Florida's economy $4.5 billion and 8,000 jobs between 2006 and 2012…but the disease is spreading to every citrus-producing state, including Texas, California, and Arizona." Greening is clearly a serious disease that must be controlled so as not to further hinder the US citrus production.

In terms of the agriculture/nutrition war of position encompassed in these Farm Bill deliberations, the theme of "control" evident in Nelson's statement demonstrates how food security operates as a rhetorical technology. On the agriculture side, controlling risk through effective policy tactically ensures not only an adequate food supply, but also maintains this industry's economic viability (or per my conception, fertility via market dominance). In stark contract, when impacts of inadequate nutrition are taken up in debate over the nutrition title and food assistance, health is articulated with personal responsibility and economic burden. Because agribusiness sustains economic circulation through job creation and global trade, the Farm Bill valorizes farm labor as *valued* work by protecting its discursive metabolization.

Arguments for agricultural policy seek to maintain the fertility of agribusiness to continue the (global) circulation of US comestible commodities. Indeed, as many

Congressional Leaders point out, agriculture already plays a significant role in the domestic and international economy through job creation and competitive foreign trade. With entreaties not to curb, curtail, or interrupt these flows of comestible capital, these claims exalt the dominance of American agriculture as a globally valued (and even envied) industry.

As noted earlier, agriculture is one of the most productive sectors of the U.S., directly supporting 16 million jobs, representing one of the top employment and production opportunities in several states. For example, for Senator Klobuchar's home state of Missouri agriculture sustains 16% of the state's workforce. There are 80,000 farms in Minnesota and, as Klobuchar argues, "we are an exporting state, and it is one of the major reasons our unemployment rate is down to 4.6[%]" (160, Cong. Rec. S677, 2014). Within a context of economic recovery and budget deficit, the number of jobs created and maintained through agriculture is not insignificant.

Farm-related jobs are not limited to growing and harvesting crops. Agriculture supports a robust food manufacturing industry that includes processing, transport/distribution, and food production. Supplying hundreds of thousands of jobs (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014), food manufacturing is, as Representative Moran describes, "an enormously important industry" (159, Cong. Rec. H6523, 2013) that relies on economic incentives provided through farm policy. For example, Representative Latta puts this in sharp relief by recalling a visit he had in his district:

> Headquartered in Bryan, Ohio, [the] Spangler Candy Company is a family owned business that has been providing consumers with Dum Dums, Saf-TPops, Circus Peanuts, candy canes, and other confections since 1906. This company has over 400 US employees; but it could purchase sugar at world-market prices instead of US prices, that number would be closer to 600. That's a difference of 200 skilled manufacturing jobs in a single small Midwestern town. Imagine the positive

economic growth that would result. (159, Cong. Rec. H6525, 2013)

Thus, jobs articulate with economic growth. The circulation of money propels the cycle of economic exchange (Marx, 1867/1977).

U.S. agriculture also operates within a competitive international trade market, making domestic farm/food production significant on the world stage. As noted earlier, the Farm Bill has historically operated to insert US commodities into foreign markets (Winders, 2012). In 2012, the US exported $135.8 billion worth of comestible product, with an expected increase up to $139.5 billion for 2013 (Hanrahan, 2013). As current USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack explained on C-SPAN's *Newsmakers* program, the US is experiencing a "robust [agriculture] export year, and we'll continue" (C-SPAN, 2013b). These rhetorical appeals position trade on a precarious trajectory within an often-volatile world economy, necessitating policy reform to maintain and continue "this country's role as a world leader in product agriculture" (160, Cong. Rec. S640, 2014).

American exceptionalism is a clear theme throughout these deliberations positively reinforcing agriculture's "merits" in the Farm Bill war of position. As Senator Blunt notes, American farmers produce items desired in foreign markets because 'USA' stamped on a truck, on a bin, on a container, is a seal of approval" (159, Cong. Rec. S794, 2013). Because US agriculture is already "one of the few areas where our Nation maintains a healthy trade surplus" (160, Cong. Rec. S687, 2014), it is essential that new markets be accessed for economic exchange.

In this way, agriculture policies encapsulated in the Farm Bill regulate webs of metabolic interactions, directing workers to jobs and promoting economic growth in favorable environments. American farmers and ranchers are described as "our net worth"

(160, Cong. Rec. S668, 2014). These claims demonstrate agriculture's double productivity (what I am interpreting as fertility, in the Marxian sense). Agriculture is literally productive in that crops are grown, harvested, and sold as commodities; a government safety-net (via income supports) bolsters this industry's output capability. Yet, as my analysis suggests, agribusiness is also productive in terms of the labor that is metabolized via farming and food manufacturing operations; farm policy incentivizes a favorable economic environment with far-reaching impacts. In other words, the labor supported through agriculture policy, a fertile source of global economic exchange, should not go wasted (unmetabolized) by limiting its circulation.

Per arguments on the agriculture side of Farm Bill deliberations, this is an industry that deserves reverence (via favorable farm policy). Indeed, as Senator Leahy notes, US food security is enviable: "Look at the number of nations in this world that would give anything to be able to feed themselves and have food left over to export" (160, Cong. Rec. S673, 2014). Because of the "incredible work" of those involved in the business of food production, the US "literally feed[s] the world." If the "hard work of those producers in America grows an entire [global] economy," and agriculture is "the quintessential new wealth sector" risks to its productive potential should indeed be mitigated (160, Cong. Rec. S641, 2014). In contrast to food assistance recipients, agricultural workers are consistently described in these debates as "makers," or the ones who "get things done" and "go[] about their work, everyday getting up before dawn, doing their work, feeding us, clothing us, and powering this country" (159, Cong. Rec. H5844, 2013). The productive force of agricultural labor should not be wasted through a misallocation of already scarce budget resources.

Thus, debating the "merits" of agriculture policy rhetorically produces a valorized laboring subject. In other words, because agriculture is lauded as a driving force in US foreign trade, it discursively realizes capital through the production and circulation of surplus value (Marx, 1867/1977, p. 283). By elevating farm-related labor based on its fertile productivity, agriculture policy deliberations re-articulate the support of a government safety net with the potentiality of risk in order to protect the circulation of those doing the *real* work that "power[s] this country" (159, Cong. Rec. H5844, 2013).

Re-Employing Consumption's Waste via Food Assistance

Historically, the nutrition programs regulated through the Farm Bill have represented nearly 80% of the Bill's mandatory spending. In the context of the fiscal cliff, debt ceiling, and sequestration, efficient use of tight budgetary resources intensified an already ideologically entrenched debate about the scope and function of US farm/food policy. In arguments regarding nutrition program reform, food assistance is discursively positioned in terms of waste. Throughout these deliberations advocates and opponents each make claims to the *real* locus of waste/fraud/abuse (either in SNAP or crop insurance program implementation) yet both sides articulate the poor with economic burden, ultimately constituting the disposability of those who require food assistance. If farm policy must secure against the potential waste of productive agricultural labor, food policy must secure the re-employment of the always already wasted (unmetabolized) poor.

In stark contrast to the valorized labor of agribusiness, food assistance recipients are consistently characterized along the lines that typified the welfare debates of the 1980s (O'Connor, 2001; Ohls & Beebout, 1993). Relying on constructions of the "truly

needy," opponents focus on a particular constituency of SNAP recipients known as "Able Bodied Adults Without Children" (ABAWDs). Constituted by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), this category is populated by individuals who are not employed or otherwise in compliance with workfare requirements. The receipt of SNAP benefits by those included in this population is limited to only 3 months in a 3-year period; ABAWDs may reapply for SNAP benefits after working at least 20 hours per week for 30 days. States with an unemployment rate of 10% or higher may request waivers to this provision, allowing ABAWDs to continue to receive food stamps for a longer period (USDA Food & Nutrition Service, 2014).[6]

With a denomination like "able-bodied," it is not entirely surprising that a group identified as "healthy adult[s]" without "someone relying on you to care for them" (159, Cong. Rec. H5711, 2013), are also admonished as "people who actually can take care of themselves" (159, Cong. Rec. H5710, 2013). In this light, then, these are people viewed as shirking the "responsibility" of work, ignoring what is "in their best interests in the long term," with little regard for "the good feeling of actually accomplishing something, and...knowing you're reaching closer, ever closer to your potential" (159, Cong. Rec. H4477, 2013). Indeed, one who is able to work but is instead "lured…[toward] a welfare state" (159, Cong. Rec. H4477, 2013) is not only lazy and dependent on government assistance, but does not even have the basal desire to "make a better life for themselves and their children" (159, Cong. Rec. H5707, 2013). In this way, unlike the hardworking farmers and food-manufacturing workers, ABAWDs do *not* "want to go out and be productive so that they can earn a living" (159, Cong. Rec. H5710, 2013). These people

should not need food assistance, and thereby irresponsibly wasting resources by bloating programs like SNAP. From this standpoint, the farm/food safety net should be in place to protect the hard work that makes "your community and country even stronger" (159, Cong. Rec. H5671, 2013). Thus, food stamp recipients are viewed as "extraneous," wasting their economic "potential" by allowing their labor power to lie fallow outside the social metabolism.

Nutrition title advocates attempt to negate this tactic by instead articulating the economic waste incurred by *not* supporting "our most vulnerable"[7] via food assistance programs. Yet it is important to note that even in appeals to the material hardships of poverty, nutrition advocates cannot escape the negative construction that keeps the poor (the always already "takers") in a position of need. References made throughout deliberations to those "struggling in poverty," the state's obligation to "deal with hunger," and the inability to "accord life's basic necessities" indeed recognize and make real the misfortune of household food insecurity, yet also reinforce the *lack* and *limitations* (conceived in this context not only in terms of a lack of food, but also economic viability) endemic to this experience.

In these debates, the impact of poor nutrition becomes a rhetorical tactic used by SNAP defenders to demonstrate the economic wasted-ness of the food insecure. Since the obesity crisis of the early 2000s, health-based appeals have been used to both criticize programs like Food Stamps for incentivizing the consumption of nutrient-poor food items as well as to bolster support for food assistance to alleviate the stress and other health problems associated with inadequate food access. Toward the latter, Congressional leaders, led primarily by Representative Jim McGovern, point out the health risks

associated with low monthly food benefits: "...poor people are getting sick because they are running out of food at the end of the month. Hunger increases the likelihood that people will get other ailments…[like] dangerously low blood sugar" (160, Cong. Rec. H230, 2014). To evidence his point, McGovern inserts an article from *The New York Times* entitled "Study Ties Diabetic Crises to Dip in Food Budgets" into the Congressional record (160, Cong. Rec. H231, 2014). On the surface, this does not appear to be a detrimental appeal; it is likely an effort to elicit sympathetic policy reforms like increased benefits. However, the issue of health disparities among food stamp recipients is consistently articulated as economic risk by correlating poor health with increased emergency room visits and higher rates of student truancy. In this way, moralistic appeals to support the "our most vulnerable" become a guise as programs like SNAP are defended as means to economic and social stability. For example, Representative McGovern sees "feed[ing] hungry children and hungry Americans" as integral to the art of government because "[a]t the core of our vital interest is a stable and thriving economy, [made possible by] a strong and healthy population that is able to contribute to the economic engine that fuels our economy" (159, Cong. Rec. H5684, 2013). When people cannot access adequate nutrition, they become "less productive, more prone to disease and will not be able to function as contributing members of society" (159, Cong. Rec. H4466, 2013). And indeed, they become a costly risk by requiring ever more social services and a hindrance to a productive economy.

Risk management in the farm policy debates implores the mitigation of the uncontrollable uncertainty that comes with agribusiness. Yet managing risk through a government nutrition safety net is a harder sell, I contend, because of the unequal

valuation of the "merits" of the two sets of policies. Although Congressional leaders recognize that populations at various points in the food-metabolic cycle experience disasters, struggles, and uncertainty, those affecting food assistance populations are routinely regarded with less consideration. I contend this is because arguments like those appealing to poor health (as well as weather-related impacts, as I will discuss later) pivot on the same theme of control that characterizes similar appeals to agricultural risks, like the discussion of greening I presented earlier. When the poor are constituted in terms of laziness and dependence, health risks are not considered out of their control. Indeed, I suggest, this dovetails with broader antipoverty and even personal health discourses that neglect an intersectional understanding of these phenomena.

While these kinds of arguments seek common ground with those opposing mandatory SNAP funding—that is, by agreeing that the poor can in fact be an economic burden— nutrition title advocates ultimately fail to escape this construction. Thus, the Farm Bill's nutrition titles embody a governmentality of disposability that emphasizes the *disposing of* a particular population, operating to discursively arrange the remetabolization of food assistance recipients such that they can no longer are an economic waste. Indeed, as I will demonstrate, Farm Bill nutrition policy is organized toward the literal "re-employment [of] excretions of production and consumption" (Marx, 1894/1993) by articulating food benefits with a laboring subjectivity. In this way, food security closes the metabolic cycle not only by securing distribution channels for agricultural products (the function of emergency food programs), but also reinserts wasted bodies into the labor-force. Concomitantly, by restricting SNAP funding and increasing emergency food support, these bodies then discursively feed on their own

labor.

Those in opposition charge that SNAP participants traffic their benefits and make illegal and frivolous purchases (including alcohol and even lobster), often using atypical circumstances as synecdoche for program-wide fraud. Indeed, this singular discovery resulted in specific reform passed in the final Bill banning this practice and increasing funding for fraud detection via state gaming commissions and the USDA.

To combat these vitriolic allegations of fraud and waste, nutrition title advocates tactically appeal to the efficiency of the food stamp program through evidence of low error rates and successful monitoring protocols. Noting that "food stamps have one of the lowest error rates of any government program," Representative DeLauro even goes so far as to "defy [Congress] to...look at the crop insurance program and find out what their error rate is about" (160, Cong. Rec. H1426, 2014). Indeed, as I will discuss shortly, moving the locus of wasteful spending and fraudulent practices into the realm of agriculture becomes a key tactic for the nutrition side.

A recent USDA Food & Nutrition Service (2012) report finds that for fiscal year 2010, SNAP's overall error rate is 3.81%. As this rate includes all instances of overpayment, underpayment, retailer fraud, and trafficking, such a low number is significant for a program that has historically been stigmatized for high rates of fraud. Indeed, reports indicate that SNAP payment accuracy is at "all-time highs" (Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, 2014; Rosenbaum, 2013). In terms of SNAP recipients' abuse of benefits, Representative Jim McGovern explains: "fraud in SNAP is limited primarily to a few bad actors...10 cases involving USDA programs were closed in the last 2 months, and only one of them involved fraud on the part of a SNAP participant. That's

right, only 1 case in 10 had to do with an individual defrauding the SNAP program" (159, Cong. Rec. H4527, 2013). Further, the USDA investigations since 2012 have resulted the disqualification of more than 40,000 individuals and 1400 retailers due to inappropriate activity (CSPAN, November 1, 2013). This is particularly salient evidence as food stamp caseloads grew by an estimated 56% during the Great recession (Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, 2014).

As a tactic of dis-articulation, proponents of the nutrition title attempt to locate *real* waste in agriculture programs through a reappropriation of safety net abuse discourse. By shifting the argumentative locus to wasteful and abusive farm programs, agribusiness gets enfolded within its own antipoverty appeals (including dependence on handouts, abusing benefits, and need for greater transparency) as evidence of corporate welfare. Specifically, these arguments illuminate contradictions in the farm/food debate by pointing out hypocritical values embodied in crop insurance policy that unduly coddle wealthy agribusinesses to the detriment of those who need food assistance.

Several House Democrats outright label crop insurance using language reminiscent of historical welfare debates. For example, Representative Schweikert calls the entirety of commodity support "a permanent entitlement system" (159, Cong. Rec. H4471, 2013), while Representative Blumenauer analogizes the farm safety net to a "lounge chair for rich agribusiness interests, who need it the least" (160, Cong. Rec. H1492, 2014), and Representative DeLauro calls crop insurance "handouts" (160, Cong. Rec. H1485, 2014) and even goes so far as to say that cutting food stamps while enriching farm subsidies is "reverse Robin Hood legislation" (160, Cong. Rec. H1446, 2014). These Congressional leaders also allude to the un/deserving bifurcation, as well as

wasteful spending, that characterize similar arguments about able bodied SNAP recipients, as exemplified by a letter from the budget watchdog group Taxpayers for Commonsense (inserted into the Congressional Record by Representative McGovern): "with a $16.8 trillion national debt, our country simply cannot afford to continue sending checks regardless of...whether producers even need or want government subsidies" (159, Cong. Rec. H4391, 2013).

Indeed, although crop insurance replaces the direct payments that have historically been the cornerstone of the Farm Bill's income support programs, farm policy is heavily criticized for rewarding already wealthy multi-entity farm operations without requiring the same kind of means-testing and asset limits in place for food stamps. For example, several Representatives cite a 2012 report from the Government Accountability Office (2012) that finds the top 4% of farmers receive 33% of benefits. As Representative Price also notes this pattern demonstrates that "a stunning 73 percent of subsidy dollars goes to the top 20 percent of agribusiness," and "that just doesn't make sense" (159, Cong. Rec. H6528, 2013). Senator Flake charges that farm support programs even "subsidize[] people who aren't really farming: the idle, the urban, and, occasionally, the dead" (159, Cong. Rec. S6162, 2013), alluding to similar allegations of the lazy inner-city poor abusing food stamps in the 1980s. By pointing out that "they [large farms] can get the money under any set of circumstances," Representative DeLauro bifurcates them along the same lines as welfare recipients: "You want to talk about the most needy? These are not the most needy" (159, Cong. Rec. H6508, 2013).

The crop insurance program promulgated in the final version of the Agricultural Act of 2014 does not require any of the income verification necessary to receive food

assistance (Risk Management Agency, 2014). To be sure, despite Senate and House bills that called for some income requirements and payment limitations, these measures did not pass out of Conference. Thus, unlike food stamp recipients, farmers are not subject to means-testing as a condition to receiving safety net support and are thereby eligible regardless of income level (Schields, 2014). Indeed, as Representative DeLauro put it: "You can be a billionaire and still collect the [farm] subsidy. In the food stamp program, you can make $23,000. With that, you can only spend almost $1.50 on a meal" (159, Cong. Rec. H6519, 2013).

Nutrition title advocates also attempt to relocate waste in agriculture programs by alleging abusive practices related to the ways benefits are disbursed. In passing a crop insurance program with a broad consideration of what being "actively engaged in farming[8]" actually refers to, it has become easier for farmers to manipulate the structure of their operations to be effectively overpaid via subsidies. For example, Representative DeLauro notes how multiple managers on a single farm "pad[] the payroll" to collect nearly one million dollars in payments while several of them "never have to put their foot on the farm" (160, Cong. Rec. H1446, 2014). Indeed, Senator Charles Grassley shares a particularly bombastic account of a "farming partnership" composed of more than 20 legal entities (LLCs), and more than 30 owners and managers, most of which live "well outside of commuting distance" from the farm itself.

Further, nutrition advocates are apt to point out the lack of transparency in the reporting of Congressional Representatives' receipt of farm subsidy kickbacks. Dovetailing with evidence for low rates of fraud in SNAP, these appeals use the suggestion of secret special interest funding (bordering on bribery, really) to

enthememically disparage the credibility of pro-agriculture officials. Indeed, Congressional leaders "pocketing millions...in crop insurance subsidies" (159, Cong. Rec. H5660, 2013) while voting for deep cuts to food assistance, raises questions about the rhetorical judgments made by Congressional leaders through Farm Bill policy. Although, as Representative Blumenauer notes, these arguments are intended to illuminate how "a blind eye was turned to abuses in the lavish crop insurance program where fraud is 50% higher than the maligned SNAP" (159, Cong. Rec. H4490, 2013), I contend that allegations such as these, though not unfounded, are ultimately grounded in the same logic that leads to extreme and stereotypical accounts of traffickers pooling food stamp benefits and/or using them to purchase narcotics and houses.

To be sure, arguments such as those I have just presented intend to demonstrate how the agriculture side is actually the *real* locus of waste. Ultimately, though, attempts to re-articulate safety net abuse with farm policy fail to adequately address the disparately valued "merits" of big business versus the poor. In terms of a governmentality of disposability, nutrition title advocates have little choice but to discursively obscure the fact that the very population that receives the most SNAP benefits (households with children, seniors and/or persons with disabilities) are those who simply cannot achieve the same kind of economic viability (or use-value, per Marx)[9] as those who "manufacture outdoors" (C-SPAN, 2013a). Even when food policy advocates argue for the economic benefits of the circulation of SNAP *dollars*, arguing for example, that for every 5 food stamp dollars spent, nearly twice that is generated in economic activity in local communities (FRAC, 2010a), food stamp *recipients* cannot escape being vilified for their status as economic burden. Thus, I submit, food assistance is an always already

(economically) waste*d* subjectivity, and moralistic appeals have little traction in a context of a biopolitical social metabolism that feeds on the circulation of labor.

The structure of nutrition policies that ultimately passed in the Agriculture Act of 2014 reduces SNAP spending by $8.6 billion over 10 years, and reinstates strict work training requirements as a condition for food stamp eligibility (Aussenberg, 2014). As it was at the forefront of food policy debate throughout the period of Farm Bill deliberations I examined, it is the latter that is the most salient in my analysis. Specifically, the final version of the Farm Bill reinforces extant policy that buoys enrollment in state vocational training programs while receiving SNAP benefits. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Debbie Stabenow explains the benefits of these state-run programs: "We want worker training programs that will help people learn the skills necessary to get the good paying job they want so they…[can] achieve long lasting self sufficiency" (160, Cong. Rec. S715, 2014). To this same end, state Education and Training (sometimes referred to as SNAP "E&T") programs have been fortified with job search and job training components- resurrecting workfare policies-designed to "help SNAP participants successfully compete for the increasing number of jobs that we hope will be there as the economy continues to recover" (160, Cong. Rec. S716, 2014). I discuss the workfare paradigm by which food assistance has been guided since the 1980s in the next chapter.

Thus, the most recent SNAP reforms effectively re-articulate the support of a food safety net with (re)employment. Food assistance recipients, I contend, always already embody a wasted subjectivity; completion of the food-metabolic cycle (per Marx) necessitates the transformation of waste products back into a consumable form. The

commodification of labor and its circulation through a metabolic cycle is clearly indicated when food security is used to incentivize work. For example, when Representative Ellmers urges food assistance recipients to "participate in their communities in exchange for services," (159, Cong. Rec. H5720, 2013), and when Representative McClintock declares that taxpayers "have the right as a condition of extending [food] aid to ask those on it to do everything they can to get off of it" (159, Cong. Rec. H5671, 2013), they each rhetorically invoke the process by which labor is (re)metabolized into a use-value (or C-M-C, per Marx).[10] Indeed, as Representative Davis indicates, "investing in [vocational] skills will make individuals more marketable in the workplace" (159, Cong. Rec. H5708, 2013), and as Representative Walden also adds, food stamp recipients would "feel much better about their role in life if they could go and be productive again" (159, Cong. Rec. H5678, 2013). In this way, food security rhetorically protects against the rift of wasting this labor by securing its circulation. Thus, inasmuch as the Farm Bill regulates the food system's metabolism, it must reintegrate those who receive nutrition assistance to fully dispose of this population through their labor in order to ensure (and, indeed, consume) their economic utility.

In contrast to the valorized labor of the farm sector, whose double productivity is lauded for its positionality as a fertile source of global economic exchange, nutrition assistance programs are themselves always already a waste by virtue of their association with a wast*ed* population. The Agricultural Act of 2014 embodies a governmentality of disposability that simultaneously operates toward the rhetorical arrangement (disposal, per Foucault) of farm policy such that agricultural labor does not go un-metabolized, and management (disposing, I contend) of the poor to recover their wasted subjectivity. Thus,

in directing the food-metabolic cycle, the Farm Bill's funding allocations represent rhetorical judgments about the scope and function of state governance. In this context, then, food security is a rhetorical technology protecting against a farm/food rift.

Conclusion and Critical Implications

This case study has unpacked the ways by which food security operates as a rhetorical technology of biopolitics within the context of the Agricultural Act of 2014. I contend that the farm bill functions to direct the social metabolism by which comestible capital circulates and subjects' labor is metabolized. Indeed, by regulating the late capitalist food system, the Farm Bill organizes the relations of sustenance that enable and constrain alimentary subjectivity. Analysis of Congressional deliberations leading up to the most recent farm bill reveals articulations of food security with risk management, through policies that not only ensure the production of an adequate food supply, but also rhetorically direct this activity along economically viable paths. Agriculture and nutrition programs structured by the farm bill dispose (of) labor through respective processes of valorization and re-employment. In the context of this case study, food security's rhetoricality is illustrated by the ways by which it is entwined with the public policy that guides food production and consumption.

In this section, I provide a summary of the analysis and key findings. From there, I present this case study's contributions to Post-Marxist theory and food/environmental justice, articulating social metabolism as a valuable heuristic for environmental communication. I close with implications for the discourse of food justice. Transcripts of Congressional deliberations (including floor speeches, extended remarks, and other items included in the Congressional Record) were analyzed to demystify the function of food

security in federal farm/food policy debate. My analysis of the most recent Farm Bill deliberations illuminates tactics used to arrange the food system, directing production and consumption of comestible capital toward economically viable fields of practice. In a debate that intensified with the bifurcation of the farm and food titles of the Bill, Congressional leaders re/articulated safety net discourse in a war of position pitting agribusiness against nutrition assistance. On both sides of this debate, food security has less to do with securing an adequate food supply and instead articulates the value of particular forms of labor.

In a context of slow post-Recession economic recovery, deliberations of the scope of farm bill programs housed under the Agricultural Act of 2015 languished to allocate scarce budgetary resources (articulated as program support). The agriculture and nutrition titles became confronted one another as competing constructions of the food safety net, with each side framing food security as risk management. Champions for farm programs appropriated language connoting uncertainty and instability to articulate the volatility of the global market – a strong "farm safety net" bolsters the fertility of agricultural production. Nutrition advocates used similar appeals to stress the vulnerability of those who require food assistance. On both sides of this debate, food security functions as a rhetorical technology that secures the circulation of labor – either by maintaining financially viable fertility, or by re-employing economic waste.

The policy reforms ultimately codified in the Agricultural Act of 2014 demonstrate an arrangement of food-metabolic relations that maintain the economic production of labor. Specifically, agribusiness (framed as the "makers") is valorized for its economic fertility – by this I am referring to the legitimization of agricultural labor

through signification of this sector's "high merits" as a rich source of US capital accumulation. Concomitantly, food assistance (framed as the "takers") is disciplined for recipients' perceived status as economic waste, that is, labor lost through un(der)-employment. Food/farm policy guarantees the circulation of comestible capital through the metabolization of labor, through the flexibility of crop insurance and trade practices and tighter management of nutrition assistance programs' work eligibility standards.

This case study took up the food/farm policy in an effort to theorize the farm bill as a site of biopolitical metabolic relations (Marx, 1867/1977). Specifically, I have argued that the farm bill discursively arranged comestible activities via a governmentality of disposability. To this end, I take up the Marxian concept of *social metabolism*, a term ascribed to the process of economic exchange and the process of re/appropriating labor through commodities' life cycle. The farm bill structures the circuits of exchange (C-M-C) that condition comestible production and consumption. In short, agricultural use-values such as raw materials (natural resources) are sold in international markets; subsidy regimes dissolve this exchange value back into the commodity-form as farmers expand their means of production (i.e., purchasing equipment, for example). On the nutrition side, the first C-M is accomplished through the exchange of food benefits to program enrollees; the second half of the circuit, M-C, is accomplished through enrollees' employment (ensured most immediately through workfare-style requirements, and in the long-term by income thresholds). This, I suggested, secures against the (perceived potentiality of) discursive metabolic rift by ensuring the continued circulation (re-employment) of otherwise wasted labor.

Social metabolism mediates nature and culture by co-conditioning the flows

between social and economic practice. Placing economic activities in direct relationship with nature, this concept is a valuable heuristic for considering the layered processes (including, for example, economic, technological, and cultural) that articulate nature with culture. In this way, labor is an environmental practice, opening space to consider the sets of social relations by which the earth and worker are duly exploited. Indeed, per Marx, subjects exist in a co-conditioning relationship to nature. Discursive practices such as public policy demonstrate how one species negotiates relations with its environment.

Furthermore, that human labor is metabolized through circulations of comestible capital demonstrates the always already biopolitical function of social metabolism. Products of labor are exchanged for products of labor (C-M-C), producing economic subjects that both metabolize (through their own consumption) and are metabolized (through their own commodification), a process I conceptualize as co-consumption. This is put into the sharpest relief when considered from the perspective of food assistance policy. For example, SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps) participants receive monthly benefits that are used to purchase food that has been grown, packaged/manufactured, and distributed through others' labor. Participants are also required to seek employment and are barred from enrollment if they exceed income and other criteria used to signify their labor power. Thus, the insertion of bodies into the economic system (Foucault, 1990, 1994) is immanent across these overlapping circuits of exchange.

In these ways, social metabolism illuminates the strategic arrangement of late capitalist relations of sustenance. Public policy represents one manifestation of food justice discourse. The analysis of Farm Bill deliberations presented here demonstrates

how food security is built into the circuit of capitalist economic exchange. Through food/farm policy, and the deliberative tactics by which it is instantiated, food is solidified as a "condition of the rhetorics that humans inhabit" (Stormer, 2015, p. 100). Thus, by structuring food and foodways, discursive mechanisms like the Farm Bill direct relations of sustenance, enabling and constraining the co-consumption of alimentary subjects' labor. By differentially valuating particular kinds of labor, the Farm Bill drives the production of particular crops, such as corn, soy, and sugar that become the prime commodities in the manufacture of (processed) food. These polices contribute to rising rates of obesity by making these items cheaper, widely distributed, and more available than fresh produce (Imhoff, 2007; Nestle, 2007; Winne, 2008). In these ways, the Farm Bill strategically arranges disparities of access, effectively instantiating the very waste (poor) that then must be disposed (of) via nutrition policy.

Finally, this case study is articulates its critical intervention into the political economy of food by questioning the appropriateness of articulating food (required for biological existence) to economic viability. When certain forms of labor are valorized, and thereby protected through policy, Others are marginalized. Food justice should take heed to consider the implications of framing the food insecure as economic waste (Baumann, 2004). As illustrated in the Farm Bill deliberations analyzed here, those who utilize federal food assistance could not escape their articulation as economic burden. Indeed, even nutrition program advocates found this frame unavoidable in their appeals for increasing SNAP funding. Indeed, health risks are taken up to indicate the wasted-ness of the food insecure. The impact of poor nutrition is economic risk (for example, increased emergency room visits can drive up health insurance premiums), and strong

nutrition policy can enable a "healthy population that is able to contribute to the economic engine" (159, Cong. Rec. H5684, 2013). Yet, I suggest, articulating children/disabled/seniors' lack of economic viability by characterizing them as "investment" or "cost" is still a negative frame that ultimately fortifies an economic discourse that connects work requirements to benefits.

For Marx, estrangement from one's labor power via industrial capitalism means alienation from an essential element of one's humanness (Marx, 1848/1978). Although I eschew an essentialist notion of what it means to be human, it is worth pondering if labor should be the only valuable way of being in this world. A state that conditions access to food via biopolitical exploitation is not exercising an ethic of care, but rather mobilizing a governmentality of disposability that, privileging the accumulation of capital, feeds (on) bodies and metabolizes their labor.

Endnotes

[1] In *Capital, Vol. I*, Marx (1867/1977) presents an analysis of "the process of valorization of labor" (Chapter 7). In the original analysis, "valorization" refers to the realization of capital via the production of surplus value. I am purposely appropriating this term in my analysis as a signifier for the "high merits" ascribed to agricultural labor. That is, appeals to the productivity of agribusiness rhetorically "valorize" this sector's labor because it is the legitimate source for US capital accumulation. In contrast, the labor lost by the unemployed poor is constituted as *waste*.

[2] This is what I refer to as the co-consuming function of the social metabolism. In *Capital, Vol. I*, Marx (1867/1977) writes: "the product of individual consumption is the consumer himself *[sic]*...labour consumes products to create products" (p. 290). I use this to draw attention to the discursive means by which the laborer subject consumers her/his own labor.

[3] Here I am referring to the environmental impact of agricultural practices like mono-cropping, genetic modification, and high-intensity chemical inputs for fertilizer and pest control. Furthermore, from this perspective, conservation measures included in the Bill have little impact on the scope of US industrial agriculture.

[4] Congressional Conference refers to the appointment of members of the House and Senate to a Conference Committee, tasked with resolving disagreements about a bill. What was originally entitled, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act (FARRM) of 2013 passed in the House of Representatives on May 15, 2013, with debate about the Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act of 2013 following in September. The Conference Committee met, and the Conference Report was passed, on January 27, 2014, with the final Farm Bill signed into law on February 7, 2014. Because my interest in this chapter is in the articulations of food security throughout the process of constructing and passing the Agriculture Act of 2014, I have chosen to organize this analysis in these terms rather than an assessment of rhetorical tactics at specific stages in this process. Thus, rather than organizing my claims in terms of static chronology, I am able to present arguments about the flows and circulations of discourse throughout the Farm Bill process.

[5] See Decker (1997) for a comprehensive analysis of "Made in America" discourse, and its rhetorical roots in the Horatio Alger myth and uptake for the promotion of American exceptionalism.

[6] In 2013, ABAWDs accounted for 7.5% of total food stamp enrollment (Honeck, 2014).

[7] The phrase "our most vulnerable" is used throughout Farm Bill deliberations in reference to individuals and families who receive federal food assistance. See for example, Representative Hinojosa (159, Cong. Rec. H4462, 2013), Representative Cicilline (159, Cong. Rec. H5596, 2013), Representative Cicilline (159, Cong. Rec. H1429, 2013), and Senator Harkin (160, Cong. Rec. S681, 2014).

[8] Per the USDA Farm Service Agency (2013), "actively engaged in farming" refers broadly to the provision of "significant contributions to the farming operation" by all program participants (p. 1). Specifically, contributions must be "identifiable and documentable" such as "capital, land, and/or equipment, as well as active personal labor and/or active personal management" (p. 1).

[9] Of the total households enrolled in SNAP, 72% have children, and 25% live with seniors or persons with disabilities (FRAC, n.d.).

[10] Here, the first C is represented by the labor from which taxes are derived, M is tax money that provides food stamps, and the final C is the labor reproduced by the food stamp recipient.

CHAPTER III

SLAPPING THE HANDS THAT FEED US:

TIPPED WORKERS FIGHTING

FOR WAGE EQUITY

"...the possessor of labor-power follows as [the capitalist's] worker….like someone who has brought his own hide to market and now has nothing else to expect but- a tanning."
Karl Marx, Capital Vol. I, p. 280

"There is a connection between working for tips and accepting harassment from customers... It's like a power thing"
Aisha Taylor (Restaurant Opportunities Center #NotontheMenu Campaign)

With her face in her hands, Natalie Vazquez explains, "I'm not skinny on purpose. I'm skinny because I don't eat." As a food service worker at Central BBQ in Memphis, Tennessee, Natalie prepares and serves food, busses tables, and cleans up at closing time. Memphis is one of the poorest cities in the state of Tennessee, with a poverty rate (28.3%) that is 10% higher than that of the state (17.9%), and almost twice the US poverty rate (15.9%) (Delawega, 2013). In 2012, almost half (49.3%) of those under poverty worked full or part time jobs in the previous month (Delawega, 2012).

Featured in the web-documentary, *Inequality in Memphis: The Working Poor* (James, 2014), Natalie explains how she sought food assistance soon after moving to Memphis, but was denied enrollment into the federal Food Stamp Program: "I don't have a red cent in my pocket...I don't have food in my stomach…these folks is gonna tell me I

make too much money [for food assistance], off seven dollars and twenty-five cents, and I don't have shit to my name." Struggling to pay for food, she subsists on cheap nutrient-poor items like "rice and cereal...and oatmeal, that's pretty much what my grocery shopping list is." Living in substandard housing with a freezer that "acts finicky" Natalie also limits her purchasing of meat to "the day I wanna cook, and then I'll go get what I want."

Natalie's situation exemplifies what has become a new subjectivity in the discourse of food assistance: the working poor. Trapped in part-time or low wage jobs, making too much to qualify for federal food assistance but too little to achieve food security, the working poor as a subjectivity reveals the limits of capitalist articulations of progress that signify food security by the wage that embodies their own commodified labor.

The food industry – a sector of the US economy that encompasses the harvesting, processing, stocking, preparation, and serving of food – exemplifies the modern instantiation of the working poor with startling severity. The restaurant industry accounts for some of the fastest job growth (Coughlan, 2014). Yet those employed in this sector experience some of the harshest working conditions, lowest wages and most historically stagnant wages, and highest turnover rates (Jayaraman, 2013). Food system workers use food assistance at double the rate of the rest of the US workforce (Food Chain Workers Alliance, 2012).

In particular, restaurant workers experience poverty at nearly three times the rate of any other workforce. Compounded by the substandard restaurant minimum wage, it is not uncommon for tipped workers to receive zero (or sometimes even negative)

paychecks. While tipped workers cannot access federal food assistance, they pay into this very system through their income and other tax withholdings. Workers in this industry experience what I am calling food in/security. That is, although struggling with personal conditions of food hardship and limited access to an adequate supply of food, these workers provide essential labor that keeps the food system functioning.

Since 2012, resistance efforts among restaurant workers have fomented as unions and activist groups seek policy reforms that include improvements in working conditions and workplace harassment, and the provision of sick days and health benefits. The focus of this analysis is restaurant workers' resistance efforts to combat an exploitative tipped wage regime.

In this chapter, I consider the phenomenon referred to as the working poor, and tipped food workers' subjectivation as such within the antagonistic chasm of food in/security. The degree to which these workers' resistance activities have gained media attention reveal the limits to employment-based notions of class within food assistance discourse. I contend working poor reveals complex intersections of food security and economic justice by illuminating a central contradiction of modern industrial capitalism- that those who sell their labor power to produce comestible capital do not have adequate access to that very capital. Thus, the working poor breaks open an antagonism to traditional notions of economic progress, revealing the failure of workfare-style food assistance discourse to suture food security with paid labor.

I contend that the working poor is a subjectivity rhetorically produced (Greene, 1998) through a specific set of political economic conditions. As the particular experience of restaurant workers puts articulations of food in/security – a specific concept

I bring to bear and explicate below – into sharp relief, I am interested in the ways these workers antagonize the discursive logic that uses wage to pin food security to employment. In this chapter, I consider the biopolitical function of wage, arguing that income is the discursive means by which bodies are inserted in to the capitalist circuit of production. Inasmuch as money represents the concrete form of exchange, it operates as a means by which economic agents (workers) access food resources within relations of sustenance. In this case study, I consider employment-based food assistance discourse to characterize the workfare paradigm under which food assistance continues to operate. The analysis examines the ways the food in/security antagonism is constituted by the working poor, radically destabilizing notions that paid labor secures food access.

The Labor Process, Wages, and Antagonism

This section takes up how labor is both transformed by and hidden within the valuation of wage. The commodification of labor-power illuminates the function of wage (income) to insert bodies into the circuit of capitalism. As money is the concrete and general form by which economic agents access resources (such as food), wage embodies biopower. Income articulates subjects to relations of (food) access; antagonisms foment as groups demonstrate the failure of hegemonic discourses to suture the expenditure of paid labor with food security. Thus, my exploration of the restaurant wage regime is grounded in the framework of food in/security I articulate in the analysis that follows.

To unpack the function of wage-labor, and the rhetorical configuration of tipped wages within this system, it is first necessary to review Marx's conception of the labor process. Referring to the process by which human labor power is objectified through the production of commodities, the labor process defines the transformation of labor power

into labor (use-value) through the production of commodities that can be traded in the market (exchange-value). Consumers pay (via price) for what appears to be the value of the commodity; price at once reflects and deflects the labor embodied in the commodity. Workers receive payment (via income) for expending their labor; wages become discursively fused with food security.

According to Marx, all humans have within them the capacity to set labor in motion. Labor power thus refers to "the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical form, the living personality of a human being, capabilities which he *[sic]* sets in motion whenever he produces a use-value of any kind" (Marx, 1867/1977, p. 270). As it is only "activated" when labor is expended, labor power represents the potentiality of labor-yet-to-be. Yet through the expenditure of labor during production, it is simultaneously alienated from the worker, and "crystalliz[ed]" in the commodity created (p. 128).

Importantly, the ultimate "magnitude" of the value of any commodity is measured by the *socially necessary labor time* required for its production. Marx (1867/1977) presents a key differentiation between the actual production time (referring to the physical number of hours/minutes it takes a worker to produce an article) and that which is "socially determined" as the average or typical amount of time needed to produce an article.[1] Socially necessary labor time as the measurement of a commodity's use-value is ultimately expressed to a consumer in terms of the item's price. Price not only represents an item's value but also the "substance" of that value, or living labor contained in the commodity (p. 131). This element of the labor process thus becomes tricky, I argue, in a microexchange context like a restaurant when the customer ultimately evaluates the

exchange-value of servers' labor. Undoubtedly, food service seems like "easy" labor; the social construction of restaurant work tasks as "low skilled" devalues the socially necessary labor time expected in this industry.

I suggest this is the result of the positioning of food service on a three-dimensional discursive matrix. First, a server functionally represents the restaurant's social organization of production (that is, they become for the customer the public face of the restaurant, and the conduit through which the consumer interfaces with back-of-the-house staff like the chef). Also, the actual commodity being exchanged here gets tangled in a quagmire of competing discursive constructions. Isn't the customer simply paying for the meal, with the tip representing an extra "bonus" for work well done? Is the service itself not also commodified in this context? Although tips are expected to make up for wages otherwise lost from the subminimum wage, most consumers may not realize they are subsidizing their waitstaff's income (Azar, 2005, 2007; Lynn, 2015). Finally, in light of all of this, the consumer cannot possibly judge the factors of labor time explicated above with any substantive effectivity. As the analysis will demonstrate, the tipped wage regime indeed benefits from this confusing web of articulations, trapping workers in a discourse that makes them kowtow for their income.

In the context of the restaurant industry, the price of a customer's food always already embodies labor-power (paid to the business owner by their customer) exchanged via money-as-payment. This point is an important one, I suggest, because inasmuch as the price of labor power (i.e., wage, paid to the worker by their employer) is *also* determined by a social quantification of necessary labor time, the locus of exchange for trading payment-for-price and payment-for-wage becomes fused under the restaurant

tipped wage system. In other words, the expectation undergirding payment of a subminimum wage is that a restaurant industry worker will make up the rest of their income via tips. That the customer is ultimately responsible for making up their server's wage effectively devalues socially necessary labor time, intensifying the labor requirements for earning a socially adequate wage, and ingratiating restaurant service staff to the largesse of their customer. As I explicate below, the positioning of tipped workers between time-wages and piece-wages further compounds this exploitation. Food in/security, I argue, is thereby instantiated via the subminimum/tipped wage regime, constituting a working poor subject entrapped betwixt a regular hourly wage and variably determined bonus that guarantees neither food security nor workplace stability.

As labor is commodified through production, the 'price' of labor power is also determined by socially necessary labor time. Wage is therefore a converted form of the (exchange) value of a worker's labor power. Like any other commodity, this value must account for the socially defined amount of time required for its (re)production. The maintenance of a worker's needs for social reproduction include needs like "food, clothing, fuel and housing" (Marx, 1867/1977, p. 275). These must be able to be replenished (via income) at least to the level of basal subsistence.

Importantly, as Marx points out, 'subsistence' is itself a socially constructed category, "depend[ent] on the conditions in which, and consequently the habits and expectations with which, the class of free workers has been formed" (p. 275). With this, I suggest, is revealed the hegemony of wage-labor: Capitalism has a vested interest in the perpetuation of "this race of peculiar commodity-owners" (workers) on the market (p. 275). Within this discursive totality, wages must ensure the social reproduction of the

worker by providing for their basic needs, including, as indicated above, food.

Therefore, I suggest, we can extrapolate that food (in)security is a biopolitical function of the wage system. To be clear, I invoke the term food (in)security here to reference both the achievement of food security and lack thereof, as hunger and satiety are simultaneously instantiated by capitalist wage regimes. Marx (1867/1977) indicates how wages instantiate relations of (food) access in *Capital, Vol.* I. Footnote 14 in Chapter 6 reproduces accounts of "two sorts of bakers, the 'full priced,' who sell bread at its full value, and the 'undersellers,' who… almost without exception, sell bread adulterated with alum, soap, peal-ash, chalk, Derbyshire stonedust and other similar agreeable, nourishing, and wholesome ingredients" (p. 278). Citing an 1855 report from Commissioner Tremenheere of London, the footnote goes on to describe how, " a 'very large part of the working class,' although well aware of this adulteration, nevertheless purchase[s] the alum, stone-dust, etc." (p. 278). Indeed, this occurs precisely because their wages prevent these workers from purchasing unadulterated bread.[2] The so-called adulterated bread becomes available to the workers because it is what they are able to afford; those who can afford the "unadulterated" bread need not patronize the "undersellers." Though paid for their labor, these workers must subsist despite " the deleterious effects on [their] health" caused by consuming nonedible substances like dust and ash.

Thus, we might think of food security from this perspective as "socially necessary food security," inasmuch as capitalism articulates it in terms of subsistence, rather than abundance. Capitalist discourses like workfare exploit this relation between wages and food security as hegemony – disguising, yet benefitting from, the constitution of "*socially necessary*" food security to limit enrollment in public assistance. Further, it is this

hegemonic articulation of wages with food security that allows a discourse like workfare to capitalize on the emptiness of employment (what I will call <work> in the analysis to follow) to suture the meaning of labor. The emptiness of <work> at once instantiates and neglects the injustices faced by tipped workers as they are articulated into a chasm between two different wage regimes.

Wages are mobilized as a rhetorical tool of biopolitics via their power of illusion. This is accomplished in two ways. First, wages appear "on the surface...as a certain quantity of money that is paid for a certain quantity of labour" (Marx, 1867/1977, p. 675). In other words, if I agree to work at the rate of $10 per hour for a 10-hour working day, I will be paid $100, appearing as if the labor-for-wage exchange is a direct valuation of the labor crystallized in whatever I have produced during the working day. Yet the concept of "socially necessary" labor is still significant here – though *hidden*, it is not irrelevant. As Marx explains, "it is the [socially necessary] quantity of labor required...not the objectified form of that labour" which determines the value a worker's labor-power (p. 677), and thereby the 'price' of the wage paid. When I contract to work a 10-hour day at the rate of $10 per hour, I have actually agreed to the social determination of X amount of labor required for the production task, *not* to the actual amount of my own labor that will become objectified in whatever I produce during the work period. Because the amount of socially necessary labor time is always less than the actual quantity of labor expended in production, wage appeases (indeed, *teases*) the worker into believing she is being compensated for the amount of work she completed.

Second, wages are illusory inasmuch as they "extinguish every trace of the division of the working day...into paid labor and unpaid labor," making all labor appear

as the paid form (Marx, 1867/1977, p. 680). Perhaps the most egregious form of capitalist exploitation is the always already existence of wage theft. Profit (capital) is created not only through the alienation of labor-power from the worker but indeed by the appropriation of *unpaid labor time*. Under the wage-labor system, a worker always expends more labor than that for which they are ultimately compensated because her work-day is divided between the portion that benefits her own reproduction and that which benefits capital. Specifically, a worker expends labor toward the production of the value of her means of subsistence (expressed in the money-form as wage). Once this value is met, the rest of her labor is *surplus*, expended for the production of profits for the capitalist (p. 324)[3]. In this way, as Marx explains, "capitalist production...rests directly on wage-labour" (p. 676) precisely because of its camouflaged coerciveness.

Wages thus cloak the always already alienation of labor under a veil of exchange. The worker is effectively duped into believing she is being directly compensated for the labor she expends, receiving a wage that represents a valuation of her worth. This characteristic of exchange (as a mask) allows workfare discourse, I suggest, to extort labor through public service and other work assignments in direct exchange for food benefits (themselves disguised as a wage with which the poor access food), predicating food security on income.

In the restaurant industry, this characteristic instantiates the working poor as food in/secure via the precarious positionality of tipped wages. There are two primary types of wage regimes under capitalism: payment by length of time (time-wages), and payment by the piece (piece-wages). As the names suggest, these two wage structures are differentiated by the element of the labor process (time or item) by which the capitalist

can most profitably extract surplus value. Under both structures, the price of labor is calculated by dividing the value (socially determined) of the working day's labor-power by the number of hours in the work period (day, week, etc.).

For time-wages, this formula quantifies the socially necessary price of the working hour (Marx, 1867/1977). When workers receive a wage based on time expended in production, this is the formula hidden by the determination of their pay grade. That time-wages operate on a contract (i.e., worker agrees to the rate of pay per time segment, such as $10 per hour), this affords the worker a certain degree of stability (read: security) in being able to anticipate how much income they should receive.

Importantly, when that wage is calculated as a salary of X-dollars per Y-time *worked*. That is, when an employer only pays employees for the hours during which labor is physically expended (the opposite of a salary), the worker will effectively be employed for a shorter time than that used in measuring the price of labor. This is because there is no longer a definite length of the working day, as manifested through shift work (like in a restaurant, for example). In other words, the direct exchange of pay for number of hours worked even further devalues labor by undercutting the already lower determination of socially necessary labor time. In this way, time-wages allow an employer to "wring from the worker a certain quantity of surplus labor without allowing him the labour-time necessary for his own subsistence" (p. 686). By implication, then, this exploitation is even more acute as tipped employees are already paid an hourly subminimum wage of $2.13.

On the other hand, piece-wages are calculated on the basis of the quantity of labor expended (i.e., that which is "crystallized" in the number of items produced). Piece-

wages do not directly express the value of labor time, but rather the number of articles produced, allowing an employer to pay even less per worker.[4] Importantly, in this regime, "[t]he quality of the labour is here controlled by the work itself, which must be of good average quality if the piece-price is to be paid in full" (Marx, 1867/1977, p. 694). This is supposed to provide the worker with some degree of stability (read: security) in terms of anticipating their wage. Yet there is no 'definite quantity' of piece work in the restaurant context (instability), and it is left up to the customer to evaluate anyway, leaving restaurant off the hook for these wages since the customer subsidizes them.

Because piece-wages are determined by the producer's capacity for work, they represent "an exact measure of the intensity of the labour" (Marx, 1867/1977, p. 694). Under this wage regime, a worker will be incentivized to elongate their workday in an effort to increase their production, thereby driving the price of their labor down per the formula above. This characteristic of piece-wages incites two biopolitical practices that aid in the extraction of surplus value: competition among workers, and bodily exploitation. Basing wage on the quantity of items produced means that wages will vary between workers, creating competition. Marx (Marx, 1867/1977) gives this a passing thought, focusing as he does on the insignificant impact peer-to-peer competition would have on the proportion between wages and surplus-value (in other words, competition among workers would not result in the capitalist losing profitability by paying out more wages). However, Marx (Marx, 1867/1977) footnotes a report detailing the engineering industry's practice of hiring of "a man who possesses superior physical strength and quickness...with the understanding that he is to exert himself to the utmost," thereby inducing the other workers to "keep up with him" (footnote 8, p. 695). This kind of

competition can also manifest in a context like the restaurant industry, in which servers' shifts and tables are assigned by managers or hosts, inciting competition among workers to ingratiate themselves (sometimes through sexual favors) to their superiors.

The intensity of labor under a piece-wage regime also exploits workers' bodies. As indicated in the footnote cited above, some industries (including restaurants) hire employees based on biological characteristics, like "physical strength and quickness" or looks. More importantly, however, the motivation to "strain [one's] labour-power" often drives workers to risk their health in order to prolong the workday. Again, Marx (1867/1977) only footnotes this issue, in a brief reference to the *Children's Employment Commission First Report*. Here, he cites children receiving piece-wages in the pottery industry, in which working overtime: "...tends directly to encourage the young potter to over-work himself," resulting in "bad constitutions" (p. 696). Workers can thus risk bodily harm to increase their wages.

Regardless of the specific payment regime, wage-labor always already negates the body – for example, a worker may be disincentivized from taking breaks, visiting the restroom, or eating, in order to fulfill the obligation for their wage. Thus, my analysis of restaurant workers' living wage activism advances several arguments regarding the biopolitics of tipped wages. First, the restaurant industry precariously positions tipped workers between the two forms of wage regimes summarized above. Indeed, through the restaurant industry's reliance on an hourly sub-minimum wage with the additional expectation of tips, I suggest that the price of commodified restaurant labor is paid in *both* time- and piece-wages. As such, tipped workers are doubly exploited. Unpaid labor time is always already alienated via wage-labor, with paid labor time only compensated

by a subminimum time-wage. This further represents a substandard valuation of socially necessary subsistence as restaurant wages have remained historically stagnated at $2.13, while the regular minimum wage has made modest increases. Tipped workers sell their labor-power to the restaurant in which they are employed, but the customer is expected to make up payment for the rest of their paid labor time. Finally, the tip itself is articulated both as piece-wage (by the industry) and price on top of food cost (to the customer). Subsidizing wages in this way allows this industry to more violently "wring" surplus value from its employees (and, frankly, the consumer).

As wages rhetorically link workers to degrees of economic power, they articulate subjectivity with purchasing ability. Drawing on this allows capitalist discourses like workfare to hegemonically suture the expenditure of paid labor with food security. The antagonism opened by restaurant workers' resistance efforts reveals the limits of the subminimum hourly/tips wage structure that instantiates these working poor into food in/security. Antagonism refers to "the point of the relations of discourse to the surrounding life world and shows the impossibility of the discourse constituting a permanently closed or sutured totality" (DeLuca, 1999b, p. 336). Hegemony is the process of fixing meaning in a discursive context, yet the linkage between articulated elements is always already partial and contingent (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). These interstices, or what Laclau (2006) calls "the antagonistic chasm" can be exploited in political struggles, where upon groups may seek to dis-articulate chains of meaning. Thus, antagonisms "emerge as limits from within the social" (DeLuca, 1999b, p. 336), and are thereby "the negation of a given order" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 12). When these limits are exposed, social struggles occur. Groups may then re-articulate meaning to

suit an new version of the social order. For example, DeLuca (1999) notes how the environmental movement antagonistically demonstrates the limits of industrialization. Phenomena such as "global warming, ozone depletion, toxic waste, and pesticides in food and water" explode the discourse of industrialization by demarcating its boundaries—indeed, pollution demonstrates how waste and care for the earth are considered as externalities within this discourse (p. 336).

Importantly, as Angus (2012) notes, antagonism "allows [social movements] to specify under what conditions a given social difference becomes experienced as oppressive or exploitative" (p. 547). In these cases, struggles over meaning are inflected as antagonism for their ability to call forth "the conditions under which a social identity experiences a block to its realization" (Angus, 2012, p. 547). In this way, social movements embody "the antagonistic chasm" (Laclau, 2006, p. 84) as their social identity eludes the hegemonic construction of meaning. The space of dis-articulation is a "contrary, *broken* space," or "absent fullness" (emphasis original, Laclau, 2006, p. 85). Social movements inhabit this space through their embodiment of the "break down of something in the social order" (p. 85).

Tipped workers' inhabit the "antagonistic chasm" through precarious positionality within both time- and piece-wage regimes. In this way, they antagonize workfare discourse and the hegemonic linkage between employment and food security. Indeed, workfare discursively promises that, through paid labor, one will achieve food security (this logic perpetuates income and employment thresholds for receiving federal food assistance benefits); I explicate the characteristics of this discourse in the analysis that follows. Yet tipped workers, though paid for their labor, continue to experience food

insecurity at an alarming rate.

The analysis presented in this case study complicates food security and the discourse of food justice through considerations of articulation and antagonism. Food assistance discourse since the inception of workfare during the Reagan era has consistently promoted employment as the gateway out of poverty (and, by extension, the achievement of food security). This discourse has become undermined by empirical evidence of individuals employed but working in part-time positions, underpaid but above the poverty threshold only enough to be ineligible for benefits have not achieved the full sense of food security as promised. In light of these conditions, I contend tipped workers' resistance efforts reveal the limits of hegemonic attempts to suture food security with employment under the logic of workfare. Furthermore, by articulating food security to the organization of restaurant labor, occupational safety, and practices of dining out, the relevance of food justice across circuits of capital becomes evident.

The Emptiness of <Work>: Tensions of In/Security in the Restaurant Industry

Restaurant workers' resistance efforts have been fomenting since employees of Windows on the World, the fine dining restaurant atop the World Trade Center, waged a strike in 2002 (Jayaraman, 2013). Through the Restaurant Opportunities Center United (ROC), restaurant workers have continued their active resistance through guerilla-style peer-to-peer research, advocacy and leadership training, and national public campaigns. Since 2013, ROC campaigns from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles to raise the minimum wage and to curb other labor abuses affecting food industry workers[5] have garnered greater public attention, articulating these workers' struggles with broader

discussions of income inequality.

For this chapter, I have compiled an assemblage of historical and contemporary texts to characterize workfare discourse, as well as the antagonistic tactics used by restaurant workers to expose its limits. Specifically, I analyze congressional hearings and policy documents from 1980s Food Stamp reform debates, reports on minimum and tipped wages from public policy groups, social media and other public online accounts of restaurant workers' campaigns and demonstrations (including, for example, YouTube videos of public rallies). The analysis presented in this chapter is focused on the last year of resistance activity, in which these groups have organized high profile and large-scale public events, and during which instrumental gains have been achieved.[6] These texts provide critical insight into the function of workfare as a discursive strategy used to suture food security with commodified labor, and its function as the ground on which the working poor is rhetorically produced. Focusing on this period allows me to make claims about the on-going antagonism these groups make visible, and the rhetorical tactics used to articulate food in/security within the context of economic inequality.

This chapter advances the concept of food in/security, in reference to its antagonistic double-articulation in the context of food industry worker resistance. I suggest, restaurant workers' resistance tactics make visible the "absent fullness" (Laclau, 2006) of food in/security within a biopolitical economy of tipped wage labor: those who sell their labor power to produce comestible capital do not have adequate access to that very capital in an employment context in which an already substandard wage is subsidized by the consumer. Against the backdrop of workfare-infused food assistance policy, workers antagonize their unstable positionality between time- and piece- wages,

revealing how <work> structures economic injustice through bodily exploitation.

Will <Work> For Food: Characterizing the Discourse of Workfare

The Food Stamp Act of 1977 was signed into law as an effort to provide a food access safety net as part of the War on Poverty (Oliveira, Tiehen, Ver Ploeg, 2014). By 1980, bloated caseloads and extensive enrollment in the Food Stamp Program were seen as problematic in light of continued "stagflation" after the collapse of the US manufacturing industry (Fanning, 1989). During the recession of the 1980s, the US unemployment rate skyrocketed to 10.8%; the number of people living below the poverty line increased by nearly 35% between 1979-1983 (Auxier, 2010). Despite these trends, Food Stamp Program expenditures were reduced by $3.5 billion by the 1981 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (Pierson, 1994, p. 117). Thus in a political economic context of acute recession, high unemployment, and fiscal conservatism, Ronald Reagan was elected into Presidential office with the goal of boosting US economic competitiveness by ensuring the creation of "stable, permanent jobs for all Americans *who want to work*" (emphasis added, Reagan, State of the Union address, 1983, para. 40). In this era, food assistance became a key site of ideological struggle over the role of the state in the welfare of its citizenry, with social policy increasingly articulating economic viability through efforts to bolster workforce productivity.

The welfare system writ large came to be administered through what is known as "workfare," an approach that directs public benefits recipients toward paid labor as a bridge out of poverty. Because this chapter is interested in workfare as it continues to condition food security, I am interested in the addition of services like job training and job search assistance, and income thresholds and work requirements that continue to

structure the federal Food Stamp Program. In this section, I characterize the workfare approach to food assistance, arguing that this constructs the discursive plane the restaurant industry's working poor subject seek to antagonistically break open. I argue that the implementation of income-based eligibility standards and enrollment thresholds as well as limiting Food Stamp enrollment and benefit allotment once labor standards are met operate as a carrot-and-stick that attempts to suture food security with earned wages (exchange value). These features ultimately valorize <work> as an empty signifier, assuming that any form of "regular" or "unsubsidized" employment will (eventually) yield food security via income. The limits of this discourse are evidenced by the food in/security antagonism articulated by tipped workers' resistance efforts, which I take up in the next section of this analysis.

Throughout the 1980s Congress held several hearings aimed at defining the "workfare philosophy" as federal legislators tested and considered making permanent workfare approach to food assistance. As workfare represents a "changed philosophy of welfare" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983 p. 54), these "conceptual debates" (Workfare Versus Welfare, 1986, p. 103) offer rich insight into the discursive means by which food stamps have come to operate as a technology of biopolitics. Although specific policy features have been refined since this period, these debates reveal originary moves to hegemonically fuse (socially necessary) food security with wage labor.

After a comprehensive review of 14 early test projects in which states piloted early versions of workfare programs, the Government Accounting Office (GAO, 1981) presented three primary objectives of this new approach: "deterring program participation by those who could work, but chose not to; securing repayment to taxpayers by those

who are needy and receive assistance; and introducing individuals to the work environment" (p. 4). By the mid-1980s, these objectives underpin what is seen as the ultimate goal of workfare, "to encourage [food assistance] recipients to obtain regular employment" rather than requiring public services indefinitely (Workfare Versus Welfare, 1986, p. 3). Thus, workfare can be characterized by three intersecting rhetorical features: structural mechanisms that predicate food access on labor power, work/benefits exchange articulated as social debt repayment, promotion of the American work ethic as means for econo-social integration. These features valorize <work> as an empty signifier, assuming that any form of "regular" or "unsubsidized" employment will (eventually) yield food security via earned income.

First, workfare is characterized by distinct structural policy mechanisms that rhetorically predicate food access on labor power, including income thresholds and means tests for enrollment, work "obligations" and sanctions for noncompliance. These programmatic features ultimately condition the provision of food (security) on an evaluation of an individual's ability to be integrated into the market system via their labor power.

To be eligible for enrollment in the Food Stamp Program, household income must be at or above the federal poverty wage level.[7] Including household wages, business income, as well as other government benefits, and assets (such as the value of owned vehicles and homes) this calculation often has the effect of subjectivating households into being *poor enough* for eligibility (Ohls & Beebout, 1993). That is, a family may have an unemployed head of household, but own a new car or have a working spouse who makes *just too much* income, making them ineligible for food stamps. This is particularly salient

when a household experiences unexpected unemployment, other short-term loss of regular wages, or when individuals work part-time and/or low-wage jobs. Further, enrollees are disqualified from the program once they meet employment standards. In terms of food assistance, assets like spousal income or owning a vehicle articulate with labor power, (erroneously) demonstrating that individual's/household's ability to expend labor and earn a wage.

The hallmark of the workfare concept is the requirement to expend labor in exchange for benefits. Indeed, as then Bordentown, New Jersey Mayor Joe Malone states before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, workfare instills "the expectation that if [enrollees] are physically able, they *have* to work" (emphasis added, Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 54). Under the original workfare approach to food stamps, recipients were interviewed and assigned to specific jobs in the public sector, that is positions in public service to the state, like custodial, laborer, maintenance, and food service (Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982).

Work requirements equaled only about 40 hours per month on average, such that, as the GAO advised in 1981, it would be "highly unlikely that completing workfare obligations would create a real conflict with participants' efforts to look for a job, go to school, or engage in part-time employment or training" (p. 3). Indeed, as workfare was sedimented as a feature of food assistance in 1984, recipients' work-related responsibilities would come to include not only hours in public service, but also participation in specific training programs.[8] One's monthly Food Stamp benefit allotment "translated" into the specific workfare obligation to be met, based on the federal minimum wage. For example, in 1982, at which time the federal minimum hourly wage

was $3.35, an individual receiving $135 a month in Food Stamps would be required to perform 40 hours of workfare services a month, if that individual was already employed their monthly workfare obligation could be reduced to 30 hours (Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982). Structuring work "obligations" in this manner always already instantiates the perception that recipients are paying off a societal debt; I will return to this argument shortly.

Interestingly, workfare demonstration projects showed little to moderate success in the ability of workfare experience to lead to permanent employment for participants. For example, John Bode, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Food & Consumer Services for the US Department of Agriculture, reports "few changes after the workfare experience" among men and women participating across the demonstration projects (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 16). Most participants in this test program were employed prior to workfare, and continued employment in the same sector after workfare obligations were met and they left the program. That those included in this report worked, and continued to after workfare, in primarily low-skilled sectors (21% of men in construction or carpentry, 34% of women in food/domestic/health service) demonstrates the hegemony of "socially necessary food security" under capitalism. Congressional and other state leaders count it as a success that these workers maintained their subsistence-level food security.

Later in the same hearing, T. M. Woodruff, then a Florida state representative, also reports that of those participating in Florida's workfare pilot,[9] in which 57% of assigned work hours were not completed, 12 people were hired to full-time positions as a direct result of their workfare experience (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983).

Interestingly, Woodruff's response to these low figures denies any structural flaws and actually delivers a backhanded insult to those who left the program without completing their "obligation": "that tells me that those people either had another way to earn their income or simply didn't need the welfare badly enough to work for it" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 61). In terms of "socially necessary food security," the implication here is that workfare must only operate at a capacity to ensure the basal reproduction via employment of any kind, those who fall through the cracks are personally at fault, but the program works.

Despite their limited initial success, workfare labor obligations not only rhetorically fuse food security (through the provision of food stamp benefits) with crystallized labor through workfare itself, but the *potentiality* of labor (labor power) via the expectation that workfare experience will lead to securing regular employment and the income that comes with it. Furthermore, that gaining "unsubsidized employment" with a wage above the income cap is what ultimately bumps one from program participation demonstrates the articulation of <work> with food security.

Sanctions for noncompliance ensure that no food is provided without the completion of <work>, articulating food *in*security as punishment. Indeed, in their initial report to Congress assessing the effectiveness of workfare demonstration projects, the Government Accounting Office (1981) offers several recommendations for "strengthening" workfare sanctions (p. 3). If workfare "obligations" are not met, typically by not completing the requisite hours, that individual was originally barred from receiving food stamp benefits for 1 month; the GAO report suggests doubling this period. Recall that food stamp eligibility is determined on the basis of household income; the

GAO (1981) suggests "denying benefits to the entire *household*...until all past workfare obligations are satisfied" as a move to further strengthen the noncompliance sanction (emphasis added, p. 4). Upon enrollment in the Food Stamp Program, participants originally had an initial 30-day period before workfare obligations commenced in which they were expected to search for job, effectively creating a loophole in which enrollees *could* receive food benefits without actually working. In response, the GAO recommends closing this loophole; ultimately workfare policy enfolds job search requirements within the set of tasks required to maintain eligibility. Finally, the GAO (1981) suggests that on-site workfare tasks be acutely monitored such that "merely showing up at the jobsite [cannot constitute] compliance" (p. 4); workers must be surveilled to ensure they actually complete job tasks if they are to continue to receive benefits. Thus, if as Senator Jesse Helms harshly states "they aren't willing to work for the benefit, off the rolls they go" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 2).

Not only does the emphasis on sanctioning noncompliance capitalize on a stereotype of the poor as apathetic and unmotivated (one that continuously undergirds food assistance discourse), it also provides a handy way out for making social policy always already exclusionary. That is, noncompliance measures allow policymakers to articulate workfare as a "cost saving" tool because of its so-called "deterrent" effect (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 77). Indeed, reducing benefits because workfare hours are not met and capitalizing on the perception that food stamps are unduly complicated and that workfare jobs are "unglamorous" ultimately allows states to "break even" by reducing food stamp expenditures and caseloads while blaming the poor for *their* lack of accountability. Woodruff succinctly captures this point in his 1983

Congressional testimony: "[workfare] takes out the political repercussions to a person like myself on a local level, that has to make the decision about possibly cutting a person off welfare or not" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 62). Ultimately, workfare is about employment (<work>), with food security as the prize achieved via income. If an individual has the labor power to find <work> on their own, they aren't *needy enough* for food assistance.

Thus, these structural mechanisms of workfare-infused food assistance policy limit access to food by placing the impetus of food security on <work> itself. The assumption underwriting all of the programmatic features analyzed here is that labor power is the means of securing one's access to food, via income from regular, unsubsidized employment. Once the income threshold is surpassed, households lose their food benefits, demonstrating the expectation of that newly acquired <work> to provide "socially necessary" food security. The working poor subject antagonistically demonstrates the limitations of workfare policy by inhabiting the contradictory reality of at once having a job and experiencing food insecurity. This contradiction comes into sharper relief when we consider the working poor subjectivity inhabited by tipped workers, whose <work> experience means receiving both an hourly wage and tips (a piece-wage), creating instability and instantiating bodily risk.

As noted, it is the emphasis on commodified labor that is the hallmark of the workfare paradigm. In terms of the food assistance policy debates analyzed here, workfare characteristically promotes <work> not only as the catalyst for economic integration (a point to which I will return shortly), but also as a penance for having been *gifted* food security from a generous tax-paying public. Positioning <work> as the means

by which recipients pay retribution for receiving their food benefits exploits wages' illusion of compensation for expending labor while hiding the fact that recipients are being effectively punished for not selling their labor power on their own.

The articulation of food assistance benefits as a "grant" sets up the "work-for-benefit" (Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982, p. iii) system as social debt repayment. The articulatory power of this term pivots on its double meaning in public policy. Grants are a common feature in policies, including food assistance, that provide funds to be used in achieving policy goals. For example, the USDA allocates block grants to local anti-hunger agencies seeking to implement Food Stamp Program initiatives like farmers market "double up food bucks" campaigns. Yet in the context of poverty, the use of "grant" to describe food stamp benefits can be taken as having been *granted,* as a gift.

Food *in*security is thus articulated as a public debt incurred by those who lack the capitalistic wherewithal to commodify their labor and must utilize public services for help. To be sure, administering a social program like Food Stamps entails extensive administrative costs – for staffing, technology needs, and other resources – shared between an individual state and the federal government. Keeping these costs low, without sacrificing program efficiency, is both essential and challenging. In weighing out food stamp program expense, workfare is lauded as "sav[ing] the taxpayers money," (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 4). As noted, these "savings in food stamp benefits" (GAO, 1981, p. 5) are realized when individuals are either deterred from applying, have their benefits reduced, or leave the program due to employment or noncompliance. Thus, the responsibility of demonstrating whether workfare is worthwhile is placed firmly on enrollees' labor power.

For example, in their assessment of workfare demonstration projects, the GAO (1981) explicates "securing *repayment* to taxpayers" (p. 4) and "*returning* something of value" (p. 5) [emphasis added to both], as primary objectives of expanding workfare within the Food Stamp Program. Senator Jesse Helms also encourages states to structure workfare programs such that participants must "*earn* the monthly food stamp allotment" (emphasis added, Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982, p. 5). In a later hearing, Morton H. Sklar, former Director of Jobs Watch, reiterates, "workfare...is not a job, it is a *working off* of benefits" (emphasis added, Workfare Versus Welfare, 1986, p. 4). Thus, food security is only rewarded through active economic engagement, i.e., selling one's labor power for income.

If the poor require state-assisted food access, that is, funds granted so they may obtain a reliable household food supply, these benefits are a substitute for the full food access that comes from "regular, unsubsidized" <work>, and thus the expectation is that they should turn to food stamps "reluctantly" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 4). When state-sponsored benefits are received, participants should then be "doing something in return" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 54) for them. Workfare thus becomes a means by which this population can (read: should) challenge the stigma of being perceived as "a drain on the taxpaying public" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 2), and reciprocate their gift through economic productivity.

Articulating food stamps as a "grant" reifies centuries-old images of the poor as indolent and licentious,[10] rhetorically propping up an image of the American Taxpayer as benevolent-yet-frustrated benefactor. Indeed, Senator Helms states this in explicit terms: "fairly or unfairly, right or wrong, there is widespread public perception among taxpayers

that they are being ripped off...resentment has been growing for years and years and it is white hot right now" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 7).[11] As the one "burden[ed]" with providing the funds that run the Program and bestow benefits upon participants, the Taxpayer expects those dollars to be "somewhat prudently spent" (Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982, p. 2). Speaking on behalf of taxpayers in Florida's 58th District, Representative T. M. Woodruff asks, "We are willing to give you assistance, I am willing to pay my tax money and do that- are you willing to work for it?," and indeed answers, "If they say no, then we don't have the obligation to give them tax dollars" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 61). In light of the theme of (economic) "integration" addressed later in this section, the racial connotations of this phrase should not go unnoticed.

It is significant that the early workfare programs placed participants in state-approved public service jobs like custodial, maintenance, laborer, and food service (GAO Review report, cited in Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982). In a report on behalf of the Heritage Foundation, Peter Germanis recognizes "the community receiv[ing] something in exchange for its assistance" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 76) as a distinct advantage of workfare labor. Senator Helms also notes the benefits of workfare-infused food assistance not only go to Program enrollees but to the municipalities who "receive...the public service performed, work that they otherwise perhaps could not afford without increasing property taxes" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 2). This labor structure not only conjures images of indentured servitude, but recalls the explicit imperative of the notorious workhouses of the 19th century (Katz, 1993).

Yet Germanis' and Helms' statements also add another discursive layer to the taxpayer persona referenced earlier. Indeed, if Food Stamp enrollees are performing labor otherwise unavailable to municipalities, not only is it likely that these workers are not paid a fair wage but also that the benevolent-but-frustrated taxpayer is in fact off the hook for paying for these services to be rendered in the first place.

Articulating food insecurity as social debt not only emphasizes the reciprocal nature of working by suturing secure food access with commodified labor, but in fact undergirds its retributive function. That is, by receiving benefits as a grant gifted by benevolent-yet-frustrated taxpayers, food insecurity becomes a social debt, with wage labor as its corrective. Combined with the programmatic features analyzed above, the <work> experience afforded via workfare is lauded as a bridge to full food security, subjectivating the poor as a "subclass" (Workfare Versus Welfare, 1986, p. 51) who must be prodded by economic incentives to "[bring] their own hide to market" (Marx 1848/1978, p. 280). That is, actively insert their labor into the economic mainstream, though they will "now [have] nothing else to expect but- a tanning" (Marx, p. 280).

Perhaps the most pernicious characteristic of the "workfare philosophy" is evidenced by the vitriolic stigmatization of the indolent poor, as the wage labor system articulates poverty is as economic stagnation (individual/household and collective). Proponents laud workfare for exposing participants to <work>, thereby motivating the poor to secure regular unsubsidized employment and achieve economic integration. By promoting the American work ethic as a means for econo-social integration, food *in*security is articulated as punishment as workfare participants are disciplined for their economic lethargy.

From the inception of workfare in pilot projects, “the value of work training or work ethic that participants acquire” is highly ranked among program benefits (GAO, 1981, p. 5). Workfare job assignments were intended to provide, particularly for the chronically unemployed, “exposure to the work environment” by encouraging the development of “crucial work habits, such as punctuality, dependability, and good working relations with fellow workers” (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 76). Indeed, such experience “provides [participants] considerable upward mobility” (Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982, p. 16) as workers not only hone skills, but may also include their workfare experience on future resumes/job applications, receive references for future employers, and/or (in the ideal scenario) be hired at permanent full-time status at the workfare job site.

Development of the job skills afforded by the structural features of workfare participation analyzed above, should aid “those who lack enough skills, incentives, or education” in achieving gainful employment (Workfare Versus Welfare, 1986, p. 1). Articulated as the “economic mainstream” (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 66), experience such as keeping appointments, showing up on time, and the like, via workfare should connect participants to “further employment” (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 3), kicking them off public assistance rosters into full food security.

Recall, however, the limited degree of success achieved by the 14 workfare demonstration projects in the early 1980s. These trends are not discussed in terms of programmatic or paradigmatic limitations or inefficiencies, but rather add to the perception of the idle poor, thereby bolstering the disciplinary ideology of workfare discourse. For example, when Florida Representative Woodruff presents data that show

more than half of program enrollees were given workfare jobsite assignments, and just over 40% of those completed their job assignments. He states, "The interesting thing is that you hear questions about fairness and equity…if that many people were not completing the jobs for some unequitable *[sic]* reason, the program has a built-in failsafe mechanism: they can apply for a good-cause hearing" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 59). That only three good cause hearings were held, he reasons, "the rest of them" by which he refers to enrollees who did not complete their workfare hours, "must have felt that things were running fine and, they simply didn't want to work" (p. 59). Thus, ignoring the possibilities of any other systemic issues related to this population's social marginalization, he articulates the failure of the program by deriding workfare participants' work ethic. The emphasis on participants' apparent unwillingness to fulfill labor requirements indeed strengthens workfare's ultimate goal of "causing *these people* to be accustomed to working" (emphasis added, Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982, p. 2) and leave the program.

Thus, <work> alone is articulated as means off of public assistance, and into food security. No recommendations for wage, quality of employment, work conditions, or benefits are ever discussed as criteria of workfare assignments, job searches or training, or even the employment achieved after the program. The emptiness of <work> as a signifier in the discourse cannot be overstated, as Morton Sklar warned in 1986:

> [if the sole focus of workfare is] a push into the work force, a push to find jobs, then you end up in a self-defeating mode, because you are dealing with a situation where a minimum wage job will not bring a recipient off the welfare rolls in a good, good proportion of the cases. This is because of the fact that the minimum wage at this point is too low that it doesn't really get a recipient out of poverty." (Workfare Versus Welfare, p. 96)

Ironically, Sklar's comment points out the limitations of supply-side economics, a

tradition of economic thought that has historically mobilized employment (<work>) as the arbiter of economic security.[12] Following this flawed economic logic, Sklar adds, "If you work for a long time at minimum wage, you will in fact be earning more than poverty. It's not likely that you are going to be at the minimum wage for a long time" (p. 97). With little consideration for type of work, wage, or conditions, workfare relies on this empty signifier as a way out. Indeed, its emptiness allows workfare proponents to suture employment with food security; this also operates as to rhetorically prod the indolent poor.

The narrow focus on <work> thus allows workfare proponents to strategically belie the biopolitical function of food assistance under a guise of benevolence. Throughout these hearings, Congressional representatives and their witnesses make repeated gestures of backhanded sympathy. For example, Peter Germanis of the Heritage Foundation notes how the benefits of workfare extend beyond those directly participating in the program, to "help instill the American work ethic not only in the program participants but in their children as well, who would become accustomed to seeing their parents *working for a living*" (emphasis added, Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 76). Yet this statement actually articulates a double insult to those who seek public assistance – not only are program participants themselves without a work ethic and not appropriately "living" their economic citizenship by selling their labor, but they are also punishing their children by taking away their chances of enacting an economic citizenship in the future. That is, the unemployed who seek food assistance are seen as wayward, lacking the education, skills, or even habits that would "accustom" them to a work environment, thus requiring "the discipline provided by regular employment,"

positioning workfare as the whip (Workfare Versus Welfare, 1986, p. 2). Enforcing mandatory labor and intense bureaucratic surveillance, then, prods this "subclass of our society that is detached from the mainstream of economic life in America" like cattle to market (Workfare Versus Welfare, 1986, p. 51).

The food *in*secure are stigmatized by their apparent lack of the self-respect and self-esteem that is "enhanced" by <work> experience (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 77). Indeed, as a so-called detached subclass, food assistance recipients do not "function in the ways other Americans require" and will therefore "never be accepted as equals" unless they "enter the job market…[and] work in order to achieve [their] income" (Workfare Versus Welfare, 1986, p. 38). Using work requirements to rationalize welfare on the basis of economic viability makes the integration of bodies into the market the primary function of food assistance. That is, inasmuch as economic productivity articulates the state's ultimate biopolitical interest in its population (subjectivated as workers), workfare-infused food assistance is only responsible for ensuring 'socially necessary' food security, the implication being that full food security (articulated as citizenship in the economic mainstream) can be "achieved" via the income received through <work>. Yet full economic citizenship can never be achieved if benefits end once minimal <work> standards are met.

It is the failure to sell their labor power (perceived as a lack of personal responsibility) that segregates the poor from the economic mainstream; workfare proponents urge "social integration" via program participation (Workfare Versus Welfare, 1986, p. 37). In this way, I argue, food access is mobilized as a signifier of independent economic productivity. Specifically, workfare-infused food assistance only

approximates food security, what I am calling "socially necessary food security," by "granting" benefits in exchange for labor. *Full* food security is rhetorically promised when "regular employment" (simply referring to unsubsidized <work>) is secured.

Workfare constructs the discursive plane the restaurant industry's working poor antagonistically breaks open. As my analysis of Farm Bill deliberations demonstrates, workfare continues to condition food assistance policy, reifying these historic attempts to hegemonically articulate food security with wages (metabolizing the poor's labor so it is not wasted, as I argued in the previous chapter). In the case of tipped workers, the precarious positionality between time- and piece- wages makes them a unique iteration of the working poor. Public demonstrations and other resistance efforts reveal the limits of workfare by articulating the complex contractions of their experiences of food in/security within the context of restaurant labor.

Making Visible the Absent Fullness of Food In/Security

The Restaurant Opportunities Center United (ROC) was founded as a union to aid restaurant workers displaced in the aftermath of the September 11, 2011 World Trade Center attacks.[13] With 10 chapters, ROC has continued to organize national fair wage campaigns across the US, organizing a 1 Fair Wage campaign to increase the restaurant minimum wage and eradicate the dependence on tips for servers' income. In addition to public rallies across the US, #LivingOffTips is a social media initiative for sharing reasons for supporting minimum wage reform. Through an interactive webpage, users can upload personal stories of their experiences of the hardship of food service. Supporters can also use the hashtag #LivingOffTips on social media, like Facebook and Twitter, to post stories, photos, videos, and comments.

These stories function to break the social order (disarticulation), making the absent fullness of food in/security visible. Restaurant workers' resistance efforts demonstrate the emptiness of <work> as a guarantor of food security, revealing their positionality as a workforce providing food to others while experiencing poverty at double times the rate of any other in the US (Jayaraman, 2013).

That restaurant employees like hosts, servers/wait staff, and bussers work for a subminimum wage at which they earn nearly 75% less than the federal standard, their income is expected to be subsidized by customers' tips. Such a wage structure rhetorically produces contingent workers who often make too much income to be eligible for food assistance, but not enough to achieve adequate food access. Food security in this context is tactically nuanced (what I am calling food in/security), articulated with the ability to anticipate one's income, occupational safety, and health. I take up the first of these in this section, the latter two in the third part of my analysis.

Stories of economic exploitation and workplace hardship therefore antagonize historic attempts to suture food security with wage labor by revealing the contradictions of food in/security within the restaurant industry. Restaurant workers illuminate the absent fullness of food in/security by naming their #LivingOffTips experience, and through a subtle comparison of tips to welfare grants. These tactics rhetorically fill in the emptiness of <work> through significations of unpredictability and instability. In this way, the instrumental goals of 1 Fair Wage become equivalentially chained, articulating the injustice of a tipped wage regime.

The campaign's main web page displays statistics and infographics regarding the state of tipped workers, as well as a counter that calculates income lost through the wage

theft instantiated by the subminimum/tip wage structure.[14] The page's midsection presents a matrix of photos under the banner "Servers are fed up with tips. These are their stories. Please join us."[15] Each photo reveals the user's story with a hyperlink to "Add your Story." Users who choose to submit are asked to include their name, contact information, a photo, and are given the following questions as guidance for telling their story:

> What's it like living off tips? How would a stable, livable wage change your life….What's the craziest thing that's happened to you while working in the restaurant industry? Are you supporting a family? How many years have been in the industry? Have you ever dealt with unwanted sexual behavior from customers, co-workers, or management? (ROC, 2015d)

More than 100 stories are included in the #LivingOffTips campaign site. Others are posted on Twitter or other blogs; the hashtag also used to tag videos on YouTube. By participating, workers use their stories to name and describe the instability of paid <work> in this industry.

Restaurant workers describe working for tips as "luck of the draw," a "game of roulette," and a "crapshoot every night." These phrases mobilize a risk frame, analogizing their daily <work> experience to placing a bet (indeed, a *wager*) on whether and how much income they will go home with that day. This frame denotes the unpredictable nature of earning a wage that is ultimately determined by the customer.

As Ellen's story notes, although servers cannot anticipate how busy their restaurant – or how generous their customers, a point to which I will return shortly – will be (piece-wage), the rate of their time-wage does not change: "Consider this: I earn $5.83 an hour before tips...whether we have a busy or slow shift, that won't even get me a trip to and from downtown." Most owners/managers cannot reliably anticipate the day's business, and more than half of all restaurants close in their 1st year due to a lack of

profitability. Ellen thus presents two important antagonistic moves that fill in the meaning of <work>. First, she explicitly names the two-tiered wage system by which she is paid, simultaneously indicating the steady, though still inadequate, nature of her time-wage (she knows she will earn $5.83 per hour for the time worked during her shift) and the variability of her tips (dependent as they are on having a "busy or slow shift"). Second, putting her wage in terms of transportation (presumably gas money or transit fare) also exposes how dependent on tips she is, and the failure of her wage to ensure even socially necessary (re)production. That is, by implication, if her wage can't even provide her access to transportation to and from work, she may also struggle to pay for other necessities like food.

Tipped workers have to make difficult decisions, living day to day without reliably knowing how much income they will bring home. For example, Chloe describes the difficulty she faces raising a family on server's wages: "I have to [choose] what is important when I never know what I am going to bring home in tips. Sometimes I have to decide do [we] eat or pay my cell phone bill." Thus, these reflections demonstrate how #LivingOffTips is a "hindrance to equality," making servers feel like "slavery never ended." Articulating tips in terms of gambling highlights the risk workers face in not knowing day-to-day how much of an income they will be making.

In this way, restaurant workers call into being their precarious positionality in the space of food in/security. They "struggle to survive" and "[make] no living at all" while serving food to others who in turn pay their wage through tips. Even on the substandard restaurant minimum wage, many servers find that they make *too much* to be eligible for food assistance, as exposed by the quandary expressed by Jennifer H. of Asheville, North

Carolina:

> Do I save for my goals and send money to my family, or do I eat? do *[sic]* I try to move forward with my life, pull myself up with my bootstraps, or do I put gas in my car so I can go to work [and] make $20 in tips after 6 hours?...Technically, I make just too much to receive food stamps (I've applied twice) but I make too little to rise above my circumstance.

Operating against workfare-infused food assistance discourse, servers like Jennifer H. are not considered *poor enough* for food stamp benefits, despite being trapped in an occupation that doubly exploits their surplus labor by shifting the price of the piece-wage onto the customer.

Here, the hegemonic function of workfare discourse is revealed: Because workers like Jennifer H. are already demonstrating their capacity to sell their labor-power, they do not *lack* work-related skills and motivation. Under workfare, these employees have thus "achieved" the security of regular employment, and "will in fact be earning more than poverty" if they "work for a long time at the minimum wage" (Mead, 1986, p. 99). In the context of tipped work, these expectations capitalize on the assumption that a server's monthly earnings in tips will make their pay equivalent to the federal standard minimum wage. This belies, however, the reality that tips are a piece-wage subsidized by the consumer. Thus, the #LivingOffTips campaign makes publicizes the "absent fullness" of tipped <work>: Though regular, these workers' wages are not unsubsidized.

The hegemony of <work> prevents these workers from seeking public benefits, but also simultaneously personifies them as funders of the very social programs they cannot access. Unstable tips (piece wage) on top of an already substandard hourly wage uniquely and precariously positions these workers at once as the benevolent taxpayer funding entitlement programs like Food Stamps, yet removes the possibility for them to access their own products of their labor because they cannot receive the benefits, and

indeed may not even take home wages on a given work day. In this way, <work> is filled in with a literal emptiness – as in, the empty paycheck – and food in/security is signified by the contradiction of being handed a ticket to economic citizenship they cannot fully redeem. Indeed, in this context "absent fullness" (Laclau, 2006) not only articulates to the personal experience of food insecurity, but also the emptiness of one's paycheck.

By naming their experience and giving voice to their economic hardship, restaurant workers thus fill in the emptiness of <work> on which workfare discourse so narrowly focuses but so broadly articulates. Through their stories, these workers make the absent fullness of food in/security visible and effectively re-articulate food security onto the larger plane of the inequitable political economy of the restaurant tipped wage system itself. That is, these stories unmask the illusion that many customers have about tips- they are not an added bonus for a job well done, but are in fact piece-wages paid by the customer for the quantity of labor expended through food service. Further, #LivingOffTips antagonizes the hegemonic articulation of wage-labor by making their economic exploitation visible by asking, "Do [restaurant workers] not deserve a sense of financial security simply because they deliver your appetizers?" (Jennifer H.).

In light of the characterization of workfare discourse presented earlier, it is not insignificant that tipped workers use the same language of compassionate grants used to describe food benefits as they reflect on their experience of #LivingOffTips. Across their stories, workers express their disdain and embarrassment for being "[f]orced to rely on the kindness of society to live," adding that "it's like begging for money." Customers are described as "the strangers I'm serving and placating," whose tips embody "how they are feeling," and ideally, their "generosity and courtesy," toward the server's performance.

Indeed, studies show that consumers tip to reward service (Lynn, 2014), and out of social obligation or burden (Azar, 2005, 2007). Not only do tipped workers struggle with the uncertainty of earning a variable amount of income, their stories demonstrate how restaurant <work> is also constituted by "worry[ing] about whether or not their customers are going to help pay their bills."

Indeed, tips tend to function as a reflection of the customer's evaluation of the service provided rather than the price of the labor required for food service, and often (as I will discuss shortly) of the server herself. Wait staff are often punished with little (or zero) tips if customers are not fully satisfied. Servers can even be held accountable for things out of their control like coupons and food preparation, as Mallory M. of Charleston, South Carolina explains: "Say your burger comes out raw, even if I put it in right, Little *[sic]* or no tip. Say, the food takes too long, no tip for me…Oh, wait? you can't use two coupons at one table? no tip for me. Out of crayons? Don't have togo cups? NO TIP." Stories like Mallory's validate tips' function as piece-wages, exposing how they operate to extract even more labor from workers. Because piece-wages express the value of the volume of production (Marx, 1867/1977), it is no surprise that servers are held accountable for things like undercooked food or the restaurant's supply of take-out containers.

Such a wage structure recalls the punishment of food *in*security through noncompliance sanctions if "obligations" were not met under the original workfare-food assistance system. To be sure, I am not suggesting that food service is analogous to the notion of "working off of food benefits" as if they were public debt. However, workers' stories of #LivingOffTips indicate the same ideology that condones the withholding of

food (via access) as a sanction for not working enough. Furthermore, this not only reifies the always already exclusionary function of workfare-infused food assistance programs, but entraps the tipped restaurant worker in the paradoxical space of food in/security. Though employed, tipped workers must still "beg[] for money." In this way, even in the context of regular employment, restaurant workers feel the rhetorical force of workfare.

Furthermore, mobilizing tips as piece-wages instantiates a context of exchange, similar to that experienced within workfare. The consumer expresses their quantification of the server's production in the form of a tip, engendering the expectation of "receiv[ing] something in exchange" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 76) for the wage payment. In this way, too, as evidenced by Mallory's story above, leaving this quantification up to the customer removes the same "repercussions" (Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982, p. 62) of subsidizing food access in the dining context as in food assistance. The impetus for intensifying one's labor is put onto the server herself, allowing the customer to (arbitrarily) deny her wage if the <work> "obligation" is not adequately met. Thus, along with the volatile unpredictability of restaurant labor, the tipped wage structure articulates servers into "dependence on the people you serve."

The connotation of "service" in the context of restaurant labor shifts when considered in relation to the public service job assignments featured in the original workfare paradigm. Just as Senator Jesse Helms lauded "work we couldn't otherwise do without raising property taxes," as a benefit of workfare-style labor-for-food exchange (Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982, p. 2), restaurant workers also recognize their subjectivation into a subsidized wage regime that allows the perpetuation of the sub-minimum wage. Indeed, this is what drives ROC's 1 Fair Wage campaign to end tipped

wages outright. Yet just like food assistance recipients who must take their workfare assignment even if it "is not the most glamorous job to have" (Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982, p. 61), tips articulate food service work as menial. For example, as Sara reflects, "...imagine having to make your living off the generosity of others and how "easy" they perceive your job to be and how "undeserving" you are of what many believe to be extra wages, instead of your ONLY wage." Stories like Sara's demonstrate how the workfare "grant" structure – itself created as a bridge into regular employment – is transferred into the work environment.

Embodying the Antagonistic Chasm: Food In/Security as Bodily Risk

The Restaurant Opportunities Center United (ROC) also uses its campaigns to highlight the exploitative nature of this particular kind of work environment. In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that almost 12% of restaurant workers say that they continued to work while suffering from flu symptoms, vomiting, or diarrhea on two or more shifts in the last year (Sumner et al., 2011); survey data also show that nearly 90% of restaurant workers report not receiving paid sick days or health insurance (Jayaraman, 2013). Further, nearly 37% of all sexual harassment complains received in 2011 by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission were filed by female restaurant workers- a group that makes up only about 7% of the entire restaurant workforce (cited in Jayaraman, 2013).

I suggest that by enduring hazards of this magnitude, tipped workers embody the antagonistic chasm of food in/security; the violent bodily harm they incur is a function of their precarious position between wage regimes. Restaurant workers' #LivingOffTips stories open, and indeed their bodies inhabit, this antagonistic chasm through narratives

of working while sick and suffering through sexual harassment. Thus, restaurant workers at once disarticulate food security's reference to a stable food supply at the individual/household level, and simultaneously articulate it as a disruption to the circuit of production and consumption that sustains the restaurant industry. By revealing the horrific conditions of workplace exploitation, these stories expose the emptiness of workfare-style promises for social equality via regular employment. Threats to public health- of restaurant staff and their customers-and occupational safety not only bolster the unpredictable nature of #LivingOffTips, but also disrupt the stability of the food system, articulating food *in*security with bodily risk.

There are no federal or state requirements for restaurants to provide tipped workers paid sick days, yet many food industry employees report not even having the opportunity for an unpaid sick day (Jayaraman, 2013). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014), about half of all food and beverage servers and related workers (including those in service, prep, cleaning, and customer service positions in the restaurant industry) were employed part-time in 2012. Because of this, restaurant employers are able to maintain a workforce just under the federal requirements for health insurance benefits. These conditions neglect the impact of food industry labor on employees' bodies. To be sure, tipped workers endure, as one server explains, "a tough, physical job that wears on your back, knees, and wrists." Indeed, in 2011, the US Department of Labor ranked the restaurant industry as the third highest in total number of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses (including minor cuts, burns, slipping and falling, and so on) (cited in Jayaraman, 2013).

Further, tipped workers report high rates of threats of termination should they call

in sick or ask for a day of rest, forcing many to work while ill, sometimes with highly contagious diseases. Working while sick is a strong theme across the stories posted to the #LivingOffTips campaign site. For example, Jessica reports how a "a close friend of mine was actually in labor and was pressured by management to finish her shift before leaving for the hospital." She further confesses witnessing "a grill cook who was actually vomiting in the kitchen and then continued to work because he was pressured by management to stay and finish his shift." Sarah C. recounts her own "worst experience" of working on Valentine's Day "in one of the fanciest restaurants in Philadelphia" while stricken with strep throat, a highly communicable disease and public health hazard. Her manager refused to allow her to go home, risking exposure to the restaurant staff and consumers, about which she sarcastically retorts, "Would you like Streptococcus with your romance?"

Reports like these of restaurant staff working while ill are disturbing, rhetorically destabilizing images of a clean, pristine, and safe restaurant experience for staff and consumers alike. In 2011 the CDC reported that almost 12% of restaurant workers say that they continued to work while suffering from flu symptoms, vomiting, or diarrhea on two or more shifts in the last year (Sumner et al., 2011). In fact, as Jayaraman (2013) argues, the restaurant work environment may actually be *making* employees ill via exposure to one another, food-borne bacteria, and the fast-paced prep/service environment that often leaves workers unable to properly wash their hands or wear gloves.

As Sarah C. notes in her #LivingOffTips story, "rarely do restaurants create a shift schedule that accounts for the possibility of someone needing a day off at the last

minute." Worse yet, Jessica describes being pressured by management to find her own replacement if she expects to take a sick day: "[I] was told that it was my responsibility to call all of my coworkers and find someone willing to cover for me, and that if I could not find someone, I would still be expected to come to work." Such conditions subjectivate tipped workers as a contingent labor force that can be easily and quickly replaced by others held in reserve.[16] Because food industry employment requires little formal training it can easy capitalize on low-skilled labor, restaurant employers can readily appeal to an always already industrial reserve army waiting to take employees spots on the payroll.

Stories of working while sick are rhetorically compelling because they force a recognition of the role played by the prep, line, and service staff in securing the smooth operation of a system that provides food for 58% of all Americans at least once a week (Rasmussen Reports, 2013). That is, these stories configure workers' bodies (labor power) onto the ground of food security articulated in broader terms than an individual or household's access to a stable food supply. Working while sick reveals the complexities of the food in/security antagonism, challenges notions of a secure dining experience. Articulated with an unstable income (that is, a substandard minimum wage and tips), these workers are ineligible for health benefits, leaving their bodies precariously susceptible to injury and disease.

Servers threatened by termination and quick replacement are unduly forced to expend their labor at any cost, risking not only their own health but that of any others exposed to them in the restaurant environment. Thus, against the backdrop of workfare discourse – indeed, the discourse that at once articulates these workers as the working poor and also excludes them from food assistance benefits- "exposure" in this context

becomes imbued with a particularly antagonistic signification. Recall that "exposure to the working environment" was hailed as one of the key objectives of workfare-style public assistance, as it would provide participants an opportunity to hone skills and attract references for gainful employment (Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982, p. 76). In the context of #LivingOffTips, however, restaurant workers already "achieve" (Workfare in the Food Stamp Program, 1982, p. 38) their income through regular (though, as explicated earlier, not unsubsidized) employment; they are thus 'exposed' not to skills that will further develop their economic viability but rather to communicable diseases that threaten public health (as well as sexual abuse, a point to which I turn next). The vulnerability of workers' bodies within this system and their (at least, potential) impact on consumers is thus made strikingly visible.

The most contemptible aspect of the #LivingOffTips experience is restaurant workers' vulnerability to sexual harassment, abuse, and assault. ROC data show the restaurant industry is the single largest source of workplace sexual harassment, with 90% of female tipped workers experiencing some form of sexual harassment on the job (ROC United & Forward Together, 2014). Tipped workers often feel pressured to be flirtatious with customers, thereby exposing them to horrific assault by restaurant owners and staff, leaving them feeling helpless as the precarious nature of their tipped wage makes them vulnerable to this kind of abuse. These stories, I argue, rhetorically destabilize the meaning of *security* in the context of the capitalist circuit of food production and consumption by revealing the limits of workfare-style promises of social equity and personal responsibility via employment.

Many #LivingOffTips stories recount pressure for servers and wait staff to flirt

and otherwise sexually provoke customers. This often included leading customers on and dressing provocatively. For example, Alexandra recalls being called "'Bunny' by dirty old men" as well as having to tolerate incessant "comments...about my body and clothes." Furthermore, as Alexandra "refused to dress provocatively," she believes this "probably contributed to my low tips." Though it is not uncommon for restaurants and other dining establishments to encourage staff to "dress to impress," the subjectivation of employees to unwanted sexual advances is directly connected to the tipped wage regime within which their labor power is commodified.

As Gwenn notes, "customers decide how much they'll pay you by what they think of your looks" because "people tip for pretty, sexy, and flirty [waitresses]." Submitting to the reality of these abusive workplace conditions, some servers deliberately manipulate their dress as a means to garner more tips, as Emily reports: "The girls I worked with and I had what we called a 'tip shirt' or 'tip dress,' something revealing that we made more money when we wore." Aisha, appearing at a ROC-sponsored 1 Fair Wage campaign rally,[17] explicates the issue in clear terms: "they [customers] think my body is for them to enjoy, look at, touch, say what they want. They think if they throw me a couple of dollars in the form of a tip, it's ok…It's like a power thing." Customer-subsidized wages instantiate a grants/exchange protocol between the restaurant worker and her customer, subjectivating a server as a sexual object available for consumption.

ROC also uses the slogan #NotontheMenu to articulate the biopolitical force that links sexual harassment with food in/security under the tipped wage regime. This hashtag is deployed in conjunction with monthly 1 Fair Wage rallies that include Eve Ensler of the *Vagina Monologues*, Marie Wilson of Take Our Daughters to Work Day, and

Aleyamma Mathew of the Ms. Foundation among the protestors. As Debjani Roy, of Hollaback! an advocacy group that works for gender equality in the fight against street harassment, stated at one of these rallies: "You deserve to work in an environment where you are not expected to smile in response to a customer making lewd comments about your body" (ROC United, 2014). Indeed, tipped workers embody the antagonistic chasm of food in/security by expending their labor to food to serve others, as they earn a meager income. Yet, having to endure sexual violence as a condition for one's wages, this analysis suggests, articulates workplace safety and gender equity as dimensions of food security.

Restaurant sexual harassment is not limited to unwanted catcalls and other flirtatious advances from customers. Indeed, restaurant staff often experience violent sexual assault. Women who work in alcohol-related positions, such as bartending, bar backing, or as a cocktail waitress, are more vulnerable to sexual assault on the job (ROC United & Forward Together, 2014).

Kate, a so-called "shot girl," at a college sports bar relays a particularly horrific story of workplace rape:

> I was cleaning my tray in the kitchen after close when the owner approached me with a clipboard and said, "now that you work here, I'll show you how we take alcohol inventory." I followed him to the basement, he pointed out where a few liquors were stored. We entered a second room also stocked with alcohol, and a lone bar stool. He closed the door and said, 'Ok sweetheart tours *[sic]* over.' He aggressively kissed me and touched me. I interjected and said, "I don't think this a good idea." He responded, "You are the one that came down here. Now bend over." He turned me onto the chair, pulled down my skirt, and with a hand on the back of my neck proceeded to have to sex with me...I dragged myself home, humiliated, violated, and degraded.

With graphic detail, Kate's story explicates the degree of violence tipped employees may suffer in the restaurant industry. Exploiting managerial authority, and what also may be

an age difference, this brutality is more than an occupational hazard. Subminimum health and safety standards articulate with subminimum wage in this context. Though one could debate the relationship of alcohol with food security, Kate's story is representative of the type of attacks tipped workers are subjected to as they serve food to others, the very ones who, in turn, pay their wage. This is not workplace safety; this is not food security.

Like Kate, who was afraid to fight back in the instance recounted above, other tipped workers reluctantly tolerate workplace harassment from both customers and management because, as Emily put it, "those guys are paying my rent. The management is also often guilty of giving unwanted sexual attention, which is also tolerated, because they decide which shifts I work." This, I submit, may be the most insidious instantiation of biopolitics – not only are tipped workers tethered to the capitalist economic regime via labor, but also by the overt exploitation (and then forced internalization of this exploitation) of their bodies through sexual abuse.

Against the historic backdrop of workfare discourse, tipped workers' resistance efforts articulate the antagonism of food in/security. By making visible the instability of their labor, restaurant staff destabilize the hegemony of <work> by demonstrating how their precarious positionality between time- and piece-wages instantiates a precarious experience betwixt and between satiety and hunger. Indeed, through the exposure of their experience #LivingoffTips and stories of working while sick and workplace harassment, these workers re-articulate food security onto a broader economic plane, illuminating how wage structures relations of sustenance across circuits of comestible exchange.

Conclusion and Critical Implications

This case study has unpacked the ways by which tipped workers disarticulate and re-articulate the discursive relationship between employment and food security through wage equity activism. I contend that wages function biopolitically as the ties that bind commodified labor to the capitalist regime, thereby sustaining the co-consumption endemic to economic exchange. Workfare, the system under which the Food Stamp program was restructured after its first round of reforms in the early 1980s, mobilized the logic of supply-side economics to predicate food assistance on employment, a discursive construction I have labeled <work>. Through this hegemonic construction, workfare has discursively produced the working poor – a subject entrapped by underemployment. Tipped workers are doubly entrapped as they are paid both in time (sub-minimum hourly wage) and by the piece (subjective wage evaluation made at each table by the customer). In this way, I suggest, the hegemony of <work> has subjectivated them as food in/secure. In the context of this case study, food security's rhetoricity is illustrated by its dis/articulation with employment via wage regimes that condition access to comestible resources.

In this section, I provide a summary of the analysis and key findings. From there, I present this case study's contributions to Post-Marxist theory and food/environmental justice, articulating food in/security as a heuristic for parsing out the connection between economic equity and food justice. I close with implications for the rhetoric of food justice.

Transcripts of Senate hearings and GAO reports, along with tipped workers' social media posts and videos were analyzed to characterize the discourse of workfare, as

well as parse out the antagonistic tactics used to expose its limits. My analysis illuminates the rhetorical dynamics of workfare and its exploitation of <work> as an empty signifier and the always already biopolitical nature of wages. Tipped workers fill in the "absent fullness" (Laclau, 2006) of <work> by articulating the vulnerability of their bodies with their vulnerable positionality between wage regimes. Food in/security, then, denotes the economic contradiction they embody: as they provide for others' food security (by prepping, serving, and cleaning up after those who consume restaurant food), they themselves experience food insecurity in several forms. In a context of high unemployment and bloated welfare caseloads brought on by the "stagflation" of the 1980s, the Food Stamp program was reformed under workfare. As a model for structuring social welfare policy, this paradigm grants enrollees food benefits on the premise of commodified labor. If participants fail to meet program work requirements, which originally took the form of public service work assignments, they would be sanctioned with disbarment of benefits; once income thresholds are met, enrollees are knocked off of program rosters. With little consideration of type of work or adequacy of wage, workfare props up employment as the sole arbiter of food security. In this way, I suggest, workfare operates as a discourse subjectivating those unable to integrate themselves into the market into a system that articulates them as *needy enough* for state food benefits. Indeed, <work> exploits wages' illusion of compensation for expending labor power, hegemonically suturing commodified labor with food security. The working poor, or those who are employed, but not receiving a living wage, are thus unable to access state benefits and also unable to achieve food security.

Tipped workers – those employed in the restaurant industry who are paid in tips

on top of a subminimum wage – expose the contraction of <work> through by labeling and narrativizing their experience between these two wage regimes. Articulating #LivingoffTips in terms of instability demonstrates the limits of their employed status to secure them a living wage. Restaurant workers experience poverty and food insecurity at nearly double the rate of any other US workforce (Jayaraman, 2013), despite payment for their commodified labor. Their employment in the food service sector puts this paradox into sharper relief; their stories make the absent fullness of food in/security visible.

Indeed, stories of bodily risk articulate tipped workers' vulnerable bodies with their vulnerable wage situation. In this way, I suggest, these workers expose their embodiment of food in/security. Restaurant workers are often forced to work while sick, and are also at higher risk of workplace injury and disease; female tipped workers are among the top workforce populations to file sexual harassment complaints. Indeed, as the analysis argues, these trends are made possible because of these workers' position between time and piece wages. Since tips comprise a higher percentage of their pay, tipped workers are forced to put their bodies in a dangerous position that ingratiates them to their customers and managers. Food in/security, then, signifies the antagonistic chasm between time and piece wages, between corporeal security and workplace instability, between <work> and economic equity. Importantly, through instantiation of relations of access (a point to which I turn below), food in/security expands the equivalential chains that articulate food security, implicating a range of elements in the circulation of comestible capital.

Wages, per Marx, are a converted form of the exchange value of a worker's labor power, expended as socially necessary labor time. As *socially necessary*, labor time is a

discursive construction; the restaurant industry exploits this by having employees' wages subsidized by the customer. It is through the commodification of labor power that wages operate to insert bodies into the social metabolism. Indeed, as I suggested earlier in this chapter, we may begin to think about food security within the context of late capitalism as "socially necessary food security." In other words, <work> articulates food security in terms of subsistence rather than abundance. This is made clear by the narrow focus on income as the guarantor of accessing food.

Exploring wages in this way, this case study seeks to demonstrate how wages function as means for economic subjects to engage the co-consuming function of economic exchange (social metabolism). Indeed, wages are a mechanism of biopolitics as the price of the worker's commodified labor. More importantly, wages reward the worker for their metabolization within the macro circuit of exchange, as well as providing a mechanism for activating their economic subjectivity through the power to purchase other commodities (that themselves carry other workers' labor). Thus, wages enable and constrain subjects' articulation within relations of sustenance. The ability to access resources via one's money power articulates wage with food and, thereby, environmental justice. In terms of the case study presented here, this is instantiated by tipped workers' articulations of food in/security. As noted, it is their precarious positionality between time and piece wage regimes that these workers are vulnerable to both economic and workplace instability. Indeed, food in/security implicates everyone in food justice – we are all subjects and subjectivating within circuits of comestible capital. As an eater, a worker, and a tipper, I am implicated in regimes of wage inequality. The hands that feed me are then fed by the wages I pay via tips.

This case study seeks an intervention into the dual-wage system utilized by the restaurant industry. Food justice must address the other processes with which food entangles, including workers' rights and wage equity if radical food system reform is sought after.

Endnotes

[1] See *Capital, Vol. I.* Marx (1867/1977) notes, workers have variable degrees of skill, and the work environment also varies according to "the level of development of scientific and technological application, the social organization of the process of production, the extent of the effectiveness of the means of production, and the conditions found in the natural environment" (p. 130). Although it may take one worker, because of either extraordinary prowess or novice, a particular amount of time to create a widget, their labor will be valued against a social expectation of the time needed to produce that same widget. It should also be noted that Marx provides no concrete analysis of how socially necessary labor time actually comes to be socially determined.

[2] The rest of the footnote explains why: "they are not paid their wages before the end of the week, they in their turn are unable 'to pay for the bread consumed by their families during the week, before the end of the week,'" ---they are purchasing the bad bread on credit; knowing this, the bakers make this bad break "expressly for sale in this manner" (Marx, 1867/1977, p. 278).

[3] Marx (1867/1977) presents a comprehensive analysis of this process in parts 3 and 4 in *Capital, volume I.* Formulae for determining the rate of surplus labor are explicated in Chapter 18.

[4] I say "even less" here because socially necessary labor time in the piece-work context is below that determined in industries using time-wages. As Marx (1867/1977) explains: "Only the labour-time which is embodied in a quantity of commodities laid down in advance and fixed by experience counts as socially necessary labour-time and is paid as such" (p. 694).

[5] Other labor and workplace abuses for which the Restaurant Opportunities Center United (ROC) organizes include wage theft and discrimination, among others (http://rocunited.org/our-work/workplace-justice/)

[6]For example, ROC provides the following summation of their recent successes: "nationally, ROC has led and won 13 major campaigns against exploitation in high-profile restaurant companies, organizing more than 400 workers and winning more than $7 million in financial settlements and improvements in workplace policies" (http://rocunited.org/our-work/workplace-justice/).

[7] Household income is measured in terms of net income and gross income. For a complete explanation of the assets tests used in determining Food Stamp eligibility, see Ohls and Beebout, 1993, p. 32-33.

[8] With the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, workfare has been deemphasized as a structural feature of public assistance policy. Yet, as my analysis of Farm Bill deliberations indicated, education and training (E&T) programs continue to be significantly emphasized in food assistance debates. Thus, I

suggest, workfare remains a paradigm by which food assistance policy continues to be organized.

[9] It is curious that Representative Woodruff never actually specifies the number of original enrollees in the pilot program. At times, his testimony uses numbers of hours and percentages of missed work time to bolster arguments that the poor are lazy, and at other times these same figures are used as evidence for the success of the program. (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, pp. 58-59).

[10] Katz (1993) provides a complete analysis of the progression of views on poverty, un/deserving poor, and connections between late-capitalist welfare policy and the Poor Law system of the 17th century.

[15] In light of the theme of "integration" addressed later in this section, the racial connotations of this phrase should not go unnoticed.

[12] Supply-side economics, a tradition of economic thought largely associated with the work of Milton Friedman, lifts up employment as the means for economic security.

[13] See Jayaraman (2013) for background information on the tipped workers' movement.

[14] As of April 2015, this feature has reached $25,435,876,000 (http://rocunited.org/living-off-tips/).

[15] A total of 108 #LivingoffTips stories are available as of December 2014, posted to the campaign website (http://rocunited.org/living-off-tips/); 104 included in my set of artifacts for this analysis.

[16] By this I am referring to the Marxian concept of industrial reserve army, or the pool of un- or under-employed surplus labor that is necessary for the accumulation of capital wealth: "But if a surplus labouring population is a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis, this surplus population becomes, conversely, the lever of capitalistic accumulation, nay, a condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production. It forms a disposable industrial reserve army" (Marx, 1848/1978, section 3).

[17] 1 Fair Wage works in conjunction with the #LivingoffTips and #ImNotontheMenu social media campaigns organized by ROC (http://rocunited.org/one-fair-wage/).

CHAPTER IV

HUNGER SUCKS: FEEDING MORAL ENTITLEMENT THROUGH THE FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE

"The meaning which production has in relation to the rich is seen revealed in the meaning which it has for the poor."
-Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (p. 97)

"[Food assistance] programs aren't lavishing people in the lap of luxury...It's difficult."
- Newark Mayor Cory Booker, *The Daily Show, Dec. 12, 2012*

I was first introduced to the Food Stamp Challenge (FSC) in Summer 2012 as I participated in a planning meeting for the Social Soup Series[1] at the University of Utah. Gina Cornia, Executive Director of Utahns Against Hunger and member of our planning committee, revealed plans for her organization to host a community FSC later that Fall in light of proposals to cut federal food assistance programs made in Congressional Farm Bill debates. She initially suggested having the November 2012 Social Soup program as the culminating event for the SLC FSC campaign. I suggested opening it up to University students and faculty to expand participation in the FSC. For Gina, a campus campaign would dovetail with the UAH community FSC, and I agreed that Social Soup was an apt venue for generating discussion about the Farm Bill and galvanizing support for food assistance programs.

Gina's initial description of the FSC was brief: "You experience a Food Stamp

budget (about $30) for one week, eating only what that money gets you...it forces participants to make difficult decisions when shopping for food by experiencing the challenge of procuring nutritious items, avoiding hunger, and staying healthy first hand." I was initially trepidatious, though, about how much this kind of experience might really impact personal views of poverty, hunger, and/or the food insecure. I was also immediately intrigued by the possibility for change that might lie within the distinctly experiential component of something like an FSC, particularly as it may potentially reveal not only disparities in food access and the need for robust policy programs, but also powerfully highlight the ways that food binds us as subjects through relations of sustenance. After all, we each actively participate in (indeed, construct) the global food system three times a day; consumption is a political act.

The Social Soup planning committee agreed to organize our November 2012 program as the concluding event for the SLC FSC, to feature a panel of speakers and a "mini" FSC budgeting/shopping activity for program attendees who had not completed the Challenge prior to the event. I also agreed to make the FSC an experiential assignment in my undergraduate Communication & Society course, as well as to recruit another Communication & Society instructor to include the FSC as a course assignment. That same year, then Newark, New Jersey Mayor Cory Booker announced his participation in an individual Challenge. After a disagreement on Twitter regarding government reach and nutrition, Booker felt he needed to embark on his "own quest to better understand the outcomes of SNAP assistance" (CNN, 2012). Jennifer Turner, Civic Engagement Coordinator for the University of Bridgeport (UB), Tweeted Booker the FSC rules, asking him to join their campus FSC.

In the context of federal food assistance programs, food security is articulated along four dimensions. Specifically, the Food and Agriculture Organization (2008) defines the achievement of food security as the simultaneous fulfillment of adequate physical *availability* of food, economic and physical *access* to food, adequate *utilization* of food, and the *stability* of these dimensions over time. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps), provides supplemental funds for qualifying households in order to "provide nutrition assistance benefits and nutrition education services to low-income individuals and families in an effort to decrease hunger and improve the health and well-being of low-income people nationwide" (USDA Food & Nutrition Service, 2013, p. x). The average Food Stamp benefit in 2012 amounted to $133.41 for an individual per month ($278.48 per household), or $4.45 per person per day (about $1.48 per meal). The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (2014) reports that more than 46 million people (14.5%) were food insecure in 2012. The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC, 2010a) also reports that 4.9 million people were lifted out of poverty by SNAP in 2012. Though intended to supplement a household's income and provide federal funds to "enable recipients to buy more and healthier food than they might otherwise want," recipients often *rely* on benefits for *all* food-related purchases (USDA Food & Nutrition Service, 2013, p. xiv).

FRAC lauds the FSC an anti-hunger advocacy tactic for its ability to illuminate "the struggles of low-income people" in general and SNAP benefits recipients in particular. Though Challenge participants only experience a Food Stamp budget for a single week, there is significant potential for participants to realize the limits of such a low food budget. Further, the experience food hardship demonstrates how food (access)

articulates with the class process, engendering social stratification in relations of sustenance.

This case study theorizes food access as a set of class relations. Through a biopolitics of visibility, the Food Stamp Challenge reveals how food via access articulates with the class process. Specifically, by revealing the struggle of food hardship through the personification of Food Stamps, participants experience an alimentary subjectivity articulated through abject lack. To unpack this, I analyze participant feedback and reflections from 2012 Food Stamp Challenge campaigns in Utah (SLC FSC), Connecticut (UB FSC), and Mayor Booker's individual initiative (#SNAPChallenge). In what follows, I trace conceptions of class toward considerations of the class process and theorization of the abject. From there, I present the analysis, arguing that as participants recognize their own alimentary subjectivity, appeals to normalcy and strategy are deployed toward the abjectification of the poor. I conclude with a discussion of implications for food justice and praxis.

Class, Subjectivity, and the Abject

In this section, I demonstrate the possibilities for a fluid subject in Marx's work, promoting this view for critical consideration of the process of articulating class relations via disparities in food access. I contend that food *insecurity* in the context of the Food Stamp Challenge is articulated through abject lack, at once revealing and rendering invisible relations of access that condition alimentary subjectivity.

The concept of *class* is taken up in this chapter to parse out the limitations of traditional notions of static class positionality, toward a recovery of Marx's relational subject. The Marxian theory of class struggle rests on a dialectical relationship between

economic and social organization. Traditional class analysis has primarily drawn from Marx to focus on the depiction of a simplistic owner/worker dichotomy, bifurcated by access to capital, grounding a conception of class based on income. Such a view emphasizes the objective and static nature of class stratification, positing class as an entity. Marx's claim to the instantiation of two primary classes is exemplified in works like *Capital, Volume I*. Yet, I argue, the conception of a decentered subject enmeshed within a web of political forces and relational conditions is evident in Marx, particularly his early work. With the Post-Marxist turn, this has come to be theorized through discourse, highlighting subjects' use of articulatory power in ways conditioned by their relation to discursive structures.

Objective Class

The tradition of Marxian class analysis has largely recognized class as an entity, locating its position within an essentially economic totality. Presenting frameworks of social stratification, this work seeks to clarify and expand Marx/Engels' two-class (capital/labor, exploiter/exploited) dichotomy, by codifying all possible class categories, based on occupation and income structures. Class, generally conceived on the basis of income, refers to a specific relation (location) to the means of production; thus, class is an economic entity.

Most notable in this tradition, Nicos Poulantzas (1973, 1974) and Erik Olin Wright (1985) have sought to expand the traditional two-class model to account for variability (and, sometimes, contradiction) within the collectivities that constitute exploiter/exploited. Their work exhaustively maps the "infinite fragmentation" (Marx, 1894/1993) of class. Indeed, Poulantzas (1973, 1974) critiques the traditional Marxian

binary for ignoring the space between capital and labor. The working class or "the new middle class" of contemporary capitalism operates at the intersection of productive labor (that which produces surplus value) and manual labor (typically tied to industrial work. Positing that the type of labor performed positions economic agents, Poulantzas' model configures class within a definite and essential economic structure. Yet even the working class is stratified according to the configurations of politico-ideological influences that determine modes of organization and forms of class struggle. Similarly, the petty bourgeoisie is delimited into two primary ensembles that include forms of artisanal work and small family businesses (the traditional petty bourgeoisie), and civil servants, technicians, and engineers (the new petty bourgeoisie).

Wright (1985) grounds his theory of class analysis in an expansion of Poulantzas' (1973, 1974) discussion of the middle class. First, Wright clarifies that Marxian class analysis may be completed at three levels of abstraction (the mode of production, social formation, and conjuncture), by analyzing two primary theoretical objects (class structure and class formation). Wright disagrees with Poulantzas' conception of the new petty bourgeoisie, on two points. First, he argues it cannot adequately homogenize diverse categories of occupations into a common class. Second, he explains it incorrectly configures positions across occupations, putting "an unproductive employee at a bank" in the same position in relation to production as "a self-employed baker." Indeed, Wright seeks to correctly and precisely codify all possible class categories.

Debates on Marxian class analysis also center on the real relationship between economic and social organization that creates and conditions class. The nexus of this debate appears to lie within Marx's work. Many scholars point to the *Communist*

Manifesto as the primary piece explicating the economic nature of class exploitation, while others argue the *Eighteenth Brumaire* is the piece that most clearly connects class to political struggle (Cottrell, 1984). For Poulantzas' (1973, 1974) and Wright's (1985) frameworks summarized above, class is a fundamentally economic entity. As these frameworks seek to systematically and precisely codify all possible class structures, they view class as stable and fixed. I argue that the *German Ideology* (1846/1978) is perhaps the clearest example of Marx's theory of the relational subject, falling somewhere between the extremes of the economic *Communist Manifesto* and social *Eighteenth Brumaire*.

Other scholars emphasize the linkages between economic and social *processes* in conditioning class relations (Harvey, 1996; Resnick & Wolff, 1987). In terms of class analysis, this is an important point as it recognizes *class as a process* that is the effect of interactions between other cultural-economic processes (Resnick & Wolff, 1987). These may include laws (such as those enforcing private ownership or those that define managerial positions) that enforce the extraction of surplus labor. Economic processes may include exchange (buying/selling of raw materials and goods), as well as those related to markets, money, and profit. There are also natural processes, referring to the human body and the environment. Interactions between these sets of processes operate as the conditions for class processes to occur. The class process is also a condition of existence for these other processes to occur. Individuals "personify" class through their participation in these webs of "converging influences." All of these processes are over-determined and contingent as individuals embody multiple categories at once. Harvey discusses class in terms of positionality such that "class" differences are themselves

understood as power relations produced through social action. Individuals may occupy multiple roles in relations to circuits of capital. The "permanences" that make class look objective (institutions, social relationships, practices, etc) are themselves constructed from relations, that take “time and persuasion” to achieve. As the analysis in Chapter III demonstrates, one may be employed (as a tipped worker in a restaurant, for example) yet still food insecure and are unable to obtain federal assistance because of this precarious position between those two categories. Indeed, ROC and other resistance groups actively dis-articulate the objective connection of class with criteria like labor/employment.

From this, we can begin shifting conceptions of class from objective entity to embodied positionality. Though the Marxian tradition has tended to approach class using an essentialist, static, and reductionist approach, critics can look to Marx’s writings for indications of class as a process among many that make up sociality, with individuals embodying relations and class interests. I turn now to the uptake of subjectivity, a concept signifying fluidity and positionality within matrices of relations.

Relational Subjectivity

Across his work, Marx explicates class formation and struggle in terms of process. I use this concept to theorize food access as an element of class relations. Here, this concept is important for considering the social character of individuals and subjectivity in flux. For example, in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx (1844/1978) opens the section on “Estranged Labor” with a brief summary of the division of labor and private property as “the premises of political economy” (p. 70). Indeed, this paragraph captures historical materialist analysis in its sweeping account of how “the whole of society must fall apart into the two classes- the property *owners* and

the propertyless *workers*" because of the competition for capital (p. 70). However, although dichotomized between capital and labor, the relationality of class, not only in terms of each class' relational position to property ownership, but also within and between one another through competition, is apparent. Recognition of the "social character" of class, or its relationality, suggests the contingency of social relations.

Later in *The Manuscripts*, the social character of individuals is fleshed out with more detail. Marx (1844/1978) writes, "*just as* society itself produces *man as man,* so is society *produced* by him" (p. 85), and continues "Not only is the material of my activity given to me as a social product (as is even the language in which the thinker is active): my *own* existence *is* social activity, and therefore that which I make of myself, I make for society and the consciousness of myself as a social being" (p. 86, all emphasis original). Marx takes this a step further in the German edition of *Capital*, explicating individuals as "the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class-relations and class interest" (quoted in Resnick & Wolff, 1987, p. 162). Thus, an individual – whether a worker or a capitalist – is always tethered to the conditions of the social structure within which she/he is enmeshed.

The individual with socially conditioned consciousness is in fact *produced* from her/his position in relation to all of the conditions of their existence, including access to capital, as well as other social-economic factors. Marx clearly weaves evidence for a relational view of subjectivity throughout his analyses in his early work, yet it would be more than two decades until any attempt was made to fully explicate his view on class stratification and formation. As noted, the third volume of *Capital* includes a chapter entitled "Classes" in which Marx asks: "What constitutes a class?" (1867/1978, p. 441).

Answering his question with a secondary question, Marx, in line with other political economists of the time like Ricardo and Weber, presents wage laborers, capitalists, and landowners are the three primary classes, defining them as "social groups" receiving different sources of revenue (wage, profit, and rent, respectively). The emphasis on revenue and mode of employment demonstrated here, is cited as evidence for contemporary frameworks of class hierarchy that use income as a measure of class status. Importantly, however, in this same passage Marx clearly states that revenue alone is sufficient to determine class. For example, "physicians and officials" could constitute distinct classes inasmuch as they form separate social groups but generate revenue from the same source. Thus, differentiating classes by mode of employment, as Marx seems to suggest here, could lead to infinite fragmentation (1867/1978), perhaps supporting the view of revenue (income) as the key signifier for class differentiation. As this particular manuscript was left unfinished, however, we cannot know where Marx would have taken this component of his theory.

It is telling, however, that Marx defines laborers, capitalists and landowners in this passage as *social groups* organized in terms of economic positionality (again, signified by access to property ownership and source of revenue). That is, individuals "embody" those classes as relations to capital, personifying the interests of those categories but not reduced solely to the category. Indeed, I suggest, defining classes this way (even if in limited number), captures the social character of class noted in earlier works, articulating revenue as one of the material conditions continuously attributed (or "assigned") to each class such that it *appears* predestined and fixed. Though Marx does not fully theorize the *process* by which subjects are formed, his early work does indicate

the development of class-based consciousness out of life processes structured by sets of material conditions (including income disparities, housing, health, and food hardship).

The emphasis on material conditions and social groups opens space to think of the constitution of class not solely as categories organized by type of employment and amount of income, but as sets of relations co-conditioned by the other factors they constantly confront. That is, type of labor and its accompanying wage are two nodes, yet these are also articulated onto a matrix of relations, including access to food. Thus, although rooted in the material conditions subjects experience every day, Marx explains that class is a *force alien to the individuals within it*, such that it subsumes the individual as the "mean average interest" of the class-group as it assumes its general form (1845/1978, p. 179). Class then "achieves an independent existence" such that it *appears* permanent and class conditions seem "predestined" (1845/1978. p. 179). Subjects' positions within a class thereby seem to be "assigned" based on their relations to forces of production and position within the division of labor (1845/1978, p. 179), but actually develop through similar patterns over time. Thus, class *appears* permanent inasmuch as it continually structures and conditions individuals' life processes in historically similar ways. As the analysis that follows will suggest, the banality of food security renders food privilege nearly invisible. Food privilege articulates with class as it converges with other social-economic factors like income, housing, and transportation.

For this case study, articulation serves as the communicative ground on which *class* is constructed. Indeed, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) stress that every social identity is relational and partial, and all social practices are articulatory. That is to say, meaning cannot be fixed, but it appears through discourses disseminated to dominate the

ideological field. This is not unlike Marx's discussion of class *appearing* permanent through the aggregation of "general interest." Per Laclau and Mouffe (1985), the subject is always operating within a discursive structure that conditions and is itself conditioned by historically situated material conditions. Subjects are discursive elements that get articulated through discourses; they are positioned within the ensemble of relations that enable and constrain (per Foucault) their ability to link (articulate) with other elements. Subjects are not the origins of social relations, as they are positioned in ways that create those relations. Subjects have enabling and constraining articulatory power, and subjectivity is always partial, and changes with shifts experienced by other discursive elements. Thus, the (class) subject is articulated. Any class category (for example, "low income" or "proletariat") is the product of an articulatory process, producing subjects ("food stamp recipient," "poor," or "worker").

Food, consumption, taste, and hunger have been widely taken up in terms of cultural relations (Counihan & van Esterik, 2008; Cramer, Greene, & Walters, 2011; Douglas, 1984; Frye & Bruner, 2012). Food practices, including types of foods eaten and practices governing their ingestion, play an integral role in organizing social status and hierarchies. Bourdieu (1984) analyzes social class structure, the function of food as social capital within relations of dominance and subordination. Following Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1984), taste has also gained traction in discussions of culture and social exclusion (Douglas, 1984). In charting the rise of "yuppie coffee" in the US since the 1980s, Roseberry (2005) explicates how specialty coffee allows consumers to "cultivate and display 'taste' and 'discrimination'" and who seek a break from mass production (p. 123). Indeed, Roseberry's analysis demonstrates how relations of production and circuits

of capital can shape tastes through networked relations of food access. Supply chains and other networks of capital also violently limit food provisioning and marginalize vulnerable groups (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010; Patel, 2007; Winne, 2007). Meal preparation plays a central role in everyday life, regardless of social situation or cultural status (Opel, Johnston, & Wilk, 2010). As de Certeau and Giard (2008) submit, "doing-cooking" encapsulates a host of practices that operate on the border of past and present, innovation and tradition (p. 67). Though articulated across the social field in different and disparate ways, alimentary habits, practices, and relations articulate subjects and condition our existence in complex ways.

Through critical consideration of the Food Stamp Challenge, this chapter theorizes food (access) as an element in the class process. Food is essential to maintain biological existence, it is a necessity of life. Yet food circulates through systems of capital, to which subjects are bound through relations of access (themselves conditioned by production, distribution, and consumption). These relations are themselves co-constituted within a capitalist economic regime, making one's placement in the class process contingent and always already in flux. Food access converges with other social-economic processes, including consumption, housing, transportation, income, and employment. Thus, I suggest, individuals embody an alimentary subjectivity, a mode of existence conditioned by food via circuits of production and consumption and relations of sustenance.

The Abject and Biopolitics of Visibility

Julia Kristeva (1982) presents a theoretical account of the abject in her generative work, *Powers of Horror*. Defining it as "*that* of being opposed to *I,"* the abject operates

at the borderline between object and subject (emphasis added, p. 230). For Kristeva, the concept is framed squarely in terms of the Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic tradition, accounting for the psychosexual development of the superego, in which subjects learn to distinguish boundaries between self and other prior to entering the mirror stage (Felluga, n.d; Oliver, 2002). Here, I take up the concept of the abject with emphasis on its dis/re-articulation of borders and identity.

Specifically, as "those forces, practices and things which are opposed to and unsettle the conscious ego, the 'I'" (Tyler, 2009, p. 79), the abject signifies the simultaneous experience of both horror and fascination, the recognition of both difference/separation and connection/identity. The abject, as neither object nor subject, necessarily disturbs systems of order, borders, positions, and rules. The abject, then, represents (indeed, calls up) "the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite…[as] something rejected from which one does not part" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 232). Indeed, through its force, the abject calls up a system of order (gender, for example), but that system is not necessarily destroyed in this process; it can indeed come more entrenched.

Kristeva (1982) uses the human corpse, at once fascinatingly arresting and yet also horribly disgusting, as a prime exemplar of the abject. We are bodies, despite the Cartesian discourse that bifurcates the mind and body, subsuming corporeality under rational thought. Something like a corpse connotes fear (death), the unclean (decomposition), and perversion (of body, of human*ness*), shocking unconscious elements of our subjectivity into consciousness. As a corpse, the body literally transgresses the border from life to death, embodying what Tyler (2009) describes as "the zone of being and not-being" (p. 79). What makes the corpse abject is not its grotesque

quality *per se*, but rather its ability to "*show me*…[where] I am at the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border. Such wastes drop so that I might live" (emphasis original, Kristeva, 1982, p. 231). Thus, by collapsing all meaning(s) at the distinction between mind/body, us/them, and life/death, the corpse (the abject) reminds us of our own materiality, mortality, and morbidity.

It is this ability of the abject to "simultaneously beseech and pulverize the subject" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 232) that is particularly relevant to anti-hunger advocacy tactics like the Food Stamp Challenge (FSC). Indeed, as I argue in the analysis that follows, the FSC calls up what is typically an unconscious subjectivity produced through individuals' participation in the food system (specifically, articulated via disparate relations of food access). Yet, I will argue, the always already alimentary subjectivity is revealed through a phenomenology of the abject made possible through the FSC's instantiation of food hardship. In other words, experiencing the *lack of enough* (food, money, etc) to fill one's "normal" consumption makes visible one's alimentary positioning within relations of sustenance.

Important for this case study, Kristeva (1982) theorizes the abject in distinctly phenomenological terms. The abject is primarily associated with the body, and, in particular, "all that is repulsive and fascinating" about it (p. 80). Bodily experiences like death and decay, and pregnancy and childbirth, as well as those involving the externalization of internal fluids (such as vomiting or defecation) unsettle the integrity of the body's boundaries. They also discursively destabilize constructions of beauty, gender, and identity through affective experience (Kristeva, 1982; Tyler, 2009). In the analysis

that follows, I will suggest that participation in advocacy campaigns like the Food Stamp Challenge mobilizes the affective potential of experiencing hunger. Specifically, the physical sensations of hunger call forth the consumption-drive by which our alimentary subjectivity is activated.

As a *force*, the abject makes meaning, identity, borders, visible (Kristeva, 1982). They are recognized through the dual experience of fascination and disgust. However, that force, though directed simultaneously outward and inward (calling out borders and identity), the abject also ultimately reinscribes difference and sediments order, operating as a "security blanket…[that] settles the subject within a socially justified illusion" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 136). Thus, through a "double presence" (Tyler, 2009, p. 790), the abject both makes visible and renders invisible.

In this way, I suggest, abjection operates through a biopolitics of visibility, a concept that is itself situated on the borderline(s). Social change requires seeing and engaging problematic objects, yet that gaze enfolds itself through relations of power. For example, as Asen (2002) discusses the politics of visibility constituted in antipoverty and welfare discourses, he notes the complexity of drawing attention to poverty as a social ill while also reifying social stigma. On the "rediscovery of poverty" after the publication of Michael Harrington's seminal analysis *The Other America*, "poor people [were] brought into view where they have obtained, at times, an almost hyper-visibility" (p. 5). Bringing attention (visibility) to those who live at the margins, and are thereby nearly socially invisible, is both empowering and dangerous; visibility is conditioned by the power of the gaze. In terms of Harrington's book, "visibility may have enabled the undoing of programs originally implemented to combat poverty," by exposing deep structures of

inadequacy related to housing, education, and medical care (p. 5). Yet this exposure also subjects the poor to "intense public scrutiny…call[ing] attention to their supposedly baneful attitudes and behaviors" (p. 5). Indeed, accounts of SNAP recipients' purchasing habits, health disparities, and illegal activity increase their vulnerability under a lens of hyper-visibility. I suggest, the FSC similarly operates as a "paradox of seeing" by focusing public attention on a marginalized group, but doing so in ways that may actually hamper possibilities for social change and may in fact reify the social stigma that marginalizes the food insecure to begin with. Thus, it is possible to be both visible and invisible simultaneously.

This "double presence" indicates that the abject actually functions in service of the *I* rather than the *that* (rooted, as it is, in its theorization in relation to the ego/superego and individual psychosocial development). In other words, that which the abject articulates is ultimately directed inward, as Kristeva (1982) explains: "when the subject...finds the impossible within; when it finds that the impossible constitutes its very *being*, that it *is* none other than the abject" (p. 232). Indeed, therein lies the abjective force- the ultimate realization of the arbitrariness of the border between *I* and *that*- like the recognition of one's own mortality when viewing a corpse, the "impossible within" in that context.

The recognition of the "impossible within" ultimately reinscribes the "I's" identity, reifying (and rendering invisible) the very boundaries it reveals. In this way, "double presence" is articulated as inclusive exclusion (Tyler, 2009, p. 79). The abject at once calls up that which is always already both included and excluded from social existence. The poor have been recognized for existing within a state of inclusive

exclusion for at once being members of the general community and political body, but also marginalized by a number of segregationist practices. If, as Kristeva (1982) suggests, the force of the abject works inward, what really produces the fascinated disgust within the context of food hardship and the FSC is not necessarily the disparity of those who actually experience food insecurity on a daily basis; rather, realizing the "impossible within" in this case is hunger itself regardless of one's positionality to food privilege, we are all bodies that hunger.

Indeed, Kristeva (1982) notes, "food loathing is perhaps the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection" (p. 230). The act of eating can be a force of abjection when, for example, "that skin on the surface of milk" is seen by the eyes and/or touched by the lips, leading to "a gagging sensation, and, still, farther down, spasms in the stomach" (p. 231). The act of gagging is "inscribed in a symbolic system, but in which, without either wanting or being able to become integrated in order to answer to it…it abjects" (p. 231). Food is abject inasmuch as it operates as "a border between two distinct entities or territories. A boundary between nature and culture, between the human and the non-human'" (Kristeva, 1982). More than that, however, I suggest that food transgresses borders betweens subject identities. Every body eats, and thus, hungers.

We are always already tethered to a biopolitical food system through labor, policy, and wage regimes, as I have explicated in the previous two case studies. That the abject also operates in, on, and through bodies, necessarily inserts *bios* into the relations of power mediating the abject's politics of visibility. Thus, biopolitics of visibility also makes explicit the co-consumption of bodies within circulations of comestible capital. That is, the Food Stamp Challenge, I argue, functions as an *abject force*, destabilizing

seemingly fixed class boundaries, forcing recognition by campaign participants that the food insecure are not all that different than you or I. We are all bodies that hunger (Stormer, 2015). The fear produced by the realization of the "impossible within" then, perhaps, reproduces the social stigma of poverty and food insecurity, recalcifying class boundaries.

Anti-Hunger Advocacy and Food Entitlement

The Food Stamp Challenge (FSC) has been popularized by religious groups and community organizations, as well as media personalities and elected representatives who volunteer to purchase food using only the budgetary equivalent of the average SNAP (Food Stamps) benefit for 1 week. In 2012, the average SNAP monthly benefits amounted to about $133.41 per person, or $4.44 per day. Anti-hunger advocacy organizations, including food pantries and policy watchdog groups, laud the FSC as a powerful tactic to "raise awareness of hunger...and keep SNAP strong" (FRAC 2010b). Simulation of the tight budget of the average Food Stamp recipient invites FSC participants to "gain a personal understanding...of what it means to live off SNAP" by directly experiencing the difficult choices food hardship entails (FRAC 2010b).

This chapter analyzes participant feedback during and after three 2012 FSC campaigns: a community campaign in Salt Lake City (SLC FSC), a college campaign at the University of Bridgeport (UB FSC), and a personal campaign completed by then Newark Mayor Cory Booker (#SNAPChallenge).[2] Texts examined include field notes, semistructured interviews, participants' written reflections on social media, and media coverage. Together, these fragments construct a discourse of entitlement, offering insights into the ways that food (access) constructs and complicates class relations.

Through this case study I argue that we each embody a typically hidden, but always already alimentary subjectivity. Exposed by the experience of food hardship, this subjectivity explodes class boundaries, affirming food's articulation into relations of power. In this way, I argue, the Food Stamp Challenge operates as a force of abjection that collapses social borders by revealing the arbitrary but necessarily stratifying nature of food access. As FSC participants come to recognize their own alimentary subjectivity, they articulate their fascinated disgust of food-based class relations through appeals to normalcy; those who actually endure food hardship are castigated through appeals to coping strategies. Thus, through the "double presence" (Tyler, 2009) of food insecurity, stigmatization of the poor is reified through articulations of abject lack, ultimately denying the systemic instantiation of poverty, reifying its role in capitalist social organization, and, potentially negating advocacy gains that could be made through the FSC.

Making Visible 'the Impossible Within': Every Body Hungers

The idea 2012 Salt Lake City community FSC, immediately struck me as a useful experiential tool for considering one's own participation in the food system. Realizing the difficulty of others readily conjures your own privilege(s), and how fascinating, I thought, it would be to experience that through a week of food consumption. Asking campaign participants to forgo their usual weekly food budgets – clearly assumed to always already be higher than $28 per person per week – might foster consideration of what would be different, and what would be missed, the week of the Challenge. Would you end up sacrificing food items to which you are accustomed? Would you need to shop at a different store? I initially felt that the real experiment of the Challenge was to look

through its difficulty for kernels of insight about your individual/household consumption capability.

Access operates as the nodal point at which subjects are articulated within the food system. Food access structures individuals' and households' ability to acquire a food supply (indeed, their participation and positionality within the food system, configured as a set of relations) and is itself conditioned by the availability of transportation, time, employment status, and other social, economic, and environmental factors. One's capability to procure an adequate food supply at the individual or household level speaks volumes about resource use and distribution, as well as the ways that food bombards other factors of social/economic existence.

The FSC, I argue, provides participants with an experiential mechanism for realizing their subjectivation by revealing these (mundane, and thereby seemingly concrete) relations of sustenance. The FSC uses the experience of food hardship as a force of abjection, compelling participants to consider their own consumption (what, when, how they eat); participants become articulated as bodies that hunger. In this way, the FSC reveals how food always already articulates subjectivity, seemingly 'assigning' class-based social borders, by making visible how invisible that subjectivity is.

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) explicates the goal of the Food Stamp Challenge as "highlight[ing] the difficulty of obtaining enough food to stay healthy using current Food Stamp Program benefits" (The Hatcher Group & FRAC, 2007, p. 22). Specifically, FRAC provides a list of participation guidelines in their Food Stamp Challenge Toolkit, a small resource packet available for download from their website, containing explanatory material, testimonies and sample media coverage, as well

as press release and sign-up sheet templates (Hatcher & FRAC, 2007). Participation parameters are as follows:

1. Food budget of average weekly food stamp benefit.
2. All food consumed during Challenge week is purchased from budget.
3. No food already owned, or obtained for free, can be consumed during the Challenge week.
4. Log spending, and items purchased/unable to be purchased.

The FSC budget is set at the average Food Stamp benefit allotment in the state in which participants undertake the Challenge. In 2012 in Utah, the average was $28 per person per week, $35 in Bridgeport, and $30 in New Jersey.[3] The budgetary allowance and weeklong timeframe are strategically organized to condense and simulate the struggles often reported by food stamp recipients:

> After paying for housing, energy and health care expenses, many low-income households have little or no money remaining to spend on food without food stamp benefits. In addition, most food stamp households report that their food stamp benefits do not last the entire month and many are forced to turn to food pantries and soup kitchens. (Hatcher & FRAC, 2007 p. 3)

Thus, the tight budget makes participants dependant on the benefit amount, simulating the pattern of organizing one's entire budget "around the expectation that SNAP will suffice for the whole month" (USDA Food & Nutrition Service, 2013); the potentiality of running out by the end of the Challenge week also instantiates the anxiety of the monthly "food stamp cycle" (USDA Food & Nutrition Service, 2013).

If the objective of an FSC campaign is to provide a "new perspective and greater understanding" of food insecurity and the struggles faced by low-income families (Hatcher & FRAC, 2007, p. 2), it necessarily operates as an abject force between the *I* (food privilege) and *that* (food hardship). Mekeda's response on LinkedIn to Cory Booker's FSC demonstrates this force at work: "It's one thing to voluntarily go on a 'SNAP' diet knowing you can resume eating normally whenever you want." Further,

Patrice adds a similar statement to Booker's social media site: "Many people who never had to struggle will barely, if at all understand. They have always had choices."

The budget is tight and the rules are strict; this reveals how subjects are always already conditioned by food. Significantly decreasing one's usual food budget requires that FSC participants consciously consider their food choices and the price of items they purchase, in order to stay within the prescribed spending limits. Further, FSC rules prohibit the use of items already owned, including condiments, spices, and cooking oils, impacting the taste of Challenge foods as I address in the second section of this analysis. The restriction against procuring free food (via shared meals, samples, found food, dumpster diving, etc.) subtly makes visible some of the coping strategies that food assistance recipients use, for example, exploiting the ability to eat in a work environment. Food management strategies are taken up in the final section of this analysis.

The budgetary constraints were "eye opening," as several participants described the allowance. A participant in the University of Bridgeport FSC articulated this in terms of the time it took to shop for the Challenge: "It is definitely easier to go to the grocery store and not have to count every penny. Today [post-Challenge] I spent maybe 30 minutes in the store whereas last week [FSC week] it took at least an hour since I was adding up as I went along and spent a lot of time comparing prices." A student reflecting on the Salt Lake City FSC explains how she "was born in a rich family…I barely worried about what to eat for dinner, or eat less in order to save money;" the FSC was her first experience with a food budget. Two other students reflected with me about shopping for the FSC, nervously giggling as they explain how they usually "just throw whatever we want into the cart...if you want cookies or cereal, you just get it." Thus, shopping on the

FSC budget means frustration with having to calculate food prices and sacrificing items to stay within the allowance.

By its very structure the FSC instantiates food hardship in terms of economic constraints. In so doing it creates a phenomenological context in which participants cannot help but consider their food consumption and spending and dietary habits. On the first day of his FSC, Booker's LinkedIn post notes how, "[f]or the first time, in a long time, I am considering every meal and cost of the food I am eating." In response, Cassie writes the following: "Great point about having to expend so much mental energy planning where to buy food with SNAP and meal planning throughout the day! Unfortunately, too many people don't realize the exhaustive amount of forethought it takes to be poor." Later in his Challenge, Booker reflects on "worry[ing]...about affording food" as his food supply "dwindles." In a comment on Booker's Day 5 post, Donna recalls how "a woman who used [food stamps] once told me, 'when you don't have enough to eat, all you think about is food," and, she adds, "I suspect that is the truth." Others use social media to provide tips on what can "go a very long way in filling you up." Evelyn coaches Mayor Booker to "Drink loads of water," as "thirst disguises as hunger." Participants across the Challenges consistently recommended building meals around macronutrients like protein, relying on beans, eggs, peanut butter, and oatmeal as staples. Others reported eating "slowly and carefully," exploiting their regular habit of skipping breakfast to portion out their food for other meals, and rationing snacks like "pretzels and water throughout the day." For those who "have always had choices," it is unlikely that they would be as deeply engaged with their food habits outside of their experience with the Challenge.

In these ways, the FSC reveals individuals' alimentary subjectivity. As humans, we are always already food consumers as it is a biological necessity. Yet our food consumption is necessarily conditioned by the capitalist economic regime within which food circulates. The FSC not only makes visible our bio/physiological need for food (a point to which I turn below), it also makes visible how access is articulated by relations of sustenance. That is, realizing that you *have* to cook reveals how little you may actually cook or eat at home, and *having* to spend less illuminates the flexibility you usually have, and being barred from free food shows how much might be around you (coffee and snacks in the office break room, for example). Thus, the experience of lack within the context of the FSC can reveal to participants the other factors with which food is interwoven, such as income and employment, and through which class often appears concrete (Harvey, 1996; Marx, 1844/1978; Resnick & Wolff, 1987). Thus, relations of access that articulate class boundaries condition the phenomenological sensation of hunger. For participants who are always already privileged enough to spend more than $28 per week on food, they are likely to also be able to avoid these sensations in their usual daily routines. Indeed, many of us mindlessly consume food; that ability is explicitly structured by one's food access.

As alimentary subjects, the border between food privilege and food hardship becomes moot – we all must eat to survive and we are all articulated into the same system of global industrial food production. This is how the Challenge of "learning first hand what it is like to make ends meet on the average food stamp benefit " is reconciled with the advocacy goal of "raising awareness" of hunger and poverty (Hatcher & FRAC, 2007, p. 2). Like the recognition of our own body's materiality upon viewing a corpse

(Kristeva, 1982), the FSC phenomenologically collapses the always already arbitrary class-based distinction of *us* (sated)/*them* (hungry) by articulating all as bodies that hunger (Stormer, 2015).

In describing the difficulty of the FSC, many participants note experiencing corporeal sensations related to the experience of hunger. Across the Challenges, participants described feeling hungry, being "surprised how hungry I am," and having "hunger pangs" or "hunger pains." Students reported losing concentration during classes, irritability, and increased fatigue and feeling tired throughout the day. Mayor Booker was the most vociferous about his body's response to the challenge, noting on Day 2 how he had an "urge to have another sweet potato before I go to bed tonight." By Day 4, Booker's inability to afford coffee on his Challenge budget had "finally hit the wall" as he had had "a terrible headache all day and have been feeling sluggish." This post prompted Susan to send well-wishes for the Mayor, commenting that she "hope[s] you're feeling ok," while Paula commiserates, "Between that caffeine withdrawal and lack of protein, I bet you're pooped!"

Feeling these things in our bodies breaks the cognitive dissonance of understanding food insecurity in the conceptual sense. Indeed, it is through the physical experience of hunger that the potential for (policy or social) change might be realized, as Jennifer Turner explains:

> The experience is that much more real when you actually do it and you have that tangible experience versus I read this in one of my text books or I saw this on a TV show. When you actually are like oh, like I forgot to pack my lunch today, but I don't have enough money to go to a cafe and buy something; so therefore I have to skip lunch. That makes it a much more real experience, you know, than like, "Oh I read about SNAP in my textbook."

Like Kristeva's (1982) corpse example, the abjective force of the FSC lies in its dis-

articulation of the Cartesian mind/body dualism. We are all bodies that eat, and without food we are all bodies that hurt.

In this way, the FSC can function heuristically not only for considering hunger/food insecurity *out there*, but its manifestations closer to come. Mayor Booker received many accolades and superlatives for his "courage" and "commitment" in undertaking his FSC. Bearetta's comment on Booker's "#SNAPChallenge Day 4 Reflections" post on LinkedIn notes admiration for how "he doesn't just stand there…he demonstrates getting involved with his people in Newark New Jersey and stands with the needy." This sentiment is particularly salient within the context of an elected representative's individual FSC campaign. Although many who witnessed Booker's FSC were skeptical of his motives,[4] others celebrated him as "a rad, money-where-your-mouth-is-politician" (Miller, 2012). Indeed, Booker himself explicates how "reflect[ion] on the families and children in my community who benefit from SNAP assistance" solidified his decision to undertake the FSC.

Commenting on Booker's Day 3 LinkedIn reflection, Kim thoughtfully explicates this insight: "Most people have no idea...how many of our *friends and neighbors* are struggling to feed their families...These are real people, just like you and me" (emphasis added). This comment serves the imperative of gaining "a new perspective and greater understanding" explicated in the FRAC FSC Toolkit (produced with The Hatcher Group, 2007), overly reminding those witnessing and participating in Booker's FSC that by food assistance recipients "are not bums. They are not leeching off the system." Jen Adach, FRAC's Senior Manager for Communications and Content Marketing, further elucidates this point in terms of the phenemological potential of an FSC: "it just really sheds light

on what hunger and poverty look like in the U.S…it's very often you know, that *people in your community, people who you see every single day*, [face] these incredibly challenging and difficult decisions" (emphasis added). The references to people participants may know – friends, neighbors, community members – indicates that hunger could already be near, even (unknowingly) under participants' noses. Social boundaries between food privilege and hardship may (temporarily) collapse as the FSC makes food hardship visible, but it can also destabilize the "permanences" that outwardly construct participants' (and, by extension, their peers) sense of privilege. Thus, I suggest, comments like these also covertly bolster the FSC's abjective force, by calling up the potential for anyone to (unexpectedly) experience food insecurity.

Across the 2012 FSC campaigns examined here, participants were are able to articulate food hardship with economic capabilities like "incomes that are just enough to cover...household bills like rent and utilities" (Tara, on Booker's Day 5 Reflection), and "affording gas, transportation, etc…[and] health insurance" (Sadie, University of Bridgeport FSC), and how "access to a car or to someone with a car...really limits how much shopping you can do at any one time" (SLC FSC). Making connections between consumption and factors like income, housing, and transportation reference the complex ways that food interweaves with other social-economic processes in webs of relations. That the specific factors mentioned here are also those most commonly used to reference class, these comments demonstrate how food operates as a node in the class process.

These relations of sustenance are made visible by calling up alimentary subjects' hunger. Food transgresses the boundaries that make class appear concrete. Yet because class processes operate on subjects as an alien force (Marx, 1845/1978), food-based class

relations are largely invisible. The experience of food hardship by simulation of a food stamp budget illuminates these relations of access through the phenomenology of hunger sensations. Thus, within the context of the FSC, the "impossible within" (Kristeva, 1982) is hunger itself. However, although hunger abjects the boundary between food privilege and hardship, that abjective force ultimately pings back inward, referencing more about the *I* than the *that*. In other words, although the FSC brings the invisibility of an always already alimentary subjectivity into focus, it also renders these relations invisible all over again as participants cling to class-based perceptions of normal consumption. Ultimately, though this biopolitics of visibility, social boundaries are resedimented.

Food Loathing Through Appeals to Normalcy

In planning the Social Soup program in conjunction with the SLC FSC, the committee agreed on the need for an even more concise simulation of the Challenge budget and grocery shopping experience. Working with two Utahns Against Hunger (UAH) staff, a food budgeting activity was designed using cards with pictures of food items (representing all major food groups, staple and luxury items, and beverages) and their prices (averaging data from local food stores). Attendees at the November 2012 Social Soup gathering – open to University faculty, staff, and students, as well as members of the community – could work together in small groups to work through their food procurement decisions. Those who completed the Challenge that ended earlier that same week could recall their personal experience. The mini-FSC would also be a handy heuristic for those experiencing the FSC for the first time.

As I conceptualized and planned for this activity with the UAH staff, I discussed the potentiality of the mini version of FSC shopping to actually "highlight the difficulty

of obtaining enough food to stay healthy" on a food stamp budget. We agreed that our difficulty would be avoiding what we called "Thank God I'm not on Food Stamps" responses, or comments that reified the difficulty and challenge of food insecurity in a way that furthers social stigma.

Social Soup attendees balked at the inclusion of items like baloney and blue cheese, as they seemed both too cheap (read: poor quality) and expensive (read: fancy) for SNAP recipients to purchase with benefits. Others noted the importance of buying not just "any kind of milk," but whole milk specifically, "because when you're poor, the kids need that kind of fat." With the holiday season fast approaching, others discussed the difficultly of purchasing sundries for a Thanksgiving dinner on the FSC budget.

Federal food assistance recipients are frequently disciplined for purchasing calorie-dense but nutrient-poor items, as well as for purchasing so-called "luxury" food items (like steak, lobster, cheeses, and birthday cake), fueling the debate over who might be the "most needy" (read: deserving poor) that has characterized food assistance and welfare discourse since the 1980s (Katz, 1993). Understanding why food assistance recipients purchase particular items is complex, and indeed beyond the scope of this case study. I argue, however, that framing the FSC around the difficulty of purchasing a healthy and nutritious diet includes and extends reference to the paucity of the average benefit, therein signifying relations of access. The FSC reveals disparities of access among alimentary subjects by revealing to participants their own comestible privilege. Appeals to normalcy and strategy entrench the social boundaries that articulate consumption practices with socio-economic class by representing the food insecure in unsavory terms.

Campaign participants make appeals to normalcy during and after their FSC experience through descriptions of difference. These range from decrying the size of their week's food supply, missing out on preferred foods regularly consumed, and engaging in irregular dietary routines and practices. To be sure, if the primary audience for FSC campaigns (i.e., pools of participants) is those with comestible privilege, and the goal is to gain a "new understanding" of food insecurity/poverty, some degree of cognitive dissonance is to be expected in participant responses. However, I suggest that these appeals articulate participants' fascinated-disgust, that is, the realization of what Kristeva describes as "something rejected from which one does not part" (p. 232). In the context of an FSC campaign, the "fascination" lies in making the attempt to *meet* the Challenge by actually purchasing enough (and) healthy food while keeping within the prescribed budget. Those who seek to *beat* the challenge articulate this through appeals to strategy (discussed in the final section of this analysis). Yet this fascination is met with simultaneous 'disgust' made conscious through phenomenological concession to what are perceived as typically socially unacceptable practices (eating lettuce for breakfast, dumpster diving, or rationing, for example). That perception articulates a lack of normalcy that is transferred to those who actually experience food insecurity.

As participants' capability to procure food is compromised by the strict budget limitations of the Challenge, and, thus, the instability of the adequacy of one's food supply is phenomenologically revealed. SLC FSC participants readily articulate the gap between the charge to purchase food stamp eligible items and make healthy decisions with the slim allowance. Upon initiating the FSC, Juan reflected on how quickly he realized "$4 foods per day per person would not give people enough nutrition." After the

Challenge, several participants echo Rachel's comment that "four dollars could buy more food than I thought, but they were not healthy [foods]." Mike Daniels, of the Salt Lake City Workfare Office[5], who also participated in the SLC FSC reiterated how his family (participating as a unit) had to be "real thoughtful on what we thought would still be nutritious as well as filling…[making] sure we bought the right types of food." Recognizing the price disparity between fresh and processed items, many shared Jennifer's experience that "It is definitely cheaper and faster to prepare food that is less healthy for you." Participants quickly realized how available (proximate and affordable), and thereby unavoidable, unhealthy foods become to those who actually rely on federal benefits.

Rita calls out this scarcity frame in a comment she posts on Day 3 of Booker's #SNAPChallenge: "I think having that limitation on your mind can be overwhelming and creates a mindset of lack." Indeed, Booker himself consistently uses this frame throughout his reflections by making repeated references to his "constrained food options," "dwindling food supply," "eating less than I am accustomed to." These comments denote how much less he is consuming during the Challenge week than usual, and connote meagerness and fears of shortages. Similarly, Daniels explains how his family "had smaller meals…[without] as many sides" than is typical at their table. He even goes one to describe how he and his wife agreed to "sacrifice…[to] ensure that our son gets more nutritious meals…if it became that we were running out of food at the end of the week."

FSC participants also deployed the scarcity frame in visual depictions of their Challenge consumption. The use of social media platforms, like LinkedIn, Twitter, and

Facebook, allows FSC participants in the UB FSC and Booker in his #SNAPChallenge campaigns to post photos of their Challenge experience. Crystal, coming in at more than $10 under the UB budget, writes, "I spent $21.38 on this. I hope I make it." Accompanying the post is a photo of her FSC groceries splayed across a table: quart of milk, package of chicken, juice boxes, toaster pastries, several ready-to-make boxed meals, two loaves of bread, two packages of biscuit/muffin mix, and two tall cans of iced tea. Similarly, Booker uses video and photos to display several meals consumed during his #SNAPChallenge week, including a large bowl of "salad with beans and corn" (his first Challenge meal) held while he looks down forlornly. These images bolster descriptions of meager food supplies, exploiting the ability of photographs to fully capture the reality of participants' paltry Challenge diet.

Guidelines that ask participants to log Challenge week consumption heighten attention to items regularly consumed but missed during the FSC, augmenting the scarcity frame within which the food/budget allowance is articulated. Normal consumption is thus represented in terms of class privilege, ultimately articulating the food insecure with abject lack. The scarce amount of food, in this context, connotes Otherness through its paucity: This is not normal consumption, and if this indeed is what "hunger and poverty look like," then hunger sucks.

Participants across the campaigns described missing out on items they would ordinarily purchase, including items typically considered unhealthy or junk food. Lamentations on missing one's coffee or soda are frequent, indicating the ubiquity of these beverages for many participants. Indeed, sudden cessation of the caffeine and sugar content of these beverages can result in many of the corporeal sensations (headaches and

the like) discussed earlier, and Booker himself notes how several days of caffeine withdrawal makes him think he "need[s] to put a little more thought into my caffeine addiction." Furthermore, these are items that are often routine (and thereby mundane) aspects of our alimentary lives, as indicated by Booker's reflection on Day 1 that "I cannot remember the last time I started the day without a cup of coffee," and again on Day 2 that he is unable to "stop and drop a few dollars for a Venti coffee" at a coffee shop. The banality of something like coffee or soda in participants' regular, privileged existence, makes all it more noticeable when it is abstained from during the Challenge week. Similarly, Mike Daniels and his family made the decision to "let go" of snack items like chips and brand-name Oreos, "things that are probably things that you would typically buy when we go to the grocery store," in order to maintain a "well-balanced" food supply for the week.

As appeals to normal comestible consumption, these comments simultaneously articulate food items like coffee, soda, chips and cookies as banal to those with food privilege, indulgences for the food insecure. Indeed, these items are missed by Challenge participants because they have become abruptly aware of how taken for granted they are on a regular basis. Yet for the food privileged these *can* be taken for granted – they are not chastised for purchasing junk food since they are not spending federal benefits on their regular groceries as SNAP recipients do. Thus, nutrition is articulated here with basal survival, an "off-balanced" food supply is not something the food insecure can afford to indulge in.

Further, FSC guidelines require participants not to use food they already own, including items like spices/seasonings, cooking oils, and other condiments. All food

consumed during the Challenge week must be purchased on the budget (Hatcher & FRAC, 2007). Across the 2012 campaigns analyzed here, this instantiation of blandness left most participants consuming what they felt was "basic...cheap, [and] unsatisfying food." For example, Rachel reports that she "boiled some broccoli for dinner without any sauce or any seasoning," noting that it "tasted really terrible." She further reflects that her Challenge diet was so beyond the boundary of her regular consumption of sweets that she had to work hard to "avoid thinking of desserts and tasty food." Indeed, Daniels' comment about forgetting about condiments highlights the (class) privilege associated with taste: "So when you're gonna have a burger for dinner and you forgot that you didn't have ketchup on your [shopping] list, so [you're] having to go with a burger without a condiment…we just went with what we had." Articulated with a frame of scarcity, food insecurity is associated with plainness and lack of taste.

As he nears the end of his #SNAPChallenge, Booker articulates the same sense of blandness with lack of variety: "my 6th sweet potato; my 6th day of canned beans; and, my 6th day of canned veggies…I realize when you find food on sale or buy in bulk, you end up eating a lot of the same thing over and over." Canned food connotes the industrialization, preservation, and monotonization of food. Later in this same reflection, he adds, "after one week eating a SNAP equivalent diet, I can't blame someone for buying something as a 'treat' or sweets to break up a diet a bit." Although Booker is attempting to assuage the social stigma lobbied against those who purchase junk items with federal food benefits, and the accompanying health disparities, his comments function to further the articulation of nutrition with base survival discussed earlier. Indeed, the use "sweets to break up a diet" would not be relevant in the context of food

privilege.

Finally, and most strikingly, FSC participants' almost, it seems, unavoidable utilization of alternative consumption practices articulates the scarcity frame in terms of resourcefulness, representing poverty as desperation. For example, a University student participant makes the decision early in the Challenge week to eat *only* Ramen noodles (after severe stomach cramps only a few days in, the student dropped this strategy and switched to more substantial options). Another eats "only 1 piece of bread every morning" for breakfast. A participant in the UB FSC reports making "rice and peanut butter pancakes" by simply "blend[ing] the rice and peanut butter in the blender" and then frying it. Focused on the meal's macronutrients, its provision of "good fiber and protein," also notes that the pancakes were "not too bad" despite having to consume them without syrup or jam. Further, UB FSC coordinator Jennifer Turner, recalls a female participant who resorts to an alternative food procurement strategy before the Challenge week ends: "she didn't buy any fruit with her initial [FSC] budget, and probably about Sunday or Monday she wanted a piece of fruit so bad, but she didn't have any money left in her budget. So she actually went dumpster diving in the dumpster behind her job to look for fruit."

Although the other examples above are not extreme, they are clearly utilized in the context of the FSC as if no other means exist for food procurement and utilization options. Indeed, these may not be socially *un*acceptable practices, but they are not presented in positive terms, associating food hardship with risks like social embarrassment and health impacts.

Booker, with a $30 budget and vegetarian dietary needs (articulated as constraints

by his LinkedIn connections' comments), appears to subsist almost entirely on canned vegetables, canned beans, and sweet potatoes. Indeed, his privilege of alimentary normalcy is perhaps most explicitly revealed by an incident on Day 5 when he accidently burns that day's sweet potato. Booker reflects on knowing that "it was eat around the severely caramelized root vegetable or go without." Further, outside of the #SNAPChallenge campaign, Booker knows what he would ordinarily do in a situation like this: "[I] can and will throw own burned food." Noting how "profoundly humble" he feels about this is an outward recognition of his own class privilege, articulated by his ordinary capability to waste food.

Food insecurity encountered during the FSC by the otherwise food privileged reveals their perceptions of 'normal' dietary practices and routines. Describing their FSC dietary/consumption experience through a frame of scarcity highlights what is different during the Challenge week for these participants. It is through a process of negation, then, that those who actually experience food insecurity are articulated with abnormal alimentary practices. Not only does this prove the difficulty of achieving food security's four dimensions (and, thereby, meeting the Challenge), but shores up FSC participants' alimentary privilege. Indeed, food practices of the food insecure are articulated in loathsome terms – no coffee, no soda, no treats or snacks, bland food over and over, and having to resort to unusual dietary practices like dumpster diving.

In this way, the abject enfolds SNAP recipients' alimentary habits in a biopolitics of visibility. Participant commentary does indicate that the FSC sheds light on the nutrition difficulties and health disparities of those who use federal food benefits, allowing the relations of access by which those conditions are made possible to become

phenomenologically visible. Yet recent reports show an upswing in nutrition indicators among those who access SNAP benefits (USDA Economic Research Service, 2015). Though rates of diet-related disease are still higher for low-income populations, dietary habits among food stamp recipients are not as abhorrent as FSC participants presume them to be. Therefore, what is 'normal' for FSC participants indeed reveals their alimentary privilege via articulations of dietary choice, ultimately rendering those relations of access invisible all over again. Thus, social boundaries may become recalcified as the loathsomeness of food hardship comes to be articulated with those who actually experience food insecurity.

Food Management Strategies Edged by the Abject

Along with the staff of Utahns Against Hunger, the Social Soup planning committee, students at the University of Utah, and other members of the community, I participated in the 2012 SLC FSC. In preparing for the Challenge, I sought recipes for meals I could stretch through the week. I decided to make a hearty bean and vegetable stew, and shopped in the bulk section of my grocery store for dried beans. Although I knew that I would have to allow time to soak the beans overnight, I calculated that the price per pound of the bulk dried bean mix was more economical than purchasing several cans of different types of beans that were ready to cook. I also planned meals for the week, and went to more than one grocery store to make the week's purchases. Witnessing responses, feedback, and reflections from other SLC FSC participants, I noticed a pattern of (often arrogant) accounts in which participants described tactics of food management that strongly deviated from their typical mode of consumption. Several described clipping coupons and shopping at stores other than their usual grocer (I noticed that these were

often stores associated with minority ethnic groups, where the prices are cheaper). I noted how these practices were often smugly described using tones that connoted an air of superiority, as in "All you have to do is cut some coupons and plan to shop at Smiths and Reams. No big deal."

This pattern persists across other participants in the 2012 FSC campaigns analyzed here. For many, the "greater understanding…of the struggles encountered by low-income families" (Hatcher & FRAC, 2007, p. 3) was gained by critiquing the incapability of the poor rather than the system that produces disparate food access. Indeed, this is no "greater" understanding at all, since, as I demonstrate below, these critiques only further historically entrenched stereotypes of the food insecure. FSC participants made frequent appeals to coping strategies, deriding Others' (as the abject *that*) time for meal preparation and knowledge of nutrition. I suggest these comments operate as "foodsplaining,"[6] a rhetorical tactic by which the food privileged attempt to tell the food insecure "how it really is" by bringing the full weight of their social status to bear. Here, I argue, participants "foodsplain" as a means of castigating the food insecure for a lack of personal responsibility while ignoring actual coping strategies, alimentary knowledge, and nutrition literacy the food insecure in fact utilize. Although those who experience food insecurity actively employ a range of food management strategies, food privileged FSC participants' assumptions of the difficulty of food hardship and stereotypes of hunger, articulated via "foodsplaining," render these strategies invisible and thereby bolstering alimentary entitlement. In this way, I suggest, alimentary privilege is "edged by the abject" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 233).

In a follow-up interview after the 2012 SLC FSC, Gina Cornia of Utahns Against

Hunger explains how "two types of people" tend to participate in these campaigns: "People who already get it…[and] people who want to prove you wrong. Like, I can do this…[because] they want to prove that it is somehow an adequate amount of money." From her tone, this second type of FSC participant is likely to be suspicious of claims to the difficulty of food insecurity and the paucity of federal benefits. As Gina indicates, those seek to "prove" the FSC wrong may be wary of low-income individuals' diminished socio-economic capability, and critical of state entitlement programs as they encourage dependency.

Marilynn signed up for the SLC FSC because she "decided to prove it could be done," and meticulously "mapped out my menus and strategy" prior to shopping. Susan explains how her family subsists on "83 cents per person per meal, which is about half of what people get with the food stamps," is her family's typical rate of consumption, making her FSC week "a cakewalk." She later describes the Challenge as a "contest," offering the following clarification "We are not deprived, but I am a good shopper who can't afford to waste money." These comments belie the Challenge of food insecurity, but underscoring the "bootstrap" mythos of American success.

Another UB FSC participant, Joy, substantiates Susan's sentiment with a Facebook post in which she offers "people who are actually in poverty and subsisting on [food stamps]" the tip of "Perspective!" Specifically, she urges "poor people" to remember that, "globally speaking, even the poorest American is still rich! When your lower food budget makes your diet somewhat monotonous, you are still very likely getting more variety than even the adequately-fed in other parts of the world." Indeed, this comment suggests, by virtue of America's exceptionalism the food insecure

shouldn't complain about their station, and should in fact be more motivated to achieve food security. As Susan chides, "I'm not sure whether I should be happy or depressed that we eat for less than SNAP participants," lifting up her (and others') FSC experience as inspiration.

Indeed, food coping strategies range from optimizing (i.e., shopping at multiple stores, and traveling further to access desired food retailers), the use of social networks (family, friends, neighbors) for support, meal planning, and cooking standard recipes (USDA Food & Nutrition Service, 2013; Zenk et al., 2011). The ability to brag in this context props up participants' alimentary privilege, as in fact it is from that positionality in relations of food access that *I* can gaze upon *that.* The derision in these comments functions to bolster participants' own alimentary subjectivity, as indicated by their inability to consider the possibility that the food insecure may actually employ food management strategies.

When FSC participants appeal to food management strategies related to time, factors like transportation, availability of grocery stores, and hours spent at work are rebuked through "tips." Through a short series of Facebook posts, Susan swiftly rejects any excuses for a lack of time to grocery-shop and cook at home. She explains, "All the stores I shopped were on one street and could be accessed by bus service for $4 round trip. Everything I bought would fit into one of those shopping carts that pedestrians use." Thus, for transportation concerns, busses and walking are quick solutions. Issues related to the convenience of schedules and bus-stop locations, however, are ignored. The sole focus on walking distance between one's store(s) and home (and/or bus stops) closes off considerations of factors like weather, physical health, and mobility. For working food

stamp recipients, she suggests that to achieve the savings incurred through her scheme (amounting to $60) “it may be better to cut back on a few hours of minimum wage work in order to get these kinds of savings.” If time related to children (either for getting them to child care, or the effort to “pile” several into the car) prevents one from accessing the kinds of savings she achieved, “The easy answer,” she explains, “would be to trade babysitting with a neighbor.”

In this context, appeals to meal preparation strategies are chained to the time-based strategies mentioned above. Cooking is articulated as “putting food together in certain configurations and heating it,” with specific connotations of complete meals made from whole ingredients (not, for example, the reheating of convenience foods). For example, Jennifer Turner, coordinator of the UB FSC, indirectly reflects on the time constraints incurred by cooking at home: “For me personally, [the Challenge week] is the only time I’ve ever cooked my own meals for an entire week...I’m definitely a frozen meal kind of girl or [just] going out to eat...So [cooking] was kind of a unique experience.” Indeed, although frozen meals are SNAP eligible, there is a clear expectation here that they are not appropriate for the FSC. This could be because of perceptions of the poor nutrient content of frozen meals. The preservatives and additives these foods typically contain often articulate with mass production and denigration of food’s essential (“natural”) qualities (Thompson, 2011).

Participants’ shopping lists also display an emphasis for cooking whole meals with complete ingredients. For example, items like fresh produce (heads of lettuce, whole onions and tomatoes), meat (sirloin steak, London broil, and chicken), and boxes of wheat pasta and brown rice, require time for planning and preparation. Indeed, Marilynn

in Salt Lake City explicitly excludes convenience foods like frozen pizzas, bagged salads, and deli items from her shopping list, with the note, "Time consuming? Yes. (menu planning always takes time but the rewards are well worth it)." These foods take time to prepare (chopping, boiling, mixing and the like) and time to use (in terms of the cooking process). In short, these comments appeal to what de Certeau and Giard (2008) call "doing-cooking," or actively "manipulating raw material, of organizing, combining, modifying, inventing" ingestibles (p. 69). Note how the phrasing connotes industriousness, and enterprising creation. In the context of the FSC, convenience foods are thus "lazy foods." Through (poor) diet, poor people – themselves historically represented as lazy and a societal *in*convenience – the "laziness" of the food comes to be associated with perceptions of indolent people.

I suggest these appeals operate rhetorically as rebuttals to commonly perceived limitations of those who actually endure food security on a daily basis. Indeed, reflections like Susan's attempt to engage with the other processes that co-condition food access (transportation, employment, etc.), and yet these are articulated in a disparaging fashion, subtly mocking the food insecure for exaggerating time as if it is an excuse *not* to access (whole, nutritious) foods in the grocery store to cook at home. And, as noted, yet SNAP recipients' dietary choices are not as poor as many believe, with purchases of fruits and vegetables showing a modest increase (Gregory, Ver Ploeg, Andrews, & Coleman-Jensen, 2013). And indeed, food insecure individuals do in fact use the social network strategies described above (Wigg & Smith, 2008; Zenk et al., 2011), although considerations of these in both the public and academic sphere tend to oversimplify the psychosocial aspects (such as feelings of embarrassment) in asking for help.

Along with castigation for excuses of time constraints, FSC participants deride the food insecure for a lack of nutrition knowledge. Articulated as food literacy, comments regarding food management strategies emphasize the competencies needed for "doing-cooking" (de Certeau & Giard, 2008) at home. Those who actually struggle with food insecurity are mocked for lacking knowledge about (socially acceptable) consumption as what is perceived as a poverty of diet-related knowledge articulates with poverty status. As "foodsplaining," these comments reify class-based notions of family, home, and the enterprising nature of meal preparation.

Specifically, FSC participants repeatedly make references to SNAP recipients' levels of education, articulating disparities in formal knowledge (such as that gained in school) with knowledge required for food management. For example, as Sadie attempts to defend the "many folks that do receive food stamps" for having "a lower level of education…[where] nobody taught them how to budget, now to menu plan, etc." On the surface, there is recognition of how education co-conditions food access, yet it is underscored by an air of backhanded sympathy.

As "foodsplaining," the distinctly derogatory nature of comments like this denotes the superiority with which the full weight of food privilege is brought to bear in a critique of food hardship. To elucidate this further, I turn to a representative excerpt[7] from the UB FSC Facebook page, where the following conversation is posted:

> Layla: as I count what I eat in terms of cost, I find myself understanding further why lower income people have such poor health. Crap food is cheaper.
>
> Joy: "Crap food" may appear cheaper if you have enough money, since (for instance) a box of Rice-A-Roni costs $1 and a 2lb bag of brown rice costs $2. But if you calculate how many meals you can get out of the bag of rice, you'll find that it is much less expensive. I can't afford the kind of food that people are generally known to eat on food stamps.

> Layla: I can see why its tempting, the shelf price to someone who has no idea who to cook (or no means to cook it) is far different than the math we use to calculate per meal costs.
>
> Joy: "No means to cook it" does happen, but it is rare. According to federal research, 99.6% of people below the poverty level have a refrigerator, and 97.7% have a stove and oven. I believe that it's far more common for them to have no idea…or no inclination…for cooking, and I would further suggest that this is simply a symptom of why they are poor. Those who buy "crap food" and remain poor because they don't know how to manage their food (which usually translates from an inability to manage their lives) can be taught, and are probably yearning to be taught. Those who simply have no desire…what can be done?

These FSC participants engage in "foodsplaining" through two sets of appeals- math skills and cooking skills- using each to articulate impoverished food knowledge with impoverished food status. Like Sadie's comment above, Layla is initially sympathetic to the systemic disparities of food access, indicating that she now realizes how much cheaper "crap food" is than healthier items. Joy then schools Layla in "how it really is" by breaking down the math for calculating the True price per meal, to which Layla acquiesces that, for someone not "in the know" as they are, it would be "tempting" to be fooled by the shelf price of a packaged item (notice also the shift from convenience food to whole food – packaged Rice-A-Roni to a bag of brown rice). Thus, in the first half of this conversation, Layla and Joy strategically use their math skills to look beyond the shelf price to calculate the True price per meal of food items they seek for the FSC. These skills connote a degree of high-level critical thinking these participants presume the food insecure would not have – indeed, because Layla and Joy know better than to fall for the "temptation" of the shelf price.

In the second half of this conversation, Joy uses "foodsplaining" to reject the possibility that the food insecure may face cooking-related disparities. Wholly

disregarding homeless populations, or those who otherwise may have limited access to cooking equipment Joy's (erroneous) figures are provided as evidence to prove that the food insecure do in fact have access to everything they need to cook. Yet circumstances like inadequate housing, for example, can indeed limit SNAP recipients' access to the equipment (such as an oven or stove) needed to cook a complete meal (Mancino & Newman, 2007; Wigg & Smith, 2008). By closing down any excuses for not cooking, she further "foodsplains" that the *real* problem is having "no idea…for cooking." Indeed, this claim perniciously demonstrates the association of "lazy foods" with lazy people. Not only do "those why buy 'crap food'" do it because they do not know how to cook, they also have "no inclination" to do so, entrapping "them" in the cycle of poverty. Indeed, she says, if "they don't know how to manage their food" they are concomitantly unable to "manage their lives."

In this way, "foodsplaining" is used to articulate food preparation with a particular notion of home and an industrious spirit. Per de Certeau and Giard (2008), food management practices "stem[] from a social and cultural condition and from the history of mentalities" (p. 67). For the FSC participants making comments like those excerpted above, socio-cultural conditions create the plane from which their "foodsplaining" is articulated. Indeed, their alimentary privilege is "edged by the abject" (Kristeva, 1982), as "foodsplaining" indicates a "history of mentalities" related to poverty, home, and doing-cooking that is gendered and class-based. Furthermore, as cooking represents a "basic, humble, persistent practice" rooted in a "fabric of relationships to others and to one's self" (deCerteau & Giard, 2008, p. 71), "foodsplaining" functions rhetorically to keep SNAP recipients in their social place. Together, these "foodsplaining" tactics reify

social boundaries by articulating convenience foods with those who are ridiculed as lazy people.

Food preparation, and the management practices that sustain it, operates "at the most rudimentary level, at the most necessary and the most unrespected level" (de Certeau & Giard, 2008, p. 71); the banality of doing-cooking renders it nearly invisible. The ability of FSC participants to use "foodsplaining" to call up (indeed, call out) strategies utilized by the food insecure exploits the abject's biopolitics of visibility. Drawing on their own comestible privilege, appeals to strategy demonstrate how FSC participants' own alimentary subjectivity is propped up, indeed "edged," by the abnormality of food hardship.

Conclusion and Critical Implications

This case study has unpacked the ways by which hunger is tactically deployed through a popular anti-hunger advocacy tactic, the Food Stamp Challenge (FSC). Aimed at "raising awareness of the difficulty of food insecurity," community and religious organizations, anti-hunger groups, and other low-income advocates facilitate FSC campaigns for which participants voluntarily live on the average food stamp (SNAP) food budget for a calendar week. Though the advocacy goal is commendable, I contend that the FSC may negatively impact anti-hunger efforts by re-entrenching stereotypes of the food insecure. The FSC mobilizes the abjective force of hunger, phenomenologically revealing participants' alimentary subjectivity, making relations of food access and, thereby, relations of sustenance visible. In the context of this case study, food security's rhetoricity is illustrated by the ways by which it functions as a condition for biological, economic, and social existence.

In this section, I provide a summary of the analysis and key findings. From there, I present this case study's contributions to Post-Marxist theory and food/environmental justice, articulating alimentary subjectivity as a valuable heuristic for environmental communication and critical/cultural studies. I close with implications for the rhetoric of food justice.

In 2012, amidst Farm Bill deliberations and intense debate over Food Stamp Program funding, several FSC campaigns were held to bring awareness to the economic hardships faced by the food insecure: Salt Lake City, Utah community campaign (SLC FSC), University of Bridgeport campaign (UB FSC), and then Newark, New Jersey Mayor Cory Booker's individual campaign (#SNAPChallenge). Data for this case study were comprised of social media texts (including posts, videos, photos, and comments on Facebook and LinkedIn), semistructured interview transcripts, as well as my own field notes and reflections from the SLC FSC. My analysis of participant responses across these three FSC campaigns illuminates alimentary practices co-conditioned by relations of food access, by which subjects participate and, indeed, construct the food system. Alimentary subjectivity, revealed to participants through their experience of abject lack (hunger), becomes the ground from which the food privileged articulate food hardship. Appeals to normalcy and strategy demarcate class-based assumptions about consumption practices, including dietary "choice" and food management. Food insecurity becomes conflated with the physical sensation of hunger, articulating with personal responsibility over systemic disparities.

The FSC phenomenologically reveals to participants their own alimentary subjectivity. The abjective force of hunger subsumes distinctions of subject positionality.

In this way, I suggest, the FSC makes visible participants' always already *alimentary subjectivity*, a term I am using to denote food's entanglement within webs of power and meaning, as well as circuits of capital. That food, as a biological necessity maintained every day, several times a day, remains mundane, these relations are generally invisible, particularly to those with comestible privilege. Subjects are articulated into the food system via relations of access, conditioning an individual/household's capability to acquire a food supply and achieve food security. The function of these relations in the class process constitutes the major concept this chapter theorizes.

This case study takes up the Food Stamp Challenge to develop theoretical consideration of the relationship between food access and the class process. As noted, access operates as a nodal point at which subjects are articulated into the food system. Agents embody a class process as a condition of their existence with circuits of capital; individuals may personify multiple "classes" as they participate in converging webs of social life. For example, one may be employed ("working class"), but experiencing food insecurity ("poor"), such as the case of tipped workers (the "working poor) examined in the previous analysis.

The experience of food hardship is made possible for FSC participants via the limited FSC budget, calculated as the state average SNAP benefit. This, along with the other guidelines for participation (including, for example, eating healthy and SNAP-eligible foods, and restriction consuming from free food or items already owned), structures the FSC experience as a (partial) simulation of food stamps. Participants come to articulate their alimentary privilege as they describe how different the FSC experience is from so-called normal consumption practices.

Herein lies the abjective force of the FSC. Through the experience of food hardship, distinctions in alimentary subjectivity are momentarily suspended. By experiencing the physical sensations of hunger (headaches, tiredness, and the like), participants recognize (albeit briefly) how the pain of an empty stomach renders us all as bodies that hunger. Indeed, this is the aspect of the FSC through which participants' awareness of food insecurity is raised, and understanding of the difficulty of the SNAP budget can be gained. As the analysis demonstrates, participants acknowledge the challenge of "making healthy decisions while on a tight budget" when they purchase their food supply for Challenge week.

Despite this, I have reservations about the ability of the Food Stamp Challenge to fully live up to its advocacy objective. I fear that the FSC, by revealing just how unsavory and distasteful the experience of food hardship can be, may actually contribute to the social and political stigma endured by those living in poverty. Indeed, I suggest, the Food Stamp Challenge configures poverty and food insecurity as substandard to what is perceived as "normal" consumption. Indeed, by framing food security in terms of scarcity, food privileged participants become enabled to articulate those who face food insecurity with abject lack. In this way, I suggest, class-based assumptions may counteract the anti-hunger advocacy goals of the Food Stamp Challenge.

Specifically, articulations of normalcy, and "foodsplaining" management strategies mark the boundaries that demarcate (and, indeed denigrate) food privilege from food hardship once again. As a force of abjection (Kristeva, 1982) the FSC re-entrenches social boundaries by in fact articulating loathsome food practices with loathsome alimentary subjects (the food insecure), demonstrating how alimentary privilege comes to

be out of being "edged" by the abject. Indeed, this effect is evident in participant associations of poor diet with poor people, convenience ("lazy") foods with indolent individuals, as they used "foodsplaining" in articulations of food insecurity as personal responsibility. These trends mirror those evident in environmental discourses that articulate marginalized groups with environmental waste (Buell, 1998; Pezzullo, 2007), and bolster arguments I have presented in the previous two case studies suggesting articulations of poverty with economic waste.

Consideration of relations of food access opens space for environmental communication scholarship to treat food disparities in terms of access to comestible resources. As demonstrated in Chapter II, food exists within circulations of capital, co-conditioning sustenance as it moves through the social metabolism. Recall that the physical *availability* of food, economic and physical *access* to food, adequate *utilization* of food, and the *stability* of these factors over time are the four criteria of food security (FAO, 2008). Each is co-conditioned by the relations of access described above, they also co-condition the relations of sustenance that enables and constrains food security. Grocery store selections and food pantry inventories are direct entailments of the agriculture and nutrition programs promulgated by the Farm Bill. Economic capabilities articulated within webs of converging social processes enable and constrain subjects' positionality, and thereby, their ability to meet the above criteria. If food assistance exists to "enable recipients to buy more and healthier food than they otherwise might" (USDA Food & Nutrition Service, 2012), these programs necessarily communicate about the production, distribution, availability and affordability of comestible resources.

As a critical intervention into food-based discourses, this case study offers two

suggestions for food justice rhetoric and praxis. First, food justice should take heed to be aware (and perhaps wary) of the abjective force of hunger. As the analysis illustrates, the phenomenology of hunger both collapsed meaning (we are all bodies that hunger) and re-entrenched class assumptions and social stigma by pinging back from *that* to solidify the territory of *I* (Kristeva, 1982). Indeed, participants' descriptions of abnormal consumption practices and "foodsplaining" of appropriate coping strategies more readily indicates their alimentary privilege than SNAP recipients' food hardship; it is from the vantage point of abundance (articulated in terms of relations of access) that FSC participants are able to critique those who *lack* adequate nutrition, dietary habits, and "life management skills." Thus, like the publication of Harrington's *The Other America*, the Food Stamp Challenge the biopolitics of visibility presents a weighty responsibility.

Further, food justice advocates should (re)consider the FSC's conflation of hunger and food security. As noted, FSC is able to phenomenoligically reveal all dimensions of FAO criteria for achieving food security, but participants experience this through the primary sensation of hunger. Although the physical feeling of not having enough to eat can be a motivator, primarily as a moralistic appeal, it also limits the scope of social and policy change. Indeed, as Chapter 1 explains, food security has been lifted up as the term of choice in the discourse of economic development because of its signification with circuits of exchange, modes of distribution, and other sets of late capitalist econo-social processes. Mobilizing hunger as impetus for food system reform, I suggest, reifies the very logic by which workfare and other antipoverty discourses function. In this way, advocating via hunger reinforces conceptions of personal responsibility, cementing it as punishment for wasting economic potential. The question for food justice and anti-hunger

advocates should not be, as Poppendieck (1998) asks, “How hungry do people have to be, and for how long, before we feel that is appropriate to assist them?” (p. 79), but rather how can the concept of food security move beyond the provision of a food supply and access to calories. I take up this imperative in the Conclusion chapter.

Endnotes

[1] Social Soup is a monthly lunch-and-learn series held on the campus of the University of Utah. I served as Co-Chair of the organizing committee from 2012-2015. Open to the University community and the general public, these monthly events are organized to raise awareness of food justice and sustainability issues, including food preservation, urban gardening, genetically modified (GM) foods, and other pertinent topics. Past events have included nationally recognized food movement figures, including Eric Holt-Giminez of Food First, and Saru Jayaraman of the Restaurant Opportunities Center United.

[2] Data for this chapter are comprised of public social media posts (including Facebook and LinkedIn, and open access blog on the Utahns Against Hunger website) and their accompanying comments, transcripts of five semistructured interviews, as well as my fieldnotes and reflections from the SLC FSC. In total, this corpus comprises more than 100 pages of text.

[3] The Food Stamp Challenge is intended to be completed over the course of a calendar week (consecutive 7-day period). To be clear, however, this is not an accurate simulation of how food stamp purchasing operates. Enrollees receive their monthly allowance on debit-style Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, with the remainder of the monthly benefits rolling over month-to-month. Like a debit card in the check-out line, EBT purchases are automatically deducted from the recipient's allowance. The Food Stamp allowance is not intended (Edin et al., 2013) to be the sole source of payment for food in the month— hence the inclusion of *Supplemental* in the acronym Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, the new name for Food Stamps adopted in 2008). However, for many who rely on FS, it is indeed the case that their food stamp allowance becomes the only source of food for them, creating the monthly boom-bust cycle that can leave cupboards bare at the end of the month until the allowance is replenished (Edin et al., 2013).

[4] Many media outlets reporting on Booker's Food Stamp Challenge questioned his motives. For example, Pous and Waxman of *Time Magazine* (2012) called out this "stunt" that "as Booker's name is bandied about as a possible gubernatorial candidate, the extra publicity certainly doesn't hurt." Similar skepticism was voiced in reports from *The Economist* (2012), NBC News (Resnikoff, 2012), and Salon.com (Williams, 2012).

[5] A pseudonym.

[6] "Splaining," is an increasingly popular term that references "a general process by which a privileged figure who is nevertheless an outsider 'splains' to a marginalized insider the nature of the latter's own experience" (Goldberg, 2014). Originated by Rebecca Solnit (2012) in her popular essay, "Men Explain Things to Me," and popularized through social and mainstream media, "mansplaining" refers to a discursive tactic by which one "explains without regard to the fact that the explainee knows more than the explainer, often done by a man to a woman" (Rothman, 2012). Scholars have begun articulating this concept with other facets of social identity including race ("whitesplaning), and weight or

body type ("thinsplaining) (see Goldberg, 2014). Thus, the term "foodsplaining" in this chapter is an intentional play on this concept, signifying a rhetorical tactic by which the food privileged- outsiders to the real experience of food insecurity- explain to the food insecure how food security *should* be achieved.

[7] The excerpt examined here represents similar comments made across the three FSC campaigns analyzed for this case study. I also reflect on the prevalence of what I am calling "foodsplaining" in my fieldnotes from the SLC FSC.

CHAPTER V

HUNGER AS BIOPOLITICAL CONDITION:

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

"Eating is an agricultural act." – Wendell Berry, "The Pleasures of Eating"

"Another food system is *possible." –Eric Holt-Giminez & Annie Shattuck,* Food Movements Unite!

Hunger is not simply a function of resource availability or scarcity. Global food production is near an all-time high (FAO, 2014), while nearly 40% of all food in the US goes wasted (Bloom, 2010). Thus, emphasis on the production of more food is not enough to achieve food security that, I suggest, would be too easy. Hunger is an issue of access and distribution, and, as such, is mediated by relations of power that structure the availability, affordability, and utilization of alimentary resources. Unlike McGovern's inflection of this sentiment in this dissertation's epigraph, in which he articulates the condition of hunger with the lack of political will, this project submits that hunger is rather a condition of the political economic system it entwines.

Thus the critical question by which this project has been motivated is *how is hunger enabled and constrained via relations of sustenance*? With an eye toward food systems (foodways), this dissertation has taken up the political economy of food security

in terms of the enabling and constraining nature of capitalist discourse.

By tracing food security's rhetorical entanglement with environmental, economic, and cultural processes, this project complicates the simplistic notion of food security as the provision of an adequate food supply. Rejecting moralistic considerations of hunger and poverty, this project maps manifestations of food justice, providing insight into the discursive function of food security in maintaining a particular type of (late capitalist) food system. The previous chapters have demonstrated how public policy, activism, and advocacy discourses articulate food security in the service of particular political and economic ends. In this chapter, I draw on the previous case studies to articulate my contributions to rhetoric, Post-Marxist theory, and environmental communication.

Articulating The Biopolitical Economy of Food via Relations of Sustenance

The flow of comestible capital complexly enfolds the gambit of socio-economic activity. Food security imbricates (and is implicated in) all aspects of the production circuit, from the growth and manufacture of commodities to the utilization of products via practices of consumption. These micro- and macro-systems of exchange constitute, arrange, and deploy an always already alimentary subjectivity. With this in mind, I have organized this project as a sketch of the biopolitical economy of food by tracing articulations of food security across three discursive contexts: farm/food policy, subminimum wage equity activism, and anti-hunger advocacy.

The case studies presented in the previous chapters have mobilized a major Marxian concept in the examination of rhetorical tactics that enable and constrain food security. Food security can readily be articulated with labor (Farm Bill), wage (tipped

workers activism), and class (Food Stamp Challenge). Operating as a metabolic mediator between nature and culture, the Farm Bill disposes of labor through nutrition and agriculture programs. Providing food assistance benefits on the basis of income (commodified labor), workfare promises food security via wage; restaurant workers disarticulate the hegemonic constitution of <work> by demonstrating the contradictions of tipping. Volunteering to experience the average SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps) benefit, participants in the Food Stamp Challenge expose and re-entrench alimentary class boundaries.

Thus, across these cases, food security functions to evade the provision of an adequate food supply. Instead, it enfolds with late capitalist fears of economic contingency. That is, food security functions discursively to present and simultaneously assuage the ever-present threat of economic deficiency (waste) posed by the poor (the food *in*secure). That it is propped up as the vehicle for economic development and social stability (FAO, 2008) operates as a handy guise, hiding the biopolitical utility of food security toward maintaining an economy of co-consumption. Indeed this bolsters the hegemony of late capitalism by sustaining a political economic configuration that assures the accumulation of wealth for the state. Food security is not about "getting enough food to live a healthy life" (FAO, 2008), but rather keeping bodies integrated into the economic machine.

The case studies also demonstrate the overlapping (and, sometimes, antagonistic) subjectivities produced via food security discourse. The mobilization of food security toward managing labor-related risks via public policy articulates subjects in terms of labor power- agricultural "makers" versus nutrition assistance "takers." The dispensation

of food security via employment constitutes subjects as those who <work>. Embodiment of food in/security subjectivates tipped workers into an antagonistic chasm betwixt and between wage-earning and food hardship. The sensation of food *in*security via the phenomenology of hunger conditions subjectivity via relations of access. The Food Stamp Challenge exposes and entrenches degrees of comestible privilege.

Woven through my analyses is the notion of an always already alimentary subjectivity. Undergirding labor power, wage-earning potential, and class-based access is the human requirement for food. Indeed, we are all bodies that require food for biological and physiological function; we are all bodies that hunger and eat. Yet, the scope of industrial food and the late capitalist political economy by which it is co-conditioned binds our bodies to circuits of comestible exchange. Thus, articulations of food security and alimentary subjectivity are always already in service of maintaining the capitalist mode of production. In this way, food operates within a biopolitical economy of co-consumption. I specifically deploy this term in reference to the constant production/exchange/consumption of labor instantiated by the capitalist social metabolism. Indeed, the exchange process engenders the metabolization of labor through agents' commodification via production, and the metabolization of labor through agents' consumption. At once, we consume and are consumed.

Case study analyses demonstrate how co-consumption functions through sets of dialectical tensions imbricating the body. As indicated, labor is fed and metabolized via the flow of comestible capital. The Farm Bill makes this possible by structuring agriculture and nutrition policy in order to "grow[] food to feed people" (159 Cong. Rec., 2013). In the context of wage equity activism, tipped workers are both secure (via so-

called <work>) and at risk (vulnerable to food hardship articulated as sexual harassment and illness), via the "absent fullness" instantiated by the tipped wage system. For those who participate in Food Stamp Challenge campaigns, the comestible privilege of some is exposed (and bolstered) by the hardship of others.

Environmental, rhetorical and critical/cultural scholarship must move beyond assumptions of the sated body, and analyses of food-related media and other benign representations of comestible culture. I argue that food security is a rhetorical product of late capitalist relations of sustenance, subjectivating bodies within circuits of comestible exchange, binding us to the alimentary practices it organizes, and thereby enabling and constraining subjects' rhetorical capacities.

Eating Is an Environmental Act: Food as Environmental Justice

Food embodies the nexus of nature and sociality by demonstrating how cultural practices are bound in reciprocity to processes of environmental decision-making. From policies that regulate farm production, to practices that organize dietary intake, food enfolds bodies with the environment. Thus, food security necessarily speaks volumes about the sets of practices that organize enviro-economic relations. As each element of this dialectic is itself co-conditioned by disparities of power, food is a necessary extension of environmental justice. The previous case studies shed light on several aspects of food justice, mapping its landscape through its permutations across the circuit of comestible capital. Articulating food with environmental justice, I suggest, allows for wider consideration of the environmental and social implications of the late-capitalist food system.

This dissertation has traced three ramifications of food justice via the arrangement

of foodways, attenuating implications of food industry wage inequity, and social structures of economic capability and food access. Demonstrated in Chapter 2, the Farm Bill sutures the ubiquity of industrial food through its arrangement of the global food system. Agriculture policies, in determining what commodities are produced, have direct impact on grocery store inventories and food prices. Mechanisms like the grocery aisle, packaging, restaurant patronage, and other dietary practices are one of the primary ways late capitalist subjects engage the environment (Nestle, 2007; Patel, 2007; Poppendieck, 1998). Environmental justice vigilantly combats uneven processes of environmental decision-making, as the channels by which these processes occur often limit particular groups' participation, while making decisions that further marginalize those same groups (Bullard, 1990, 1993, 2007; Cole & Foster, 2001; Gibbs, 1998/2011; Gottlieb, 1993; Pezzullo, 2007; Walker, 2012). As the major piece of public policy regulating the production and consumption of foodstuffs, the Farm Bill functions as the principal site of food-related decision-making. As my analysis of Congressional deliberations demonstrates, the Farm Bill codifies priorities for food access based on degrees of labor value. Those always already marginalized as economic waste (the food insecure) are berated by Representatives and then doubly chastised through stigmatizing social policy. This is most evident, as I have suggested in Chapters 2 and 3, in the uptake of a workfare paradigm in food assistance programs that predicate food access on economic integration, using appeals to <work> as backhanded sympathy.

Second, like environmental justice, food justice discourse seeks to map the varied modes by which *in*justice occurs, locating its articulation into overlapping environmental, economic, and social systems (Alkon & Agyemon, 2011; Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010). For

example, health effects of lead paint articulates to systems of housing projects, standards of living, and regulations on the manufacture of indoor paint (Bullard, 2007); the immediate injustice incurred by low-income children radiates across several other econo-social processes. The analysis of tipped workers wage equity activism presented in Chapter III similarly traces the complex layering of food injustice and its diffusion across the food system. The immediate injustices faced by tipped workers are serious – workplace instability, illness, and sexual harassment – and these are functions of the subminimum wage structure. To be sure, the subminimum wage regime is maintained by a powerful industry that in fact exploits its own customers by subsidizing its employees' wages. That tips are discursively disguised as a bonus, or burden (Chapter III), implicates customers in the food security of those who serve their food, while also demonstrating how commonplace restaurant patronage has become for US consumers. Furthermore, that restaurant employees are ineligible for sick days or other health benefits, cooking and serving food while ill, articulates food *in*justice into the realm of workplace safety and consumer health. That alimentary subjects are left with few options for procuring comestible resources other than their wage (for which their labor has been commodified), implicates all economic agents with degrees of food injustice.

What most explicitly articulates Food Stamp Challenge participant responses onto a plane of environmental and food justice is the articulation of food insecurity (poor *people*) with unsavory and stigmatized alimentary habits (poor *diet)*. Indeed, I suggest, this is no different from associations of environmental *waste* and *toxicity* with the marginalized groups who live in close proximity to garbage dumps, landfills, chemical spills, and the like (Buell, 1998; Pezzullo, 2007). As demonstrated by the analysis in

Chapter 4, food access articulates with comestible resource utilization as conditioned by differential positionality within the food system. Finally, that food justice seeks equitable distribution of the benefits and risks of the accessing and eating food (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010), its affordability and availability readily associate with this paradigm.

Environmental justice discourse must account for food and its social justice implications. This dissertation critically intervenes by demonstrating two expansive moves food justice provides for EJ: to nuance our consideration of the "environment," and the transcendence of identity politics. In these ways, food justice productively moves EJ scholarship and praxis beyond nature/culture and race/class binaries, by which it has been stifled for some time.

First, food is situated at the nexus of the environment, politics, economics, and cultural systems. Agriculture, diet, nutrition, and other alimentary practices emplace the human species within complex webs of relations, navigated and mediated by political choices we make every day. Food is intimately positioned to enter our homes, our places of work, and our bodies in ways that are simultaneously necessary, contingent, and contradictory. In this way, as I note above, the ubiquity of food makes its articulation with these webs of practice "at the lowest level of respect" (de Certeau & Giard, 2008), that is, so taken for granted that they are rendered nearly invisible. Indeed, as my case studies demonstrate, food transects the environment and econo-sociality through policy regimes, resource access, and dietary practice. In this way, I suggest, food necessarily expands the scope of what "the environment" signifies, as it operates at the interstices of nature and culture, places humans in intimate relation to natural (comestible) resources, and co-conditions other socio-cultural processes.

Yet environmental communication scholarship in this area largely tends to emphasize the "traditional" realm of "Nature" via case studies of toxic spills and chemical leaks, reforestation campaigns (Endres, 2012; Hunt, 2014; Peeples, 2013). I suggest that issues like inter/national farm and food policy, struggles for wage equity, diet-related practices, and anti-hunger advocacy reveal the complex ways that humans use, access, and consume natural (comestible) resources.

Paraphrasing Wendell Berry (1990/2010), the title of this section indicates the most immediate way food articulates with the environment: everybody eats, and we are all bodies that hunger. As the previous case studies highlight, food necessarily and complexly enfolds the various subjectivities we inhabit. In this way, food transcends identity politics. Making this claim does not negate my previous arguments for the marginalizing effects of food and foodways, but rather eschews the logic of reducing subjectivity to a single identity marker. Indeed, EJ discourse is stymied by a race/class binary. The alimentary subjectivity made possible via considerations of food justice productively bypasses this blockade.

EJ has productively turned attention to power and positionality in relation to systems of environmental decision-making, galvanizing grass-roots resistance to unjust practices. Yet, both praxis and scholarship have largely tended to treat identity markers as separate and static entities. Race and class, for example, have been stuck in a subtle war of position over the essential basis of environmental *in*justice, bifurcating the environmental racism and antitoxics movements (Bullard, 1990, 1993, 2007; Cole & Foster, 2001; Gibbs, 1982/2011; Gottlieb, 1993). For example, Robert Bullard (1990), hailed as the founder of the EJ movement, wholly dismisses the plight of Appalachia's

rural communities, arguing that on the basis of their Whiteness they have an outright greater capacity to resist injustice. Similarly, Lois Gibbs and the residents of Love Canal have more readily identified their efforts with the Anti-Toxics Movement, rather than EJ.

The danger in this is the reification of static notions of identity, particularly in terms of sedimenting race and class as separate entities. I address theoretical treatment of class as an entity in Chapter 4, arguing in favor of relational subjectivity. The overlapping and contradictory nature of converging identity processes is also demonstrated by my analysis in Chapter III. For EJ scholarship, this narrow view on identity is not only reductionist and essentializing, but limits critical consideration of the wider, systemic, processes at work in instances of injustice. For example, it is only by examining tipped workers' wage equity activism that the issue of customers subsidizing restaurant waitstaff can be articulated as an environmental justice issue with reference to the food insecurity experienced by tipped workers themselves. Furthermore, it is through a food justice perspective that the subjectivation of customers into this kind of wage regime can be interrogated. Not all who dine in restaurants are food privileged (for example, some restaurants now take Food Stamp benefits for payment), yet patrons are at once articulated as a supplier of servers' income as they purchase food for themselves.

Indeed, food justice highlights the various ways that subjects are articulated into the food system, revealing the complex and intersecting ways that food confronts cultural nodes like employment and income, housing and transportation, geography, and social history. Thus, as the case studies demonstrate, food justice eschews unproductive dichotomies of race versus class, asking scholars and advocates to unpack the various and multifaceted articulatory practices that subjectivate groups into the food system.

The Point Is to Change it: Implications for Alimentary Praxis

Taking up the impetus for praxis galvanized in the traditions of critical rhetoric cultural studies, and environmental communication, this project takes as its primary aim the articulation of food security as an issue of environmental justice, toward the development of food justice. Food justice articulates a clear objective for critical praxis by "help[ing] guide food system action and policy change" (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010, p. 5). In this section, I draw on insights gained from the case study analyses, presenting two implications for critical alimentary praxis and further development of food justice discourse and scholarship.

First, for food justice to continue to flourish and activate radical food system change, scholars and advocates must consider the complex ways that food crosses, intersects, and enfolds other socio-economic and environmental processes. My tracing of articulations of food security through public policy, wage equity, and anti-hunger contexts evidences this complexity. Indeed, employment, wage, labor conditions, dietary and nutritional needs, housing, transportation, and child-care all mediate and co-condition food access and utilization. Such interweaving stitches a complicated advocacy agenda. More specifically, the particular political economic frame of this study indicates a greater need to engage the economic logic that undergirds the food system and its marginalizing effects. Such a perspective propels the radicalization of food justice efforts by challenging the very structures that condition the circulation of comestible capital. This, I suggest, necessitates coalitions and intersections that bring food directly into conversation with the other processes mentioned above. Most fruitful among these, I suggest, is an alliance between the food and labor movements.

Second, responsibility toward food insecure subjects must be navigated with an eye toward the biopolitics of visibility. By this I mean the delicate responsibility that comes with engaging the tension between exposing and reconfiguring disparities in the food system. As I discuss this concept in Chapter 4, bringing attention (visibility) to those who live at the margins, and are thereby nearly socially invisible, is both empowering and dangerous. Focusing public attention on a marginalized group may in fact reify the social stigma that marginalizes that group to begin with. In the case of the food insecure (often conflated with those in poverty, though this is not empirically accurate), biopolitics of visibility engenders a dual in/visibility via articulations with waste (i.e., wasted subjectivity, per Baumann, 2004).

Indeed, articulations of the poor with economic waste weave through each of this project's case studies. As shown in Chapter 2, Congressional representatives seeking improvements to nutrition assistance programs unable to avoid framing diet-related health disparities as economic burden. In the context of Farm Bill deliberations, this is a rhetorical move to engage the stereotype of "the poor" as a drain, propping up the health impacts of robust nutrition assistance to assuage rebuttals from the opposing side. Yet this frame, an attempt at social inclusion by making health disparities visible, functionally reifies the stigma of the indolent poor (social exclusion) through associations of diet-related disease and a lack of personal responsibility. Similarly, the hegemony of <work>, in suturing employment with food security, is built on late capitalist articulations of paid labor as economic integration. Indeed, as I characterize workfare discourse in Chapter 3, those who are not "productive members of society" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 2) by not commodifying their labor and achieving food security via income are

articulated as wasted labor, indeed, outside "the economic mainstream" (Mandatory Workfare Program, 1983, p. 66) become subjectivated under a penitentiary system of food assistance benefits. Finally, as my analysis in Chapter 4 demonstrates, appeals to alimentary normalcy and strategy articulate *poor people* with *poor dietary habits*, reifying associations of poverty with wasted social (and personal) responsibility. In each of these cases, rhetorical moves are made to expose the condition of the food insecure, to initiate particular food system reforms, yet that exposure doubles the vulnerability of this always already marginalized population by reifying social stigma.

In response, food justice advocates must seek out ways to demystify food hardship while also empowering those who experience it. This is not an easy task, and there is no easy plan of alternative intervention. To be sure, as I explicate in Chapter 4, hunger sucks; hiding, belying or otherwise shading that fact obfuscates any potential for food system change. Yet heavy-handed sympathy and moralistic appeals unduly fetishize poverty, reifying paternalistic policies and sedimenting social stigma.

Finally, food justice must embrace a radical agenda aimed at wholly transforming, rather than reforming, the global food system (Holt-Giminez, 2011). Indeed, as this project has shown, food security is a distinct category of late capitalist relations of sustenance. Indeed, as Lawrence and McMichael (2012) submit, the current market-oriented approach of intensifying the production of comestible resources "has been shown to fall considerably short" of achieving food security (p. 136). I concur, as under such a paradigm, hunger cannot be eradicated; hunger itself productively serves the imperative of capital accumulation via biopolitical co-consumption. Furthermore, that environmental impacts (such as pollution, deforestation, as well as drought and other

effects of climate change) cannot but be externalized by this economic regime, the link between a deteriorating global environment, increasing population and food demand, and food provisioning and distribution must not only be accounted for, but engaged via radically reconfigured relations of sustenance. With this in mind, I entreat food justice advocates, and environmental communication scholars, to embrace an integrative view of food and foodways to "rethink the meaning of-along with the mechanisms to promote and achieve- food security" (Lawrence & McMichael, 2012, p. 138).

To do this, we can begin by embracing efforts to expand the measurement of food security. For example, the Food and Human Security Index (FHSI) can be a viable alternative assessment tool for generating insights into the complexity of food production, distribution, and consumption. Developed by Carolan (2013), the FHSI discursively rearticulates *food* security as *nutritional* security, as the former emphasizes the production of resource-intensive, calorie-dense, and nutrient-poor commodities and the manufacture of processed foods. Indeed, the turn to nutritional security refocuses attention on the ways by which relations of sustenance operate at the interstices of nature and culture, by linking human well-being, environmental sustainability, and market concentration (p. 181).

With a more integrative concept of food security in mind, perhaps offered by mechanisms like the FHSI, we must also consider global issues of food dependency and radical movements toward food sovereignty. As Carolan (2013) notes, rethinking food security along these lines also articulates with food independence. The most food insecure states are geographically located in the Global South, have higher rates of poverty per capita, and produce a larger share of the world's food supply (Carolan, 2013;

Holt-Giminez, 2011; Lawrence & McMichael, 2012; Patel, 2007; Schade & Pimentel, 2010). These states then become unable to feed themselves through structural adjustment policies, land grabs, peak oil, fresh water constraints, and climate change (Lawrence & McMichael, 2012), thereby becoming dependent on the Global North for food provision (by trade or aid). By measuring food security in terms of distribution and well-being, the FHSI can more fruitfully highlight these disparities, bolstering local efforts to reshape the global food system and redistribute alimentary power.

We are all bodies that hunger. Food is necessary for biological existence, and its deployment as a discursive force is inescapable. Hunger, therefore, has a particular functionality in the structure of the global food system, via the arrangement of bodies within said system. As alimentary subjects, we are enmeshed within relations of sustenance that enfold our bodies into the capitalist economic machine. Thus, food security is not just a *political* condition, but a *biopolitical* condition. Interpreting the conditions of hunger in late capitalism is only the first step toward alimentary praxis; the point is to change them.

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