

**Want Amid Plenty:  
The Capitalist Paradox of Hunger and Food Waste**

by

**Alaina Spencer**

Food Systems and Society

Marylhurst University

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Food Systems and Society

March 19, 2018

Thesis Advisors: Sean Gillon, Ph.D. and Patricia Allen, Ph.D.

[Thesis Approval Page]

[This page will be provided for you. Just leave this page blank for now]

Copyright © 2018 by

Alaina Spencer

## Table of Contents

List of Tables	vi
Abstract	vii
<b>Chapter One. Introduction: Want Amid Plenty</b>	<b>8</b>
The General Public and Want Amid Plenty	9
Food’s Status as a Commodity and Want Amid Plenty	10
Significance of Understanding Want Amid Plenty	10
<b>Chapter Two. Background and Significance: How is food a commodity and what does this mean?</b>	<b>13</b>
Capitalism and Commodities	14
Food as a Commodity and Alternate Views	16
Food as a Right	16
Food as Commons or Public Good	18
Food as Charity	19
Social Problem: Want Amid Plenty	20
Companies and Commodities	20
Consumer Power	21
Production Narrative	22
A So-Called Paradox: Want Amid Plenty	23
Food Relief Organizations	25
Research Problem	26
Conclusion	27
<b>Chapter Three. Methodology and Methods</b>	<b>28</b>
Positionality	28
Methodology	29
Methods	30
Constitutive Research Question 1: Agricultural Industry	30
Constitutive Research Question 2: Food Relief Organizations	31
Conclusion	33
<b>Chapter Four. Results, Analysis, and Contribution: Agricultural Industry and Food Relief Organizations</b>	<b>34</b>

Constitutive Research Question One: Agricultural Industry	35
Results	36
Seed Companies	38
Equipment Companies	40
Pesticide Companies	42
All Agricultural Companies	43
Analysis	44
2007-8 Food Crisis	44
Mechanization and Modernization	45
Market and Trade Liberalization	47
Constitutive Research Question Two: Food Relief Organizations	48
Results	50
Food Aid Organizations	52
Food Banks	54
Food Waste Organizations	56
All Food Relief Organizations	58
Analysis	58
Immediate Needs	59
Donations	60
Funding	61
Contribution	63
Political Change	64
New Views of Food	65
Community Scale	66
Conclusion	67
<b>Chapter Five. Conclusion</b>	<b>68</b>
Key Findings	69
Implications for Social Justice and Social Change	70
References	74

**List of Tables**

Table 1 Agricultural Industry Discourse.....	37
Table 2 Food Relief Organization Discourse.....	51

## Abstract

The issue of want amid plenty, or people going hungry when there is an abundance of food, has long plagued the capitalist society. People have suggested that want amid plenty is a paradox, but this thesis suggests that want amid plenty is a product of food's status as a commodity. As such, this research addresses the persistence of the idea that want amid plenty is a paradox in the food system in order to understand how agricultural industry's and food relief organizations' discourse influences the general public's understanding of want amid plenty so that we can reveal gaps in discourse and move towards a more just food system. To do this, I ask one overall research question: How might existing discourse enable or prevent the general public's understanding of want amid plenty? In examining discourse, it appears that the agricultural industry's response to the 2007-8 food crisis played a major role in allowing the agricultural industry to frame want amid plenty as a paradox. In addition, donations, government funding, and time constraints greatly dictate the way food relief organizations frame want amid plenty, causing many of them to not question food's status as a commodity. The general public's understanding of want amid plenty as a product of food's status as a commodity is the first step in moving towards addressing the root problem. We must also enact stricter policies focused on feeding people, consider viewing food in a different light, such as food as a public good or commons, and define and address want amid plenty at the community scale.

Keywords: want amid plenty, hunger, food waste, capitalism, food commodities, agricultural industry, food relief organizations

## Chapter One

### Introduction: Want Amid Plenty

In the United States, and globally, we have a deep and persistent problem with hunger. According to the World Food Programme, “815 million people—one in nine—still go to bed on an empty stomach each night” (World Food Programme 2018). At the same time, we have an abundance of food produced, and an abundance of food wasted. On this front, according to the World Food Programme, “Of the 4 billion metric tons of food we produce each year, one third is wasted” (World Food Programme 2018). In other words, one in nine people are hungry, while one third of the food produced is wasted. The fact that these two issues co-exist is somewhat perplexing.

Actually, hunger and food waste are often presented together, as a paradox. How can we have so many hungry people and an overproduction of food, leading to food waste, at the same time? The idea of this paradox has existed since The Great Depression. In 1932, Walter Lippmann spoke of “the sensational and the intolerable paradox of want in the midst of abundance” (Poppendieck 1986, xvi). Thus, Walter Lippmann gave name to the paradox of want amid plenty; there are people hungry, i.e. in want, while there is also plenty, i.e. food wasted.

Increased production is often suggested as the solution to hunger, in what is known as the production narrative. The production narrative suggests that hunger can be solved by increased food production, even though hunger has co-existed with an overproduction of food since The Great Depression. Large companies in the agricultural industry, who profit from food production, are usually the ones championing the production narrative. But not everyone agrees that increased production is the solution to hunger.

In 1998, Janet Poppendieck published two significant writings, *Sweet Charity?* and *Want Amid Plenty: From Hunger to Inequality*, that presented a new framework for understanding these interrelated issues. Poppendieck (1998a and 1998b) revealed that hunger is due not to a lack of food produced, but to poverty. When people are surrounded by food but do not have enough money to purchase it, this is want amid plenty. Thus, Poppendieck (1998b) proved that “the ‘sensational and the intolerable paradox of want in the midst of abundance’” is not a paradox, but a product of food being part of the capitalist system (5). Surprisingly, in response, we still have not gotten the food we do have into the hands of those who need it.

Actually, food waste persistently increases, and hunger continues to grow. In the 20 years since the publications of *Sweet Charity?* and *Want Amid Plenty: From Hunger to Inequality*, there has been no substantial change in how the basic need of food is met (Poppendieck 1998a and 1998b). Furthermore, there has been no reduction in the amount of food produced and further wasted. In fact, there seems to be a disconnect between how Poppendieck (1998a and 1998b) explained want amid plenty, as a result of capitalism, and how the problems of hunger and food waste are currently being addressed. Hunger is not addressed as a basic human need, while food production continues expanding despite the amount of food wasted.

### **The General Public and Want Amid Plenty**

The general public still largely understands want amid plenty as a paradox in the food system, which helps to explain the lack of change in addressing hunger and food waste since Poppendieck’s (1998a and 1998b) work. What is not understood is how this understanding persists despite the knowledge of the academic world negating the production narrative. We do not understand why academic knowledge is not translating into public understanding about want amid plenty.

Furthermore, while we understand the agricultural industry continues to push the production narrative in light of profit incentives, we could benefit by better understanding how this production narrative continues, when much of food academia counts the narrative as false, so that it can be more effectively addressed. So too, because the general public looks to food relief organizations in explaining the social problems of hunger and food waste, the way these organizations explain want amid plenty influences how the general public will understand it. It is unclear whether the majority of food relief organizations are framing want amid plenty as a product of the capitalist system or leaving the connections between hunger, food waste, and food's status as a commodity unconnected.

### **Food's Status as a Commodity and Want Amid Plenty**

In understanding want amid plenty, it is essential to understand food's status as a commodity in the capitalist system. Food's status as a commodity means that food is a commodity like any other. Food is something to be bought and sold, not treated as a basic necessity. Understanding food's status as a commodity is a foundational, explanatory element in want amid plenty. If food is only something to be bought and sold, it is left at the mercy of the agricultural industry overproducing food for profit, while also excluding people who cannot afford to pay for food, i.e. people are left wanting in the midst of plenty. Thus, understanding the factors that allow the general public to understand want amid plenty as a paradox must connect with understanding how food's status as a commodity produces an abundance of food and excludes those who cannot pay for such food.

### **Significance of Understanding Want Amid Plenty**

Until we understand the factors that enable the general public to understand want amid plenty as a paradox instead of a product of the capitalist system, hunger and food waste cannot

be addressed in a way that solves or even significantly reduces each issue. Research is necessary to reveal how the agricultural industry can continue to push the production narrative, in light of academia noting its falsehood, so that the general public can recognize how the production narrative leads to greater food waste not less hunger. Unless the influencing factors on the general public's understanding of want amid plenty are exposed, lasting solutions to hunger and food waste cannot be achieved. It is thus necessary to research discourse from the agricultural industry regarding the production narrative and from food relief organizations regarding their framing of want amid plenty, to move towards a more just, less hungry, and less wasteful society.

This research addresses the persistence of the idea that want amid plenty is a paradox in the food system in order to understand how agricultural industry and food relief organizations' discourse influences the general public's understanding of want amid plenty so that we can reveal gaps in knowledge or discourse and move towards a more inclusive and just food system. Ultimately, this research reveals the answers to my central research question: How might existing discourse enable or prevent the general public's understanding of want amid plenty? In order to answer my central research question, I will ask two constitutive research questions: 1) How has standard agricultural industry discourse addressed the production narrative in relation to hunger and food waste? And, 2) How is hunger in the context of abundant food explained by food organizations doing relief work?

In the next chapter, Background and Significance, I explain capitalism and commodities, explain food's status as a commodity, further detail want amid plenty, and explain the research problem of this thesis. The third chapter, Methodology and Methods, explains the overall methodology used to address the research problem, outlines the specific methods used to address

the constitutive questions, and reveals my positionality. The fourth chapter, Results, Analysis, and Contribution, explains the results of my constitutive questions, analyzes the results in light of my central research question, and offers contributions my research has made to the issues of hunger and food waste. The fifth chapter, Conclusion, summarizes the results and analyses and explains the political, industrial, and charitable implications for social justice and change concerning hunger and food waste.

## Chapter Two

### **Background and Significance: How is food a commodity and what does this mean?**

For many Americans, capitalism in the United States is as natural and as vital as the air we breathe. As Holt-Giménez (2017) confirms, “capitalism is simply not discussed in capitalist countries—not even in university economics courses—where political-economic structures are assumed to be immutable and are rarely questioned” (see Introduction). Herein lies the problem. If capitalism is not questioned, then its effects are easily overlooked. However, capitalism could be the critical influence on two of the food system’s biggest problems.

The capitalist system requires a continual production of goods for the paying market, which stands in conflict with a food system that’s tied to the earth’s natural processes. Consider Albritton’s (2009) sentiment, “the entire spirit of capitalist production, which is oriented towards the most immediate profit, stands in contradiction to agriculture, which has to concern itself with the whole gamut of permanent conditions of life required by the chain of human generations” (2). Because agriculture is intimately connected to environmental resources, agricultural production is bound by the limits of such resources. However, capitalism seeks profits, and to sell more goods, which intensifies agricultural production beyond the limits of environmental resources. Capitalism overworks the environment and perpetuates an overproduction of agricultural products so that there will be more products on the market for people to buy, but some people do not have the money to buy these products. Therefore, capitalist production requires a disregard for both hunger and food waste by requiring a continual supply of agricultural goods for the market and by requiring people to pay in order to eat.

This chapter aims to shed light on the ways capitalism is influencing both hunger and food waste by drawing on scholarly literature to define and explain capitalism and commodities,

as well as food's status as a commodity. It will then explain how food waste and hunger are tied together within the capitalist system by the social problem of the so-called paradox of want amid plenty. In this so-called paradox, the capitalist system perpetuates both hunger and food waste by producing an oversupply of agricultural goods, and excluding people who cannot buy said goods. Within the so-called paradox lie the agricultural industry and food relief organizations' responses, which are the focus of this thesis research. The chapter will conclude with the research questions that drive this thesis.

### **Capitalism and Commodities**

Capitalism, the economic system used by many world powers in developed societies, is dependent on the concept of the market. Wood (2002) broadly defines capitalism as "a system in which goods and services, down to the most basic necessities of life, are produced for profitable exchange, where even human labor-power is a commodity for sale in the market, and where all economic actors are dependent on the market" (2). Because capitalism forces goods to be placed on a market in which they are dependent on exchange rates and price, prices are not fixed but can change with the ebb and flow of the market. This is termed the free market, which the United States tends to favor.

The free market overlooks the necessity of goods by relying heavily on the market to determine the price of goods, which has complicated effects. This dependence on the market disembeds goods from their social need and creates greater problems for society at large, which Block (2001) illustrates:

When state policies move in the direction of disembedding through placing greater reliance on market self-regulation, ordinary people are forced to bear higher costs. Workers and their families are made more vulnerable to unemployment, farmers are exposed to greater competition from imports, and both groups are required to get by with reduced entitlements to assistance. It often takes

greater state efforts to assure that these groups will bear these increased costs without engaging in disruptive political actions. This is part of what Polanyi means by his claim that ‘laissez-faire was planned’; it requires statecraft and repression to impose the logic of the market and its attendant risks on ordinary people (xxvii).

In the free market, prices are regulated by the market through supply and demand, meaning “that the requirements of competition and profit-maximization are the fundamental rules of life” (Wood 2002, 2). In relation to food, this is illustrated by increasing agricultural production, minimizing input costs, and selling as many food products as possible for as little as possible. The emphasis on competition and profits has not always been so, yet the origin of capitalism is not agreed upon.

There are varying beliefs about the origin of capitalism, ranging from a belief that its origins and expansions are “natural” to a belief that it developed from unequal distributions of power. According to world systems theory, capitalism emerged from the world economy in which there was “an unequal exchange between regions” (Wood 2002, 18). Specifically, imperial powers exploited lesser powers, which gave rise to capitalism in some places and not others. Conversely, the commercialization model associates capitalism with the rise of cities, indicating the origin as a natural “quantitative increment” rather than a “major social transformation” (Wood 2002, 13). Those who believe that capitalism was and is a natural progression argue that capitalism continued and continues expanding to encompass ever-increasing commodities. A commodity is the term used for goods or services that are produced for exchange in the capitalist system, which can be anything from bottled water to human labor to agricultural products. The following section will explore the ways in which food has entered the capitalist system as a commodity.

## **Food as a Commodity and Alternate Views**

According to the commercialization model of capitalism, it was natural to commoditize food because as capitalism continued to grow, it encompassed anything and everything that could be bought or sold. This places food on the same playing field with all other commodities in a free market where competition is encouraged and expected. McMichael and Schneider (2011) confirm, “when food becomes a market commodity it satisfies monetary demand, rather than social need” (127). In this vein, food is no longer viewed as what it is, a necessary intake for survival, but something from which to make a profit. However, placing food on the same level as every commodity is not the only way food is viewed.

There are three notable alternate views of food. The first is food as a right, in which food is viewed as a basic human right on par with the need for water. The second is food as commons or public good, in which food is a common good and people actively participate in deciding the production and maintenance of their food environments. The third is food as charity, in which food is given out free of charge and is an exception in food’s status as a commodity. In the following subsections, I detail each of these three views of food in order to exemplify the possible alternative views of food.

### *Food as a Right*

Viewing food as a right means that food is no longer a commodity in the market subject to price spikes and companies’ greed, but instead is viewed and protected as a basic human right. Governments are then responsible for protecting this right for their citizens; “social policy [regarding food]...becomes mandatory, not a nicety that can be trimmed off in the interests of national budget relief” (Anderson 2013, 114). The responsibility shifts from individuals, forcing them to pay, leaving them out, or providing insufficient charity, to the government. This is not to

say that governments are providing food to every individual, but rather are ensuring “that everyone ha[s] reasonable opportunities to provide healthy food for themselves and their families” and that “food security pre-empt[s] business interests” (Anderson 2013, 119-120). Placing responsibility on governments ensures that everyone’s right to food is protected, while also allowing room for other ways of food provisioning.

Viewing food as a right also provides the space for food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is not only people’s right “to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through sustainable methods,” but also people’s “right to define their own food and agriculture systems” (La Via Campesina 2018). Food sovereignty challenges the power structures that have allowed corporations to profit off of one of life’s basic necessities by clarifying how food “is not a mere commodity but necessary to human life” (Mares and Alkon 2011, 79). Food sovereignty coincides with food as a right by allowing alternate solutions to food provisioning.

Ultimately, the root causes and solutions of hunger are defined differently when food is viewed as a right. In fact, food as a right “fundamentally changes how we see causes of and solutions to food insecurity” and, further, food waste (Anderson 2013, 113). By taking on this view, the right to food would include ensuring access to means of food production, removing federal subsidies benefitting corporations “that result in cheaper costs for many unhealthy foods” and thoroughly examining all agricultural, food, and trade policies (Anderson 2013, 120). Considering the necessity of food, many food activists and food relief organizations uphold the view of food as a right in their work towards hunger relief. The view of food as a right contrasts somewhat with the view of food as commons, which is further explained in the next subsection.

*Food as Commons or Public Good*

Another notable view of food is food as commons or public good, which goes beyond the view of food as a right. If food were viewed as public good the whole food regime would change. No longer focusing on capitalist profit in an individualistic society, food as commons would “be governed in a polycentric manner by food citizens that develop food democracies which value the different dimensions of food” (Vivero-Pol 2017, 187). In other words, instead of one entity controlling food, all citizens would be responsible for the regulation of food in a manner that respects the various dimensions of food while ensuring people maintain the right to decide their own food system.

Instead of corporations competing for profits from food, food as commons or public good would connect people to maintain their own food systems. Vivero-Pol (2017) depicts what such a food regime could look like: “a food commons regime would be based on sustainable agricultural practices and open-source knowledge through the assumption of relevant knowledge, material items, and abstract entities as global commons” (187). In this regime, food is not treated as a profit source. In its place, food is to be a common good for people to access. Further, people play a significant part in deciding and maintaining the system that produces their food. After all, the “end-goal of a food commons system...[should be] to increase food access, build community bonds and shorten distance from field to table” (Vivero-Pol 2017, 187). The transition to a food as commons or public good system will require the “embrace [of] a series of commons, including respect for the ecosystem to the re-establishment of its life cycles,” respect for indigenous knowledge in food production, and mutual support within and between various places (Dalla Costa 2004, 136). Food as commons or public good depicts a system of people working together to provide basic needs, which is exemplified by the food sovereignty movement.

Actually, it could be stated that food sovereignty aligns more closely with food as commons or public good because of people's right to define their own food system and the complete opposition to the industrial, capitalist food regime. Both food as a right and food as commons offer an alternative to the capitalist food system, but there is a final view of food that is already enacted in many countries, which is the view of food as charity.

### *Food as Charity*

Food as charity is the exception to the standard of buying and selling food in the United States and globally. Food as charity is the giving out of food for free and is enacted by food banks, soup kitchens, or any organization that is giving away food. Rather than opposing capitalism, food as charity has been made necessary by the commoditization of food and the free market, making it an unviable lens to view food.

Food as charity is not a viable alternative to capitalism for a number of reasons. Food as charity relies on surplus food, which may not be steady or nutritiously adequate. Further, food as charity does not challenge the overproduction of food, which often ends up as food waste instead of as charity. Organizations rely on surplus food to be given to them by large agricultural actors, food retailers, restaurants, or any place producing an excess of food to run their operations making their work unsustainable. This dependence on surplus food supports the overproduction of food and only placates the hungry.

Ultimately, food as charity does not reduce the amount of hungry people, nor does it reduce the amount of overproduced food. Food as charity simply redistributes overproduced food to people who need it, which is important, but not sufficient to reduce systemic hunger or food waste. Furthermore, as Allen (1999) states, "there will always be people who need food assistance as long as there is underemployment, unemployment, poverty-level wages, and

inadequate pensions and access to food is based on ability to pay” (126). Without addressing the causes of hunger, food as charity acts as a temporary Band-Aid to keep the number of hungry people at bay, all the while overlooking the excess of food that is wasted.

The three alternate views of food described above illustrate that viewing food as a commodity is not the natural way to view food, nor is it the only way to view food. Similar to the choices that created capitalism, food as a commodity was not a natural occurrence, but rather the product of people’s choices and decisions. Given that there are many views of food, we must examine the social consequences that placing food as a commodity entails.

### **Social Problem: Want Amid Plenty**

I am focusing on the issue of want amid plenty, or what Poppendieck (1998) describes as “the sensational and intolerable paradox of want in the midst of abundance” (5). Specifically, I am interested in the connections between food waste, hunger, and food’s status as a commodity. This section thoroughly describes the effects of food’s commoditization on hunger and food waste, including the responses by the agricultural industry and food relief organizations, which impact how want amid plenty is understood and addressed by the general public. The impact of discourse from the agricultural industry and food relief organizations, regarding food’s status as a commodity, hunger, and food waste, on the general public’s understanding of want amid plenty is the focus of this thesis research.

### *Companies and Commodities*

When food becomes a commodity in the market, it then acts as any other commodity. As companies work with profits in mind, it is cheapest for them to continually create an overabundance of food, let consumers buy what they will, and discard the excess. This means companies are producing as much food as possible regardless of quantities on the market and

discarding the excess, instead of producing only what is needed. The commoditization of food also allows companies to place business interests over any other interest.

In the overproduction of food, companies are taking the routes that save them costs while returning the highest profit. This means if it is more profitable to let crops rot in the field, they let them rot. If it is more profitable to reject imperfect looking produce, they reject it. If it is more profitable to throw food away than to give it away, they throw it away. When food is just another commodity, companies are free to produce as much food as possible and discard surplus in the name of profits.

### *Consumer Power*

To this point, some argue that consumers influence what companies' produce, which is the idea of consumer power. Consumer power suggests that the market changes to produce what consumers are buying the most of. Those with capitalist interests, such as the agribusinesses looking to make profits, usually employ the idea of consumer power because it allows companies to continue high production levels.

However, there are a few discrepancies in the logic of consumer power. As argued by Barnard (2016), "the idea of 'consumer power' rests on believing the *rhetoric* of capitalism while ignoring how it actually works. It assumes a relatively neat correlation between what consumers want and what actually gets produced, a relationship that ex-commodities [food waste] themselves suggest is not so straightforward" (223). Barnard (2016) employs the term "ex-commodities" to mean still valuable food items that were once a commodity in the market but have been thrown out in spite of their necessity. In other words, Barnard (2016) argues that the presence of food waste alone illustrates the little power consumers have in influencing production. Gunderson (2014) concurs with this idea by declaring, "consumers have little control

over happenings in production regimes,” further asserting that “producers are actually much more likely to influence what consumers want via advertising than consumers making independent choices” (113). While companies may produce more of what consumers are buying, that does not mean companies will produce less of everything else. Along with discrepancies in the logic of consumer power, consumer power overlooks part of the population.

The idea of consumer power itself, of course, disregards would-be consumers, the people without the money to buy food, but still with the need to eat. The relationship is not give and take. The relationship is corporations and agribusinesses somewhat blindly producing as much as possible and consumers buying what they choose from the plethora. The presence of food waste at all, and in such large quantities, illustrates that the idea of consumer power is not fundamentally sound and is simply an effort to distract from want amid plenty.

### *Production Narrative*

This continual oversupply of food for the market is a central theme in industrialized food systems and cultivates agricultural companies’ case for the production narrative. This production narrative is “the 20<sup>th</sup> century-long argument that increased yields is what can feed the hungry, a point that seems self-evident” (Aal et al. 2009, 1). Oversupplying the market not only ensures there is plenty of food to go around, but also keeps food prices down. This allows the poor to have sufficient access to food, according to the production narrative and the agricultural industry. But this argument is chock full of inconsistencies and is ultimately incorrect.

As many food activists know, the world is actually producing more than enough food for everyone to have more than the recommended caloric intake. This is a fact illustrated by Barnard (2016): “Since World War II, expanding agricultural productivity has far outstripped population growth. The total global food supply is 4,600 kcal per person per day—much of which is

inefficiently fed to animals, less than half of which gets eaten, and the rest of which gets wasted” (224). Because more than enough food is produced and people are still hungry, excess food is being discarded, leading to the problem of food waste.

The problem of food waste is completely ignored by the production narrative and the agricultural companies pushing it. As described above, when companies work for profit, they can place the interest of profit over every other interest. By focusing on profit, companies can overlook side effects like food waste, which is problematic and unsustainable for a planet with limited resources. Along with generating food waste, the production narrative does not reduce hunger, despite its claims to do so.

Oversupplying the market to keep food prices down will not eliminate or even greatly reduce hunger. This is evidenced by Aal et al. (2009): “much research now documents that the hungry remain with us, not because of the lack of food” but because people are forced to pay for such food (1). As explained previously, requiring people to pay for food will always leave people hungry.

#### *A So-Called Paradox: Want Amid Plenty*

Ultimately, all of this leads to the so-called paradox of want amid plenty: there is an excess of food produced creating food waste, but many people cannot afford to buy such food and so are left out of the market and left hungry. As Poppendieck (1998) acknowledges, “Poor people suffer for want of things that are produced in abundance in this country, things that gather dust in warehouses and inventories, but the bicycles and personal computers that people desire and could use are not perishable and hence are not rotting in front of their eyes in defiance of their bellies” (2). This contradictory consequence seems to be one of the biggest paradoxes purported by agricultural industry leaders, corporations, and those with capitalist interests in the

food system today. Upon further examination, we see that the connection of hunger and food waste is not a paradox at all. After all, “stores in a capitalist economy exist to make money, not feed people” (Barnard 2016, 103).

Because food must be bought and people do not have a choice if they want to eat, those with insufficient funds to buy food “are priced out of the market” while abundant food remains on the shelves (Mares and Alkon 2011, 79). Hunger is the result of many factors in a society, including unlivable/low wages, racism, gender discrimination, class discrimination, unachievable upward mobility, and unequal wealth distribution. In many cases, hunger is a result of the intersection of multiple factors. However, the greatest determinant of hunger is poverty. In fact, “hunger and poverty are inseparable” (Rieff 2015, xv). As Poppendieck (1998) further explains, “hunger, like homelessness and a host of other problems, is a symptom...of poverty,” not a symptom of insufficient food production (7). Thus, the so-called paradox of want amid plenty is not a paradox at all, but simply the capitalist system at work.

It is in the interests of those who profit the most from the capitalist system, the large agribusinesses and corporations in the agricultural industry, to leave the understanding of want amid plenty as a so-called paradox. When food waste and hunger are framed as a paradox, agribusinesses can ever increase their production to increase their profit. Besides, the agricultural industry does not even acknowledge that there is plenty of food produced, as evidenced by the continuation of their production narrative. Agricultural companies can continue to push the production narrative and the general public is none the wiser because they fail to understand the workings of the capitalist system. By keeping the general public from understanding how the capitalist system works in relation to food, agribusinesses and companies can continue making their profits while the general public is perplexed as to how the number of hungry people in the

world has not diminished. However, there are other food system actors influencing how the general public understands want amid plenty.

### *Food Relief Organizations*

At this point, the influence of food relief organizations on the general public's understanding comes in. Food relief organizations are the actors in the food system working to reduce hunger and food waste in various ways. There are many types of different organizations working towards these goals, but a few to note are food aid organizations, food banks, and food waste organizations. All of these organizations have a part in framing the way hunger and food waste are understood by the general public and then further addressed. Because food relief organizations are believed to be accurate providers of information on hunger and food waste, the general public largely understands hunger and food waste in light of the way these organizations are presenting them. While these organizations are doing important work in reducing hunger and food waste, they may not be engaging with the underlying driver of the so-called paradox, which is capitalism. Without food relief organizations engaging with capitalism, the general public remains confused about the underlying causes of hunger and food waste and how want amid plenty endures.

In light of the consequences of food as a commodity, we must examine how the agricultural industry continues to push the production narrative and the way food relief organizations frame hunger and food waste. This research is imperative to move the general public's understanding away from want amid plenty as a paradox, so that the issues of hunger and food waste can be addressed in a meaningful and productive way.

## Research Problem

As noted previously, Janet Poppendieck wrote *Want Amid Plenty: From Hunger to Inequality* in 1998, which highlights the abundance of food produced in the United States and the many people who are still hungry. Poppendieck (1998) even stated, “there is no shortage of food here, and everybody knows it” (1). And yet, nothing has significantly changed in the years since in regard to the amount of food produced or the number of people that are hungry. If anything, both of these issues have gotten worse.

This is in part because want amid plenty is still largely understood as a paradox. This so-called paradox allows the agricultural industry to continue overproducing and earning higher profits without ever addressing the point of getting people fed. So too, the agricultural industry can continue investing in productivity increases while the relations between abundance, poverty, distribution, and hunger are left unexamined. In addition, if food relief organizations do not explicitly denounce want amid plenty as a paradox, the general public remains confused. In light of this knowledge, new research is necessary to examine the influencing factors on the general public’s understanding of want amid plenty, including the continuation of the production narrative, in order to discover why hunger and food waste have only increased over time. To do this, I ask one overall research question: How might existing discourse enable or prevent the general public’s understanding of want amid plenty?

This thesis aims to answer that question. This research addresses the persistence of the idea that want amid plenty is a paradox in the food system in order to understand how agricultural industry and food relief organizations’ discourse influences the general public’s understanding of want amid plenty so that we can reveal gaps in knowledge or discourse and move towards a more inclusive and just food system. If we do not consider the factors that are

obscuring the root causes of want amid plenty, we can only offer temporary fixes and not lasting solutions. The first step towards offering lasting solutions is to investigate how the agricultural industry has addressed the production narrative in relation to hunger and food waste. The next step is to scrutinize how hunger in the context of abundant food is being explained by food relief organizations working to tackle these issues.

In order to uncover the factors that are preventing the general public from understanding want amid plenty, I ask two constitutive research questions: 1) How has standard agricultural industry discourse addressed the production narrative in relation to hunger and food waste? And, 2) How is hunger in the context of abundant food explained by food organizations doing relief work?

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has defined capitalism, explained food's status as a commodity, and discussed the persistence of want amid plenty. It went on to explore the implications that food's status as a commodity has for food waste and hunger (i.e. want amid plenty). Finally, the chapter ended by illustrating the ways this thesis will forward research in this area by investigating how actors in food relief organizations are explaining this so-called paradox and how the agricultural industry is engaging with the production narrative in light of the so-called paradox. The next chapter will outline the methodology and methods I will use to answer my constitutive questions and overall research question.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology and Methods**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the overall methodology I used to address my research problem as well as the specific methods I used for each constitutive question. I also explain my positionality on this topic and why I am interested in researching the contributing factors that are preventing the general public from understanding want amid plenty as a product of food's status as a commodity.

#### **Positionality**

I have spent a significant number of years working with people and communities that have gone hungry when there is an abundance of food wasted all around them. I have seen how the placement of food as a commodity leads to hunger by not allowing those in poverty to participate in the system. Because of this firsthand experience, I became captured by the idea of commodification. Through research, I have seen how food as a commodity benefits a handful of wealthy people at the expense of people of color, women, and those of low income. Additionally, research illuminated the lack of discussion around food's status as a commodity when offering solutions for food waste and hunger. All of this led me to see a relationship between food as a commodity, food waste, and hunger. In light of my thesis research, I anticipate a greater understanding of the factors that are preventing the general public from understanding or discussing want amid plenty as a product of food's status as a commodity. I also anticipate understanding how the agricultural industry continues to peddle the production narrative. Finally, I expect to contribute to a more just and inclusive food system in light of current food relief organizations' and agricultural industry's discourse.

## Methodology

I used an orientation of critical social science research. Critical social science “refuses to accept current social practices as the final context of validation” and further states, “future conditions and regularities are not predetermined,” but are instead greatly influenced by human action and ideologies (Comstock 1994, 628-629). As in critical social science, I believe that “conditions must be shown not to be the consequences of immutable laws but to be structures and processes constructed by elites with specific interests and intentions” (Comstock 1994, 634). By researching the agricultural industry and food relief organizations’ discourse on the causes of hunger in the midst of food waste, we can reveal the gaps in knowledge and the ways in which the production narrative has been addressed, to illuminate how want amid plenty needs to be addressed going forward.

In addition to critical social science, I used a scoping review methodology to explore how food organizations and the agricultural industry are explaining the presence of hunger alongside the plethora of wasted food, in addition to the continuation of the production narrative. As stated by Terstappen, Hanson, and McLaughlin (2013) “scoping reviews focus on breadth and allow for the inclusion of research from a wide array of disciplines and epistemological traditions” (2). While scoping reviews are most commonly conducted with academic literature, I employed this methodology with the discourse found on websites and publications of food organizations, including food aid organizations, food banks, and food waste organizations, and companies in the agricultural industry including, agricultural seed companies, agricultural equipment companies and agricultural pesticide companies. A scoping review illuminates the range of ways that the issues of food waste and hunger are discussed by the agricultural industry and food relief organizations. Moreover, a scoping review illustrates the ways hunger and food waste are being

addressed, including the agricultural industry's push of the production narrative. Ultimately, a scoping review reveals if want amid plenty is being discussed as a product of food's status as a commodity by the agricultural industry or food relief organizations. Examining food relief organizations' and the agricultural industry's discourse surrounding food waste and hunger exposed the gaps in knowledge, understanding, and how the production narrative persists.

## **Methods**

In this subsection, I detail the methods I used to address each constitutive question.

### *Constitutive Research Question 1: Agricultural Industry*

The first constitutive question I asked was: How has standard agricultural industry discourse addressed the production narrative in relation to hunger and food waste? Because most industrial agriculture is not confined to one country, I addressed this issue at a global scale. The data I needed when researching this question was the agricultural industry literature, which included websites and other publications from the specific agricultural companies in the seed realm, equipment realm, and pesticide realm. When using a scoping review in examining these websites and publications, I used a few key concepts to focus my research and understand what came up. The key concepts I engaged with on relevant discourse were food commodities, free market, food waste, hunger, increase production, and food security. As evidenced by the data I needed, the sources I used were specific agricultural industry websites and publications.

To determine the exact agricultural industry websites and publications to use, I conducted an internet search for the largest agricultural companies based on revenue. I included only those companies working directly with agriculture in three categories: seed companies, equipment companies, and pesticide companies. The top five companies in each category were included in my data. Unsurprisingly, some companies appeared in more than one category and so appear

twice in Table 1 in the Results, Contribution, and Analysis chapter. Because I examined specific companies, my unit of analysis was agricultural companies working in direct relation with agriculture production. Listed below are the specific companies I researched, or my unit of observation. The agricultural seed companies were: Monsanto, Du Pont, Syngenta, Groupe Limagrain and Land O' Lakes. The agricultural equipment companies were: Deere & Co, CNH Industrial, Kubota, AGCO, and CLAAS. Finally, the agricultural pesticide companies were: Bayer, Dow AgroSciences, BASF, Monsanto, and Syngenta.

After I examined the discourse from these companies, I employed an inductive analytical framework of my own making, which was based on what the discourse revealed. I categorized explanations by the agricultural industry based on the factors and themes that arose from the websites and publications. I also used a table to categorize how agricultural companies address the production narrative in regard to hunger and food waste by examining various agribusiness' websites and/or publications. Once I collected all of the data, I used the repeating factors and themes that arose from the discourse to create categories, which then allowed comparison of companies and divulged the overarching discourse of the agricultural companies as a whole. The categories display how standard agricultural industry discourse addresses hunger, food waste, and the production narrative, in relation to both of these issues.

#### *Constitutive Research Question 2: Food Relief Organizations*

The second constitutive question I asked was: How is hunger in the context of abundant food explained by food organizations doing relief work? Like agricultural companies, many food organizations operate in multiple countries, so I addressed this issue at the global scale. To answer this question I needed specific data, which consisted of food relief organization websites and other publications from specific food aid organizations, food banks, and food waste

organizations. Since I also used a scoping review for this question, I employed a few key concepts to focus my research and clarify the themes that came up. The key concepts were food waste, food security/insecurity, food access, hunger, capitalism, and a combination of the five. As displayed by the data I needed, the sources I used were food relief organization websites and publications.

To choose the specific food relief organizations to examine, I used a data collection strategy that consisted of an internet search for the largest actors in hunger relief work, both nationally and globally. To ensure various sides of food relief organizations were represented, I then included the top five organizations in each of the following categories: food aid organizations, food banks, and food waste organizations. For food banks, I chose food banking networks as well as three specific food banks, each in areas of the world not covered by the food banking networks, so that the span would be global. For food waste organizations, I chose the largest organizations covering varying parts of the world. However, food waste organizations were found to be more prevalent in the United States and Europe, so each is represented more than once. Since I examined specific food relief organizations, my unit of analysis was food relief organizations that are engaged with hunger and/or food waste. Listed below are the exact food relief organizations I included in my research, or my unit of observation. The food aid organizations were: World Food Programme, Feeding America, Action Against Hunger, The Hunger Project, and Heifer International. The food bank organizations were: The Global FoodBanking Network, European Federation of Food Banks, Food Banking Regional Network, Second Harvest Asia, and Food Bank Australia. Finally, the food waste organizations were: Europe Food Use for Social Innovation by Optimizing Waste Prevention Strategies, Feedback, Food Recovery Network, Oz Harvest, Save Food Asia Pacific, and ReFED.

After I examined the discourse from these food relief organizations, I employed an inductive analytical framework of my own making, which was based on what the discourse revealed. I categorized the explanations based on themes and factors that arose from food relief organization discourse. As I did in constitutive question one, I used a table to categorize how hunger is being explained in the face of food waste by using the themes and factors that arose from the food relief organization discourse. To analyze the data I collected, I used the themes from the discourse that I transitioned to categories, which then allowed for comparison of organizations and revealed the dominant discourse of food organizations as a whole. These categories display how food relief organizations explain the presence of hunger in the midst of food waste and/or the factors they are focusing on instead. This information is vital to understand the way food relief organizations frame want amid plenty, which further reveals how the general public understands want amid plenty.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the methodology and methods I used in conducting research on the food relief organizations and agricultural industry discourse surrounding food waste, hunger, and the production narrative. The chapter also identified my positionality and purpose for conducting this research. The next chapter will explain the results and analysis of this research as well as the contribution of this research to food system equity.

## Chapter Four

### **Results, Analysis, and Contribution: Agricultural Industry and Food Relief Organizations**

This thesis addresses the topic of capitalism, specifically focusing on food's status as a commodity. In light of this topic, I am looking at how the agricultural industry and food relief organizations' discourse address the social problem of hunger in the face of food waste, i.e. want amid plenty, and how this influences the general public's understanding of want amid plenty. The central research question guiding my thesis is as follows: How might existing discourse enable or prevent the general public's understanding of want amid plenty? I also ask two constitutive questions to answer my central research question: 1) How has standard agricultural industry discourse addressed the production narrative in relation to hunger and food waste? And, 2) How is hunger in the context of abundant food explained by food organizations doing relief work?

What the answers to these questions reveal is imperative to address the problems of hunger and food waste in a substantial way. Once we know the contributing factors that are obscuring the true causes of want amid plenty, we can move from treating the symptoms, people being hungry and what to do with food waste, to treating the root cause, why these are both happening in the first place. This chapter reveals the results from my constitutive questions by examining how agricultural industry's discourse is addressing the production narrative in relation to hunger and food waste and how food relief organizations are explaining hunger in the presence of food waste. Both the agricultural industry and food relief organizations influence the general public's understanding of the way food's status as a commodity naturally produces both hunger and an abundance of food. The chapter goes on to analyze the results in light of my

central research question and offers the contribution my thesis has made to the issues of hunger and food waste.

### **Constitutive Research Question One: Agricultural Industry**

My first constitutive research question asks: How has standard agricultural industry discourse addressed the production narrative in relation to hunger and food waste? This question illustrates the contributing factors of hunger and food waste that agricultural companies are touting to the general public to illustrate how these companies are addressing the production narrative. Further, this question reveals how the agricultural industry influences the general public's understanding of want amid plenty.

In the early 1970s, Lappé (1991) released *Diet for a Small Planet*, which was later reprinted in the 1990s. In this publication, she illustrated how “we have been taught that our production system rewards hard work and efficiency while providing abundant food for all, but it actually rewards waste, wealth, and size—and the hungry go without food no matter how much is produced” (96). More than forty years later, one might suppose the majority of the agricultural system would at least acknowledge this idea.

However, the revival of the production narrative, in reaction to the 2007-8 food crisis, tells a different story. Lang and Barling (2012) concur when discussing the food crisis: “The main response to 2007-8 has been to resuscitate the ‘grow more to feed more’ policy position” (315). Even this past year, Penn State published an article discussing how “the common narrative that we need to drastically increase food production is seldom challenged in agricultural circles” (Penn State 2017). But, as discussed in the Background and Significance chapter, food activists had previously debunked the production narrative in relieving hunger. In light of this knowledge, in what ways has the agricultural industry engaged with the production narrative?

## Results

As I searched through agricultural industry websites, similar responses occurred in addressing the production narrative and in the connection of hunger and food waste, which I categorize and compare. I used these recurring responses to categorize the various agribusinesses' discourse into Table 1. Through Table 1, I compare companies based on their grouping—seed companies, equipment companies, or pesticide companies—and compared the various groups. This comparison reveals the explanations of hunger and food waste that companies are proposing. Table 1 also highlights the factors that companies overlook. In light of these results, I compare my articulation of the inherent causes of hunger and food waste, the commodification of food, to the articulations offered by these agricultural companies. This comparison reveals the specific differences and gaps between my articulation of the problems and the agricultural companies.

After this comparison, I suggest why certain explanations are purported, how the production narrative is addressed and what is missing from agricultural companies' discourse. Further, I analyze and explain the exact language and ideas the agricultural industry perpetuates that influences the public's understanding of want amid plenty.

In the following subsections, I compare agricultural companies within their groupings starting with seed companies, then moving to equipment companies, then coming to the pesticide companies. Then, I discuss the agricultural industry as a whole and the overall explanations before moving to the analysis of agricultural industry's discourse.



### *Seed Companies*

As presented by Table 1, agricultural seed companies are overwhelmingly suggesting an increased use of genetically modified organisms and increased agricultural productivity as ways to address and reduce hunger.

#### Monsanto and Land O' Lakes

There was an overarching vagueness in addressing hunger, food security, and food waste by Monsanto and Land O' Lakes. While Monsanto briefly mentions hunger in their commitments to Respecting Human Rights and Community Outreach pages, there are no details about approaches in addressing these issues, let alone any mention of food waste. Monsanto discusses the necessities of GMO seeds for small farmers in meeting “the increasing demand for food by helping them make the most of their existing arable land” (Monsanto, n.d.).

Similarly, Land O' Lakes titled their 2016 annual report “Feeding Human Progress,” but the only time hunger was mentioned was in relation to their internship, Land O' Lakes Global Food Challenge Emerging Leaders for Food Security. And in fact, the site dedicated to the internship states they are working with farmers to “increase the quality and quantity of food they produce” (Land O' Lakes, n.d.). Within and outside of these instances, practical steps towards addressing hunger were not found or were stated as increasing productivity, with no mention of food waste by Monsanto or Land O' Lakes.

#### Du Pont and Syngenta

On the other hand, Du Pont and Syngenta take the time to provide a more detailed strategy of how they are addressing hunger and food security including a quick mention of food waste. On first glance, Du Pont highlights the need for local-based solutions, working with locals

to achieve such solutions and to address food safety. But upon further examination, Du Pont is pushing the production narrative by working with locals to “produce more food, enhance nutritional value, improve agricultural sustainability, boost food safety,” and work on crop protection using Du Pont pesticides (Du Pont 2017). Du Pont also suggests they have no influence on policies or regulations and pass their responsibility off to other sectors of society by declaring, “if only the global community can also find the will to address the political, economic, trade, infrastructure and regulatory issues that will also play a critical role in achieving food security” (Du Pont 2017).

So too, Syngenta has come up with The Good Growth Plan, which states specific commitments to make the world a less hungry place, describes the strategy they will use and explains how they will measure progress. Despite the fact that many commitments actually contain advertisements for their own products and focus on increasing productivity, the commitments are better rounded than those of many other agricultural companies. However, Syngenta’s core goal in addressing hunger is to increase small farmer productivity and efficiency to increase profits. Both Du Pont and Syngenta briefly mention food waste, but only in relation to their own products, which use new technologies to extend freshness.

#### Groupe Limagrain

There is one notable exception among the seed companies, Groupe Limagrain. This is the only company I researched that mentions, let alone discusses, the impacts of the capitalist system and an unregulated market on hunger. As Groupe Limagrain discusses the dangers of the unregulated agricultural market for hunger, they detail a strategy to regulate agricultural markets through their Think Tank, Momagri. They lay out ten guiding principles to combat the effects of a capitalist system on food security including setting equilibrium prices, initiating a

deduction/restitution trade system, and creating a global food security council. In light of all of this, Groupe Limagrain also “presents a risk assessment tool with economic and political indicators to political decision-makers, and formulates proposals for an international policy for agriculture and food” (Groupe Limagrain, n.d.).

Furthermore, Groupe Limagrain is the only company that stated we must shift our view of food. Groupe Limagrain instructs people to “consider agriculture and food as global public goods. Agriculture is strategic for the future of mankind, and the hyper-volatility of agricultural prices is a threat to food safety and peace in the world” (Groupe Limagrain, n.d.). The fact that Groupe Limagrain is in favor of regulating markets and declaring food as public good/commons illustrates the possibility that companies can still operate as for-profit systems while demanding food be regarded differently.

### *Equipment Companies*

Along the same lines of seed companies, agricultural equipment companies are advocating increased productivity, local-based solutions, and mechanization/increased use of modern farming practices as their steps towards solving hunger.

Deere & Co, CNH Industrial, AGCO, CLAAS, and Kubota

Three of the five companies, Deere & Co, CNH Industrial, and AGCO, discussed the need for increased mechanization and local-based solutions. While these two terms appear different, the use of local-based solutions is a complicated matter given the products that these companies sell. The fact that they sell agricultural equipment, which is mostly intended for large monocrop style agriculture, i.e. mechanization, cannot be overlooked. If these companies work with locals, they most likely intend to sell their product and their overall agricultural model to these locals, which give a profit motive to their call for local-based solutions. There is a fine line

between collaborating with locals and “export[ing] an agricultural model developed for the US to sub-Saharan African” (McMichael and Schneider 2011, 123). Deere & Co, CNH Industrial, and AGCO are not the only companies purporting their own products as solutions to hunger.

The three above-mentioned companies plus CLAAS cited a need for increased productivity, and all state the need to use their equipment to do so. The theme of AGCO’s 2016 annual report was “Engineering Food Security,” in which they mention three pillars including a “commitment to reducing post-harvest losses,” “investing in new product launches and upgrades,” and “driving agricultural mechanization in Africa” (AGCO 2016). The three pillars of AGCO’s 2016 annual report were accompanied by suggestions of specific products to use. The only company that did not suggest increased productivity or their own products was Kubota, which did not mention anything about hunger or food waste. Regardless of the four companies pushing their own products to reduce hunger and Kubota failing to mention hunger, CNH Industrial also explains causes of hunger in a different way.

CNH Industrial makes the connection between hunger and a person’s ability to pay. CNH Industrial acknowledges that hunger is often “associated with an underlying, inherent socio-economic instability” (CNH Industrial 2016, 16). Additionally, in their Sustainability Report, CNH Industrial expands upon their goals and priorities regarding food security and food waste while not attaching their products to every goal. Even though CNH Industrial is supporting solutions that are at odds with what is necessary, i.e. increased productivity, this report is an example of companies making an effort to address hunger outside of their business interests.

### *Pesticide Companies*

Agricultural pesticide companies are proposing increased productivity, use of genetically modified organisms, and mechanization/increased use of modern farming practices as ways to reduce hunger.

#### Bayer, BASF, and Dow AgroSciences

All five agricultural pesticide companies stated a need for increased productivity. While Monsanto and Syngenta were discussed above and will not be discussed again, they also fall into the pesticide category. Bayer cites increased productivity, the use of GMOs, and crop protection or pesticides as necessities to address food security in the future, even stating, “without modern crop protection methods, securing global food supplies is virtually impossible” (Bayer 2017). So too, BASF discusses the need for increased productivity, crop protection, mechanization, and GMOs. When discussing crop protection, BASF does highlight the need for such protection to not come at a cost to the environment or human safety, declaring they will “only use what is absolutely necessary to protect plants and keep them healthy” (BASF 2016, 20). But what is absolutely necessary is dependent on a number of factors, including the factor that BASF’s business includes the selling of crop protection tools.

Likewise, Dow AgroSciences lists how they are fighting hunger by creating seeds for higher crop yields, crop protection for pest control, and products to replace fat, gluten and protein. In addition, Dow AgroSciences discusses food waste and waste prevention strategies, but mainly in terms of selling new packaging products to prevent waste and extend freshness. Dow AgroSciences does consider food waste more than other companies, although their solutions all include GMOs and pesticides, which are also both things they sell.

*All Agricultural Companies*

Overall, increased productivity, also known as the production narrative, is still tremendously pushed by the agricultural industry. While Lang (2010) suggests that, “productionism [or the production narrative] has run out of steam,” this research illustrated that is not the case for the agricultural industry (95). The agricultural industry has not addressed the production narrative at all and instead is still peddling this same agenda. As evidenced by Table 1, every company beside Kubota, who did not discuss hunger at all, stated a need to increase food production in order to reduce hunger. This was the largest agreed-upon factor in taking steps to secure the world’s food supply and also address hunger.

The knowledge that increased productivity does not reduce hunger has not impacted agricultural discourse in any way. In fact, the production narrative is still given the spotlight. Campbell Soup Company sponsored a podcast that premiered this year, *UnCanned* (2018), which is said to discuss the big, hard questions in the food and agricultural world. One of the first episodes was titled, *How Do We Feed a Growing Population?* In this episode, they discussed the question with an agricultural expert from the Global Harvest Initiative, which was put together by the agricultural industry, who stated the answer was increased productivity. Moreover, the host declared, “how we look to increase food security in regions of Africa and parts of Asia is not different than how we need to think about food security at home—it’s all about productivity” (UnCanned 2018). In other words, the agricultural industry is hiding the necessity of having money to be able to eat by focusing on the fact that people are hungry instead of what caused them to be hungry. The industry is equating hunger with the absence of food on a global level. These “companies, [which are] often depicted as the enemy of environmental and social justice, are now engaging,” but this engagement looks like sustainable intensification, an apparent

oxymoron used to maintain the production narrative (Lang and Barling 2012, 318). In addition to needing money to eat, the issue of food waste was vastly overlooked.

Food waste was hardly mentioned at all, let alone discussed as a substantial issue, meaning these companies have not publically linked hunger and food waste together. The companies that have mentioned it are using reduction strategies “as a way to get their ‘green check mark’ while distracting us from the fact that our entire food system needs an overhaul” (Barnard 2016, 227). Moreover, companies mentioning food waste divert attention from their production of waste by placing responsibility on individuals to reduce their own waste.

The fact that food waste was not described as a problem by a large majority of the agricultural industry influences the general public’s understanding of want amid plenty by overlooking the so-called paradox all together. The companies that mention waste in no way describe it as a predominant problem or its connection with the capitalist system. Because they overlook food waste in this way, the agricultural industry can continue to push the production narrative without apparent contradictions.

## **Analysis**

So just how has the agricultural industry continued to push this narrative, when it is known by many to be false? The 2007-8 food crisis played a major role in reviving and strengthening this production narrative. The following subsections discuss the responses to the 2007-8 food crisis, the calls for mechanization and modernization, and the pushes of trade and market liberalization.

### *2007-8 Food Crisis*

Following the 2007-8 food crisis, the agricultural industry revived the production narrative in significant ways. According to Maye and Kirwan (2013), there emerged two “central

pillars of global food security discourse: first, that food production needed to increase by 50% by 2030 to meet rising demand; and second, that food production needed to double by 2050 to feed a world population of 9 billion” (1). These two pillars allowed the agricultural industry to push the production narrative by claiming these as the solution to hunger.

In addition, the responses to the food crisis in terms of policies, intervention, and discourse have largely favored trade and market liberalization, which has influenced how hunger and food waste are currently tackled. According to SAPRIN (2002), “the liberalization of economic activity in rural areas and a reduction of the development role of government, along with trade liberalization...have favored exports over production for the domestic market and have increased inequalities” (176). These responses to the food crisis that were supposedly meant to decrease hunger and inequality had the adverse effect.

Furthermore, in 2012 Lang and Barling (2012) posed, “it remains to be seen how far corporations will pursue tough ethical, social and environmental standards beyond those set by the state” (319). As is evidenced by this research, corporations have pursued almost the opposite of those standards, only changing discourse enough to placate the general public while maintaining their profit-seeking goals. Besides, corporations profited leading up to and during the 2007-8 food crisis, as evidenced by Lee et al. (2011): “Monsanto’s net income more than doubled from \$543 million to \$1.2 billion in the three months up to the end of February 2008” (69). The following subsections detail how reactions to the 2007-8 food crisis strengthened the production narrative.

### *Mechanization and Modernization*

Influential Western actors pushing Western visions of mechanization and modernization on developing countries have also played a part in promoting the production narrative. In

response to the 2007-8 food crisis, McMichael and Schneider (2011) confirm, “the official response...has been ‘agribusiness as usual’, with the goal now of incorporating small farmers into global commodity markets” (126). Trying to bring small farmers into the global arena worsens local food security by forcing them to produce for a global market. Switching to the global market has extremely high transition costs, drives many to debt, and turns their focus to the market for food security. But the market already failed them, suggesting that it is the “export priority that is misguided, if food security is understood as a right of national citizen, rather than that of global consumers with purchasing power” (McMichael and Schneider 2011, 127). Mechanizing small farmers and bringing them into the global market is coupled with modernization to push the production narrative.

Because capitalism is not yet widely blamed as the root cause of hunger, agricultural companies can continue to peddle the production narrative in their efforts to modernize small farmers. Modernization is exemplified by the privatization of land by wealthy corporations. Large financial and development agencies, including the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, have endorsed privatizing land in less developed countries by sporting the message of “market-based solutions to food security” through private or corporate credit (McMichael and Schneider 2011, 123). Privatization of land transitions power away from small farmers to the buyers of such land.

The transition of power away from small farmers encourages neoliberalization. The power shift is exemplified by McMichael and Schneider (2011): this privatization “implies a shift from a publicly supported domestically oriented agriculture producing staple foods for local and national markets, to a value-chain-oriented export agriculture producing for those with purchasing power in world markets” (125). This push towards neoliberalization leads to greater

hunger and food insecurity for those without purchasing power, as has been laid out in the Background and Significance of this thesis.

However, this privatization of land is simply another ploy for the wealthy to get wealthier. This fact is ironically embodied by the Gates Foundation's claim: "Over time, enabling the commercial development of African agriculture 'will require some degree of land mobility and a lower percentage of total employment involved in direct agriculture'" (McMichael and Schneider 2011, 123). This statement alludes to the intentions that privatizing land is not for food security or to aid developing countries in any way, but is instead for the profit of those with money to buy such land.

#### *Market and Trade Liberalization*

In addition, the production narrative has persisted due to government response to food insecurity in developed countries, namely the United States, of market and trade liberalization. Convincing the general public that maintaining the free market and liberalizing trade globally will reduce hunger levels allowed agricultural companies to continue the production narrative. If people believe that liberalizing trade will help feed the world, increasing production so that small farmers can compete and sell on the global market to earn a higher income makes sense. However, this is not what has generally happened for small farmers, because the "increase in costs of inputs and marketing has outstripped the increase in the prices of the goods produced, causing a decline in incomes" (SAPRIN 2002, 177). Governments insisting on deregulation and liberalization, due in large part to corporate lobbying interests, overlook this decline in incomes. By overlooking declining incomes, governments overlook the fact that those in poverty do not have the money to participate in the global market. If these people cannot participate in the market, market expansion is useless.

Moreover, within this production narrative, governments have diverted our attention to what to do with food waste instead of dealing with the reason there is so much waste in the first place. They have distracted us by emphasizing the need to redirect waste so we do not have the time or energy to examine the system that is producing the waste in the first place. Agricultural companies have also diverted attention by stressing individual responsibility in reducing waste, because “consumers can be easily made to feel guilty about the concept of waste, and can feel virtuous when not wasteful” (Albritton 2009, 163). Thus, it is an intentional act for agricultural companies to shift responsibility off of themselves and onto the consumer. The consumer can then feel virtuous when reducing waste and fail to consider the larger narrative of waste.

As mentioned above, the continued push of the production narrative is hindering people from understanding how the commodification of food leads to both hunger and food waste, because companies would stand to lose profit if want amid plenty was understood as a product of food’s status as a commodity. After all, the production narrative makes sense in light of “the corporate logic behind commercial agriculture, where only profit can be an incentive” (Aal el al. 2009, 2). By excluding my articulation of these problems, agricultural companies are purporting solutions that plunder the earth’s resources at a rate that will lead to an increase of both hunger and food waste. The next constitutive question will build off of this foundation to engage with the way food relief organizations are explaining the causes of hunger in the midst of food waste.

### **Constitutive Research Question Two: Food Relief Organizations**

My second constitutive research question asks: How is hunger in the context of abundant food explained by food organizations doing relief work? This question reveals the factors and understandings that food organizations are offering the general public about why there is still hunger when there is also an abundance of food waste. Further, this question addresses how the

general public understands want amid plenty and whether they see the root problem as being food's status as a commodity.

Food relief organizations do not have the same profit motive as the agricultural industry, which should influence how the issue of hunger in the midst of food waste is framed. Logically, it's more likely that food relief organizations acknowledge the problem and the root causes of hunger and food waste as stemming from the commodification of food. How food relief organizations frame hunger and food waste is of the utmost importance, because as Lang and Barling (2012) declare: "Policy and scientific reports usually side-step the issue [food security], preferring to offer themselves as neutral, leaving the terrain to NGOs" (320). In other words, people look to food relief organizations more frequently to understand the causes of these social issues. Because of this, how food relief organizations frame want amid plenty is extremely influential in the way the general public understands and responds to issues, as is evidenced by Wakefield et al. (2012).

In 2012, Wakefield et al. (2012) examined how community food security was taking place in various local food relief organizations in Hamilton and Toronto, Canada. Wakefield et al. (2012) examined mission statements, annual reports, interviews, and documents regarding food security and food policy to "assess the extent to which local organizations have integrated policy concerns about food access" into their work (432). In light of their research, Wakefield et al. (2012) found that "less attention was paid to the causes of food insecurity (namely structural poverty), despite the many programs undertaken by these organizations serving low-income populations" (435). Moreover, it was found that "almost all of the organizations examined expressed a desire to tackle the root causes of hunger and poverty, [but] each had a different take on what those root causes are" (Wakefield et al. 2012, 436). The lack of understanding or

agreement on root causes of hunger and poverty leads to ineffective treatment and perpetuation of these issues. Furthermore, the general public receives conflicting messages about the root causes of hunger and food waste if food relief organizations fail to agree on root causes. Was this an isolated case, or is this true for global food relief organizations as well?

## **Results**

Upon reading through organization's websites, similar explanations of hunger in the face of food waste reoccurred, which I categorize and compare. I used reoccurring explanations to categorize food relief organizations' discourse into Table 2. Through Table 2, I compare organizations based on their grouping—food aid organizations, food banks, or food waste organizations—and compare the various groups. The comparison reveals how food relief organizations are framing hunger and food waste. In light of this information, in the analysis section that follows, I compare my articulation of the inherent causes of hunger and food waste, the commodification of food, to the explanations offered by these food organizations. Further, the comparison divulges the specific differences between the explanations and in relation to the agricultural industry.

After this comparison, I analyze what explanations are missing to suggest why certain aspects are left out of food organizations discourse. Additionally, I explain the factors that influence how food relief organizations frame want amid plenty. In the following subsections, I compare food relief organizations within their groupings starting with food aid organizations, then moving to food banks, then coming to food waste organizations. Then, I discuss food relief organizations as a whole and the overall explanations before moving to the analysis of food relief organizations' discourse.



### *Food Aid Organizations*

As presented by Table 2, food aid organizations are mostly presenting the explanations for hunger as poverty, unlivable wages, access to food, and food prices. However, only two food aid organizations, World Food Programme and Feeding America, mention the abundance of food produced. Action Against Hunger and The Hunger Project do not address overproduction. In addition, Heifer International does not cite causes of hunger or overproduction at all. The following subsections will describe each organization in turn.

#### World Food Programme and Feeding America

The World Food Programme ventures the furthest into discussion of hunger in the midst of food waste of all food aid organizations, but only in their Zero Hunger Initiative. In a publication on this initiative, World Food Programme cites poor harvesting practices, food wastage, and wars as contributing factors to hunger in the midst of food waste. In describing harvest practices and food wastage, World Food Programme discusses “the ‘good year’ problem” of less developed countries which is often met with “inadequate capacity to store, market and transport food surpluses caus[ing] food prices and quality to drop. Farmers are unable to put their produce for sale at a premium when demand is highest, food is wasted and spoiled, and market volatility is sharpened” (World Food Programme 2017). While the connection between the market and limited access due to storage and transportation is made, World Food Programme goes on to state the goal of doubling the productivity of small-scale producers, which seems counterintuitive in that they are tying the solutions to hunger and food waste to the market.

In a similar manner, Feeding America almost touches on the true causes of want amid plenty, by briefly discussing the amount of food wasted and by citing factors for hunger that point to the inconsistencies in capitalism, but they fail to explicitly make the connection. Feeding America does go into detail about recovery and redistribution of wasted food but fails to connect this overabundance to capitalism.

Action Against Hunger, The Hunger Project, and Heifer International

The other three food aid organizations, Action Against Hunger, The Hunger Project and Heifer International, explain hunger without ever addressing the amount of food that is wasted. Action Against Hunger lists various causes of hunger including poverty, access and production, which is similar to the agricultural industry discourse. According to their website, Action Against Hunger's programs are designed to "bolster agricultural production, jumpstart local market activity, support micro-enterprise initiatives, and otherwise enhance a vulnerable community's access to sustainable sources of food and income" (Action Against Hunger 2017). This narrative is strangely similar to the narrative that many agribusinesses are pushing and further ties solutions to hunger to the market.

On the other hand, The Hunger Project only briefly discusses poverty and income as reasons for hunger, while Heifer International fails to explicitly mention causes of hunger at all. Both of these organizations are focused on eradicating hunger and yet fail to give detail about the causes for such an issue. The lack of transparency on root causes allows the general public to overlook why there is hunger in the first place.

Overall, despite claiming that every human needs food, food aid organizations are explaining hunger in the context of food waste in a way that does not adequately support their

central claim. Similarly, food banks' explanations of want amid plenty vary from one organization to the next.

### *Food Banks*

Food banks as a whole are inconsistent in their explanations of want amid plenty, with three food banks naming poor harvesting practices and food wastage as causes of hunger and the other two naming poverty and unlivable wages. However, unlike food aid organizations, all food banks acknowledge the overproduction of food and make the connection between hunger and food waste quicker than food aid organizations, although they do not connect these issues to capitalism.

Global FoodBanking Network, Food Banking Regional Network, and Second Harvest Asia

While The Global FoodBanking Network affirms that hunger is not a food production problem, they fail to mention why there is a food surplus in the first place. The "Why We Exist" page of the Global FoodBanking Network's website states: "Hunger is often not a food problem; it's a logistics problem" (The Global FoodBanking Network 2017). But they fail to explain causes of the logistics problems as well. Because they fail to explain in-depth the causes of hunger, the general public is left without answers.

In the same way, Food Banking Regional Network blatantly acknowledges hunger in the midst of food waste. The first banner on their website is a photo of a child with the quote, "Why do people starve when there is enough food to feed the world" (Food Banking Regional Network 2017). However, the hope of a connection between food's status as a commodity and want amid plenty is quickly lost because the page discussing food waste consists only of a graphic of food being thrown into a trashcan with a big X over it. Needless to say, Food Banking Regional

Network fails to connect hunger and food waste to capitalism, leaving the general public in the dark.

So too, Second Harvest Asia cites storage and wastage as causes of hunger and discusses the fact that hunger persists despite the overproduction of food. Second Harvest Asia names the causes of this food waste as produce appearance, refrigeration, and logistics, which are the extent to which food waste and hunger are discussed. Again, shallow explanations of want amid plenty leave the general public confused about root causes.

European Federation of Food Banks and Food Bank Australia

The other two food banks, European Federation of Food Banks and Food Bank Australia (EFFB), cite poverty as the cause of hunger and also make the knowledge of overproduction of food explicit. The first two sentences on European Federation of Food Banks' website homepage include statistics regarding the number of hungry people and how much food is wasted each year. The EFFB declares, "people living in poverty cannot afford nutritious food for themselves and their families" but do not specifically state food's status as a commodity as the cause of hunger in the midst of such waste (European Federation of Food Banks 2014). Similarly, Food Bank Australia's Hunger Report describes how Australians "live in the 'lucky country' where food is so abundant that we export more than half of what we grow and produce. And yet there are Australians who are unable to meet their basic food needs" (Food Bank Australia 2015). However, this is all Food Bank Australia verbalizes about the production of food and food waste. Coupled with their cited causes of hunger, poverty and food prices, the components for making the connection to capitalism and the commodification of food are all there, yet this connection is not explicitly made.

In all, food banks illustrate the linking of hunger and food waste, but fail to overtly tie this connection to food's status as a commodity. Because food banks fail to make this connection, want amid plenty is not framed as a result of capitalism to the general public.

#### *Food Waste Organizations*

In contrast to both food aid organizations and food banks, only two food waste organizations discuss the causes of hunger at all, while the other four do not lists any causes. While this is understandable for organizations focusing on food waste, it is surprising given their goals of redirecting and reusing waste.

#### EU-FUSIONS and Feedback

For example, Europe Food Use for Social Innovation by Optimizing Waste Prevention Strategies and Feedback (EU-FUSIONS) cites the price of food as the basis of hunger. EU-FUSIONS states: "Food loss and waste drives up the price of food," but this is the only time hunger is mentioned (EU-FUSIONS 2016). In addition, Feedback specifically mentions want amid plenty in a video titled, "Why Are We Wasting So Much Food?" In the video, Feedback lists produce appearance, food wastage, date labels, and policies as contributing factors to hunger in the face of excess food. While the connection of food's status as a commodity and want amid plenty is clearly explained, the only place the connection is mentioned is in the video. Therefore, the connection of want amid plenty to capitalism was not made by EU-FUSIONS, and only mentioned in a video by Feedback.

#### Food Recovery Network and OzHarvest

Two of the other food waste organizations mention the overproduction of food and continuation of hunger, but fail to provide causes of these issues. For instance, in their 2016 Annual Report, the Food Recovery Network declares, "The United States faces an alarming

paradox: 40 percent of all food produced is wasted, while one in six Americans is food insecure” (Food Recovery Network 2017). Despite this being the opening line to the report, causes of hunger are never mentioned. Instead, food recovery and redistribution are highlighted. Likewise, the first three facts on the hunger fact page of OzHarvest are: “there is enough food produced in the world to feed everyone,” “one third of all food produced is lost or wasted,” and “one in nine people do not have enough food to eat” (OzHarvest 2017). And yet, the causes of hungry people in the midst of an overproduction of food are never mentioned. Hence, these two organizations do not connect food’s status as a commodity and want amid plenty, but they do give greater explanation than ReFED and Save Food-Asia Pacific.

#### ReFED and Save Food-Asia Pacific

The final two food waste organizations, ReFED and Save Food-Asia Pacific, rarely mention hunger at all. Save Food-Asia Pacific simply professes, “food wastage represents a missed opportunity to improve global food security” (Save Food Asia-Pacific 2017). Similarly, ReFED does not mention anything about hunger and instead lists an analysis and solutions for food waste. Both organizations fail to engage with hunger and food waste in ways that frame want amid plenty as a product of food’s status as a commodity.

The overall finding from food waste organizations was that while they might have mentioned hunger, no details or causes were given, and instead focus was on how to redirect food waste. As such, the discourse of food waste organizations is more focused on diversion or what to do with waste, instead of reducing the production of waste. Barnard (2016) illustrates this statement: “Contemporary initiatives against food waste fail to grapple with the fundamental dynamics of overproduction and commodification” (223). Because food waste organizations fail

to grapple with overproduction and commodification, food waste organizations are leaving the general public to figure this out on their own.

### *All Food Relief Organizations*

Overall, food relief organizations were varied and inconsistent in their explanations of the causes of hunger, especially in relation to food waste. The most noted causes included poverty, food prices, and food wastage, which were all supported by only five organizations each, making an overall presentation of the causes of hunger impossible to state. Moreover, these inconsistent explanations influence how the general public understands want amid plenty.

The inconsistent narrative plays an integral role in how the general public understands the causes of hunger and food waste. If food relief organizations do not agree or do not discuss the reasons their work is necessary, then the general public is left to research these causes on their own. To come to the conclusion that hunger and food waste are directly tied to food's status as a commodity is unlikely, given the social norm of not questioning our economic system. Because capitalism is rarely questioned and food relief organizations are not making the connection of want amid plenty to food's status as a commodity openly, the general public is left confused about how hunger and food waste continue to grow.

### **Analysis**

So why is it that food relief organizations are inconsistent in their explanations of hunger and food waste? And further, why do they not make the connection to food's status as a commodity? While there are a number of factors at play in determining the discourse of food relief organizations, most of them have to do with money. The following subsections discuss the response to immediate needs, the influence of donations, and the impact of government funding.

*Immediate Needs*

Most, if not all, food relief organizations are in the business of day-to-day services for people in need, whether that is supplying food at food banks, giving out meals at soup kitchens, or teaching ways to reuse food to prevent waste. These day-to-day services are at the heart of most organizations and many people depend on their services, placing organizations in the position that if they don't give out food then real people are left hungry. However, many workers in food relief organizations understand these services only provide temporary relief to hunger and do nothing to address the structural causes of hunger and food waste.

These day-to-day services are incredibly time consuming; couple that with organizations being understaffed, and these services can take up most of an organization's time, which leaves no time for advocacy. In talking with volunteers doing hunger relief work, Wakefield et al. (2012) depicted the ways volunteers and staff of food relief organizations "highlighted how their immediate responsibilities (delivering to the greatest number of people the programs that they had come to depend on) limited their ability to respond to criticisms of their work and advocate for broader structural change" (Wakefield et al. 2012, 443). In meeting people's everyday needs, workers and volunteers are "having to prioritize serving clients over advocacy," when advocacy has the potential to address broader structural change (Wakefield et al. 2012, 441). In addition, Lindenbaum (2016) confirms, "food banks seem to prioritize the quantity and quality of services over addressing problems with the market" (376). Although speaking of food banks specifically, this statement extends to all food relief organizations that lack time for advocacy.

While every-day hunger is an immediate need that must be met, organizations are failing to find the time, staff or connections needed to advocate for larger structural change. Yet, it is not simply due to the demand of everyday needs that food relief organizations are not advocating for

structural change or, further, connecting hunger and food waste with food's status as a commodity.

### *Donations*

Food relief organizations rely on outside donations to sustain their work, which coexist with external constraints including reporting requirements, funding, and public engagement. External constraints influence food relief organizations' work in a few ways. The first is the influence of reporting requirement on donations. Many people who donate money want to see tangible, quantifiable results, which looks like number of meals given out, pounds of food delivered, and number of people receiving food. These are all day-to-day services, meaning that when people donate, they expect to see results of this kind. Advocacy for structural change is a slower process, with tangible results only in the end, putting organizations at the risk of losing donations because advocacy will not deliver results in a timely manner.

If food relief organizations connected food's status as a commodity with hunger and food waste, advocating for structural change would be a necessity and again be sluggish in offering quantifiable results. Wakefield et al. (2012) notes, organizations are "perpetually uncertain of where funding would come from and whether it would be enough to sustain programming. This continual state of uncertainty limits groups' ability to advocate for broader systemic changes" (438). While it is true that many organizations can barely keep up with meeting immediate needs leaving no time to address more root causes, it is also true that food relief organizations work a lot off of donations and fund raising and if they cannot tell of quantifiable results, it will be harder to get those donations.

Another way external constraints dictate food relief organizations' work is that organizations are wary of making connections with particular political stances. When

organizations take a stance on advocating for political change, they run the risk of isolating people who do not support such political change. If people feel food relief organizations are overstepping their boundaries, they may no longer donate. According to Lindenbaum (2016), “The need for food donations from large corporations, financial and food drive donations from individuals, labor from politically disparate volunteers, cooperation from church groups, and USDA food bags from the federal government compels food banks to position themselves at moderate points on the political spectrum” (386). Because organizations rely so heavily on donations, taking a political stance may run too high a risk.

### *Funding*

Political stances may not only isolate individual donors, but also further challenge the agricultural corporations and governments that both contribute food and/or financially to food relief organizations. To challenge these large funders puts food relief organizations at the risk of being defunded and losing large food donations, which could terminate their work entirely. Lindenbaum (2016) depicts this reality: “Surplus food is re-used through the emergency food system [or food relief organizations] in ways that benefit capital” (385). As corporations donate excess to food relief organizations, they get “tax breaks, state agricultural research, trade policy, farm subsidies, and avoided disposal costs” (Lindenbaum 2016, 382). Agricultural corporations are incentivized to overproduce and then rewarded in tax breaks by their connection with food relief organizations. Because food relief organizations are dependent on these routes of donations and funding, they do not loudly question the capitalist system in creating food waste or benefitting from hunger, for doing so could ‘bite the hands that feed them.’

Furthermore, the capitalist system is not often questioned, especially by large actors benefitting from this system for fear of seeming radical, which might lead to a decrease in

donations from corporations. As portrayed by Lindenbaum (2016), “Reliance on the federal government for commodity programs, churches as distribution partners, and corporations as food donors might prevent food banks [and other food relief organizations] from ever suggesting radical solutions to food insecurity and wealth inequality” (382). This radicalism can isolate food relief organizations and enact condemnation from the corporations who give the donations keeping organizations afloat. Reliance on large agricultural organizations dictates just how radical food relief organizations are willing to be.

So too, this radicalism can isolate food relief organizations from government funding. According to Wakefield et al. (2012), “A discouraging political climate can also lead organizations to be wary of undertaking political advocacy out of concern that it may affect their ability to access government funding” (442). Lindenbaum (2016) concurs by asserting, “food banks are better conceptualized as elements of the shadow state: voluntary organizations subject to a degree of government control” (380). Although Lindenbaum (2016) only mentions food banks specifically, this statement could be further applied to all food relief organizations. Dependence on the capitalist system by way of government funding keeps food relief organizations from challenging this very system as the root cause of hunger and food waste.

The alternate and inconsistent explanations that food relief organizations are providing in regard to hunger and food waste hinder the general public from understanding how food’s status as a commodity leads to both of these issues. Further, because food relief organizations are reliant on donations and funding from actors in the capitalist system, hunger and food waste are not being adequately addressed. The failure of food relief organizations to connect food’s status as a commodity with hunger and food waste, along with the alternative programs this enacts, “run the risk of drawing resources and attention away from the root causes of hunger, and may

reinforce particular (neoliberal) responses to food insecurity” (Wakefield et al. 2012, 443).

According to Lindernbaum (2016), food relief organizations are an accomplice in the capitalist system, as they “provide an outlet for social concern that allows the for-profit food system and financial markets to operate unmolested” (380). Hunger and food waste will not be diminished or solved without including my articulations of the root causes of these issues, which is that they are a product of food’s status as a commodity.

### **Contribution**

The production narrative that has persisted in the agricultural industry and that is not called out by food relief organizations ignores the social problem of hunger and food waste, i.e. want amid plenty, by overlooking the root causes. Failing to tie food’s status as a commodity with want amid plenty allows agricultural companies to push the production narrative, claiming that “the solutions lie in producing more food” (Lang and Barling 2012, 323). The failure of food relief organizations to make this connection allows them to continue offering temporary relief and redirect food waste without ever making meaningful headway in solving these issues.

This thesis brought together findings that have not been connected before and, as such, reveals the true causes of want amid plenty, food’s status as a commodity, for the general public. The general public’s understanding of want amid plenty as a product of the capitalist system is the first step in moving away from temporary fixes for hunger and food waste and towards addressing the root problem. In light of a more holistic understanding, this work can influence the way both hunger and food waste are addressed in policy measures, in views of food, and at what scale. The following subsections discuss potential political measures, changes in the view of food, and the scales of work that can address hunger and food waste in ways that diminish each problem.

*Political Change*

Going forward, this research can influence social change by enlightening the general public about what is wanted so that they can put pressure on politicians to enact stricter policies and regulations focused on feeding people, instead of allowing the agricultural industry to influence policy for their own profit. Although Sage (2013) declares, “While we need policy measures at all levels – from local to global – that work synergistically to feed everyone – sustainably, equitably and healthily – the food system remains dominated by powerful economic interests that the institutions of global public policy seem unwilling or unable to regulate” (78). The general public must not see immutable change as the answer and continue to place pressure on politicians to enact policies for people, not companies. As Hillary Clinton (2017) encourages, “You need to stir up public opinion and put pressure on political leaders. You have to shift policies and resources” (201). Corporate interests cannot dictate policy when it comes to food. At the hands of corporate interest, millions of people are going hungry, millions of pounds of food are being wasted, the earth’s resources are being depleted and agricultural companies are trying to tell the general public that they are the solution.

We must pressure the government to change what is subsidized. According to McMichael and Schneider (2011), “Switching of subsidies from overproducing agro-exports to stabilizing smallholding communities (relieving pressure on urban centers, and addressing land degradation from chemical fertilizers and agro-industrial farming) has the potential to revitalize the myriad local and national food markets” (135). Subsidizing food for smaller communities, rather than large agribusinesses, will support local economies over corporate business interests.

Furthermore, as asserted by Aal et al. (2009), “Food produced mainly to feed corporate profit

will lead to further food crises, not less” (3). Pressure to enact political change is crucial in creating a society that values people’s need for food over corporate profit.

### *New Views of Food*

In addition to changing policy, we must consider viewing food in a different light. As Aal et al. (2009) asserts, “Food is a human right, not a corporate commodity for speculation” (3). Taking a rights-based approach to food would mean “social tolerance of food insecurity declines and social policy to fulfill this right becomes mandatory, not a nicety that can be trimmed off in the interests of national budget relief” (Anderson 2013, 114). In other words, policies must change to protect the view of food as a right. Similarly, viewing food as public good or commons goes beyond viewing food as a right.

In the view of food as a public good, we must take a community mindset towards food provisioning. We must move away from a food system that privatizes community resources, such as land, seeds, or food, for individual profit. When we work together to meet needs at the community level, we begin to “frame food security in more holistic and inclusive terms, extending it beyond simply the quantity of food available to include the needs of communities” (Maye and Kirwan 2013, 3). This would also mean we stop relying so heavily on the global food market to provide food and in its place create smaller, more localized solutions that are voiced by the food sovereignty movement.

Food sovereignty declares the right of people to be active participants in their food environment and economy by defining their own systems. Furthermore, food sovereignty “challenges not just the quality and amounts of food accessible, but the power structure of the society in which a food environment is embedded” (Anderson 2013, 118). Moreover, autonomous food spaces would encompass these varying views of food to form “new economies

and exchanges outside the formal capitalist economy to collectively meet the needs of a community” (Wilson 2013, 728). Operating food exchanges outside the capitalist system can shift focus away from corporate profits and onto the needs of people.

Autonomous food spaces offer an opposition and alternative to the capitalist food system. Autonomous food spaces require recognition of “diverse economic practices...to reject the hegemony of capitalism and signals the beginning of a process to relearn, rethink and re-create new economic and social realities” (Wilson 2013, 734). By understanding want amid plenty as a product of food’s status as a commodity, we can begin to move from the individualistic society that capitalism perpetuates to reimagining new possibilities for meeting everyone’s basic food needs on community levels, while reducing the production of food waste.

### *Community Scale*

Together with viewing food outside of its status as a commodity, this research can help dismantle the individualistic society that pits neighbor against neighbor for corporate profit. To move away from an individualistic society, defining and solving problems on the individual scale, we must instead look at community interactions and define and solve problems at the community scale. We must stop championing ideologies such as individualism, self-reliance, and individual responsibility. For when we speak of community, we can slowly transition people to be concerned for their community and the other, instead of thinking only of themselves.

In order to do this, we must first connect across various race, gender, and class lines. As Heynen (2006) puts it, “We actually have to know who *they* are, and we have to walk where *they* live and meet *them*, talk to *them* and work harder to understand *them*” (925). When we begin to connect with diverse peoples, our compassion for others grows and fear of difference diminishes. As we become more concerned with those around us we transition to “a nation of volunteers and

problem solvers who believe that their own self-interest [is] advanced by helping one another” (Clinton 2017, 432). Problems are more holistically addressed when concern is placed around community interactions and needs instead of individuals. By moving away from an individualistic society and mindset, further research can better look at the numerous connections between various peoples, the environment, and food provisioning to propose solutions that work for the benefit of all.

In sum, we no longer have the luxury of time to overlook the capitalist system’s influence on hunger and food waste. We must educate our peers, our coworkers, our families, and everyone within our sphere about capitalism’s production of hunger and food waste, so that we can begin to move in the direction towards solving them. We must move away from an individualistic society to a society concerned for communities. We must view food in a new light and enact political change to adequately address hunger and food waste. Finally, we must fight for a food system that does not accommodate the privileged, but works for everyone.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter explained the results from the two constitutive research questions. The chapter went on to analyze these results to reveal the factors influencing the agricultural industry’s and food relief organizations’ articulations of want amid plenty and food’s status as a commodity. In light of this analysis, the chapter illustrated the contribution this research made to the food system, specifically, the potential political measures, the changes in the view of food, and the scales of work that can better address the issues of hunger and food waste. The next chapter will conclude this thesis and summarize how to move towards a more just food system.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion**

This thesis addressed the persistence of the idea that want amid plenty is a paradox in the food system in order to understand how agricultural industry and food relief organizations' discourse influences the general public's understanding of want amid plenty so that we can reveal gaps in knowledge or discourse and move towards a more inclusive and just food system. This research further examined how the agricultural industry has continued to push the production narrative in spite of many actors in the food system knowing its falsehood. By investigating agricultural industry's discourse in its peddling of the production narrative, specific factors and understandings were revealed that can now be dismantled. In addition, this research studied food relief organizations' discourse to reveal how the organizations were framing want amid plenty and whether it challenged the so-called paradox understanding. Because food relief organizations work toward relieving hunger and food waste, the general public looks to them to understand the root causes of these social issues, making it necessary to expose how they are framing want amid plenty.

So long as want amid plenty is understood as a paradox and not a product of the capitalist system's treatment of food as a commodity, the issues of hunger and food waste will not only persist, but also continue to grow. The purpose of this research was to examine the discourse from the agricultural industry and food relief organizations that influence the general public's understanding of want amid plenty so that we can make clear that food's status as a commodity perpetuates the social issues of hunger and food waste.

## Key Findings

The agricultural industry's response to the 2007-8 food crisis played a major role in allowing the agricultural industry to continue peddling the production narrative and framing want amid plenty as a paradox. Developed countries supporting trade and market liberalizations and pushing Western visions of mechanization on developing countries accentuate the agricultural industry's revival of the production narrative. By supporting mechanization, trade and market liberalization in developing countries, the agricultural industry pushes less developed countries into the global food market with promises that increased productivity will equal increased profits. But by producing for a global market, developing countries become less locally food secure and must rely on the market for food provisioning. However, the market already failed them, as displayed by the food crisis of 2007-8. The production narrative leads to small farmers getting poorer and hungrier, by forcing small farmers to sell goods at lower costs on the global market, leaving little for them to survive on.

The advantages for the agricultural industry in pushing the production narrative and framing want amid plenty as a paradox are clear in their search for profit. By mechanizing less developed countries and engaging them in the global food market, agribusinesses can sell more seeds, fertilizers, equipment, etc. and increase their own profit. Additionally, examining the discourse of food relief organizations brought different results, but, somewhat surprisingly, still had to do with monetary incentives.

Donations, outside backing, and government funding greatly dictate the way food relief organizations frame want amid plenty, causing many of them to not question food's status as a commodity. Because food relief organizations rely on donations from individuals, agricultural companies, and other large influencers, this affects how they discuss want amid plenty and

food's status as a commodity. It would not be in food relief organizations' interest to greatly question the agricultural industry; they most likely fear that donations of overproduced food and monetary contributions would cease. In relation to individual donations, food relief organizations run the risk of isolating individuals with politics or radical ideas, which could, again, impact the amount of donations. Moreover, because some food relief organizations rely on capitalist government funding, questioning food within this capitalist system would put food relief organizations in opposition to some of their funders.

Additionally, many food relief organizations provide immediate needs in the community, such as giving out meals or stocking food banks. These day-to-day services are extremely time consuming and leave little time for advocacy on structural change. Because real people rely on services provided by food relief organizations, these immediate needs get prioritized over advocating for structural change. Although, many food relief volunteers and workers know that providing for immediate needs offers temporary relief, but does nothing to address the root problem of want amid plenty. Thus, they are constrained by time and resources in their work to relieve hunger and reduce food waste.

### **Implications for Social Justice and Social Change**

This research exposed the detrimental consequences that food's status as a commodity has on hunger and food waste. This research also examined the agricultural industry's push of the production narrative and how food relief organizations fail to connect food's status as a commodity to want amid plenty. The agricultural industry's and food relief organizations' discourse in regard to want amid plenty reveals their influence on the general public's understanding of want amid plenty. This research examined agricultural industry's and food relief organizations' discourse to reveal their motivations in discussing want amid plenty in order

to move towards a more inclusive and just food system that addresses hunger and food waste in such a way as to reduce each issue.

To adequately address the issues of hunger in the midst of food waste requires a new system entirely, one which we cannot expect or rely on profit-seeking businesses to define. According to Sage (2013), “until we address the fact that the global food system remains dominated by powerful economic interests, an effective solution will remain elusive” (71). Agribusinesses must acknowledge the detrimental effect that pushing the Western visions of modernization and mechanization on developing countries has had and immediately stop pushing these visions. In its place must be a message consisting of “revalorization of traditional and local knowledge, and an interdisciplinary, holistic and systems-based approach to knowledge production and sharing” (Abate et al. 2008, 7). Agribusinesses must not overpower and overlook developing countries’ needs.

Moreover, developed countries and international agricultural businesses cannot drown out the necessity of local food security in developing countries. Global agricultural companies “lulled [developing countries] into believing that their food security concerns could be easily solved by relying on international markets,” which was detrimentally deceitful, as displayed by the 2007-8 food crisis (Lee et al. 2011, 73). Agricultural businesses that peddled this message need to face consequences for their intentional harm in favor of making profits.

In addition, overproduction cannot be incentivized and, further, companies cannot be praised for donating excess food. When companies are incentivized to overproduce, “these donations from corporate headquarters and local stores distract voters, lawmakers, and shareholders from the role of such companies in producing food insecurity, malnutrition, and obesity” (Lindenbaum 2016, 383). Agribusiness profit motive cannot be the defining feature of

the food system. Nor can we look to food relief organizations that are directly tied to capitalist interests to offer a viable way forward.

Food relief organizations can no longer allow their work to be dictated by overproduction from agricultural companies or government funding if they wish to provide more than temporary relief. Additionally, food relief organizations cannot allow donations and funding to dictate their explanations of want amid plenty. Instead of competing with other organizations for these donations, food relief organizations need to collaborate across various relief sectors so that they will not be as dependent on agricultural and government donations and funding.

Furthermore, governments need to be held accountable for the human race as a whole, instead of prioritizing agribusinesses interests. Lang (2010) eloquently depicts how governments can focus people by supporting the interrelatedness of the food system:

Food (and agricultural) policy needs other aims: to deliver sufficiency of production only on ecological terms, with sustainable food systems at the heart of international development; to judge food not just by price but meshing embedded carbon, water and land use with calories – a new set of heuristics; to factor in *all* diet-related ill-health, not just hunger; to draw on all the sciences, not just the ‘natural’ sciences, to help create resilient food systems; to focus on entire food chains, not just agriculture, to transform how food is produced, distributed and consumed; to re-frame consumer aspirations to engage them in lowering food’s impact on the environment; and to deliver the above through democratic means, building movements that hold food systems to account and shape needs appropriately (94-95).

Focusing on the various interactions of the food system better accounts for people’s needs.

This research illustrated the connection of food’s status as a commodity and want amid plenty, displayed how the agricultural industry is pushing the production narrative, and revealed the factors influencing food relief organizations’ explanations of the root causes of hunger and food waste. In light of this research, we now understand the factors that encourage the general public to understand want amid plenty as a paradox instead of understanding want amid plenty as

a product of food's status as a commodity. It is in agribusinesses' favor to frame want amid plenty this way. So too, the reliance of food relief organizations on agribusinesses and outside funding prohibit them from overtly challenging this so-called paradox.

In light of this contribution of knowledge, I outlined policy measures, views of food, and the scale at which we must address want amid plenty, in order to build a more just food system. To begin all of these steps, as a society, we must "begin to view capitalist social relations as one of many ways to organize a society rather than the only viable model" (Lindenbaum 2016, 387). In doing so, we can rethink ways food provisioning can and should be set up to meet the needs of all who eat. If we do not change the food system to focus on feeding people in a sustainable way, people will remain hungry and food will be wasted evermore.

## References

- Aal, W., Jarosz, L., and Carol Thompson. 2009. "Open Letter to Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and Director of the Center for the Study of African Economies, Oxford University, UK, in Response to 'Politics of Hunger'." *Foreign Affairs (USA)*.
- Abate, T., Albergel, J., Armbrecht, I., Avato, P., Bajaj, S., Beintema, N., and Rym ben Zid. 2008. "International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD): Executive Summary." Paris: UNESCO.  
[http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/SR\\_Exec\\_Sum\\_280508\\_English.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/SR_Exec_Sum_280508_English.pdf)
- Action Against Hunger. 2017. "Conflicts and Climate Change Pose Major Threats to 2030 Hunger Goals." Story. Accessed November 10, 2017.  
<https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/story/conflicts-and-climate-change-pose-major-threats-2030-hunger-goals>
- Action Against Hunger. 2017. "Food Security & Livelihoods." Impact. Accessed November 10, 2017.  
<https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/impact/food-security-livelihoods>
- AGCO. 2016. *Annual Report*. <http://ar2016.agcocorp.com/>
- Albritton, Robert. 2009. *Let Them Eat Junk*. London: Pluto Press.
- Allen, P. 1999. "Reweaving the Food Security Safety Net: Mediating Entitlement and Entrepreneurship." *Agriculture and Human Values* 16 (2): 117-129.
- Anderson, Molly D. 2013. "Beyond Food Security to Realizing Food Rights in the US." *Journal of Rural Studies* 29 (2): 113-122.
- Barnard, Alex. 2016. *Freegans: Diving into the Wealth of Food Waste in America*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- BASF. 2016. *Passion for Agriculture: Our Solutions*.  
<https://industries.basf.com/assets/global/corp/en/Agriculture/Crop%20Protection/Brochure%20Crop%20Protection%20Englisch.pdf>
- BASF. *n.d.* "Sustainability." Farming and Crop Protection. Accessed January 11, 2018.  
<https://agriculture.basf.com/en/Crop-Protection/Sustainability.html>
- Bayer. *n.d.* "Food Trends and Global Hunger." Nutrition and Food Security. Accessed January 10, 2018.  
<https://www.crops.bayer.com/en/stories/2016/nutrition-and-food-security-food-trends-and-global-hunger>
- Bayer. 2017. "Revolution From the Ground Up." Agriculture. Last modified October 9, 2017.  
<https://www.research.bayer.com/en/revolution-from-the-ground-up.aspx>

- Bayer. 2017. "Smart Fields." Societal Needs. Last modified October 11, 2017. <https://www.bayer.com/en/digital-farming-smart-fields.aspx>
- Bialek, Dana. "How Do We Feed a Growing Population?" *UnCanned by Campbell's*. Podcast audio. January 8, 2018. <http://toppodcast.com/show-detail/?showId=2150408>
- Block, Fred. 2001. "Introduction." In *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., by Karl Polanyi, xviii-xxxviii. Boston: Beacon Press.
- CLASS. 2017. *Annual Report*. <http://www.claas-group.com/blueprint/servlet/blob/1469940/2c403269b8a40dd9ff8136100e176a0a/annual-report-2017-data.pdf>
- Clinton, Hillary R. 2017. *What Happened*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- CNH Industrial. 2015. *CNH Industrial Executive delivers speech on Agriculture and Food Security at Expo*. London: CNH Industrial. [http://www.cnhindustrial.com/en-us/PressReleaseCNHiFiatDocuments/2015/June/20150605\\_PR\\_CNHIndustrial\\_Expo\\_\\_International\\_Agriculture\\_Forum\\_CLambro.pdf](http://www.cnhindustrial.com/en-us/PressReleaseCNHiFiatDocuments/2015/June/20150605_PR_CNHIndustrial_Expo__International_Agriculture_Forum_CLambro.pdf)
- CNH Industrial. 2016. *Sustainability Report*. Italy: Graf Art. [http://www.cnhindustrial.com/en-us/sustainability/corporate\\_sustainability\\_reports/reports/2016\\_Sustainability\\_Report.pdf#page=31](http://www.cnhindustrial.com/en-us/sustainability/corporate_sustainability_reports/reports/2016_Sustainability_Report.pdf#page=31)
- Comstock, D.E. 1994. "A Method for Critical Research." In *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*, edited by M. Martin & L.C. McIntyre, 625-639. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Dalla Costa, Mariarosa. 2004. "Food as Common and Community." *The Commoner*, no.12: 129-137.
- Deere & Co. *n.d.* "Citizenship Focus Areas" Citizenship and Sustainability. Accessed January 3, 2018. <https://www.deere.com/en/our-company/citizenship-and-sustainability/>
- Dow AgroSciences. *n.d.* "Sustainability." Home. Accessed January 10, 2018. <https://www.dowagro.com/en-us/sustainability>
- Dow AgroSciences. *n.d.* "Food and Agriculture." Global Challenges. Accessed January 11, 2018. [https://www.dow.com/en-us/science-and-sustainability/global-challenges/global-challenges-food-agriculture?arrowMenu=69f8a5e0-1911-41d5-9972-dd51b3b3dfef\\_ad8291b6-e6a3-4e7a-bb4c-35af56d96ebd](https://www.dow.com/en-us/science-and-sustainability/global-challenges/global-challenges-food-agriculture?arrowMenu=69f8a5e0-1911-41d5-9972-dd51b3b3dfef_ad8291b6-e6a3-4e7a-bb4c-35af56d96ebd)
- Du Pont. 2017. "Feeding the World." Our Approach. Last Modified 2017. <http://www.dupont.com/corporate-functions/our-approach/global-challenges/food/articles/feeding-the-world.html>
- Du Pont. 2017. *Our Commitment: Global Food Security by 2020*. Du Pont.

- European Federation of Food Banks. 2014. "Poverty & Waste." Poverty in Europe. Accessed November 13, 2017. <https://www.eurofoodbank.org/poverty-waste>
- Europe Food Use for Social Innovation by Optimizing Waste Prevention Strategies and Feedback (EU-FUSIONS). 2016. "Food Waste Wiki." About Food Waste. Accessed November 16, 2017. <https://www.eu-fusions.org/index.php/about-food-waste>
- Feedback. 2014. "The Global Food Waste Scandal." Home. Accessed November 16, 2017. <https://feedbackglobal.org/food-waste-scandal/>
- Feeding America. 2017. "Hunger in America." Home. Accessed November 9, 2017. <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/?referrer=http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-and-poverty-facts.html>
- Food Bank Australia. 2015. *Foodbank Hunger Report 2017*. Accessed November 15, 2017. <https://www.foodbank.org.au/hunger-in-australia/foodbank-hunger-report-2017/>
- Food Banking Regional Network. 2017. "Pillar of Saving Food." Our Pillars to Fight Hunger. Accessed November 14, 2017. <http://www.foodbankingregionalnetwork.com/our-pillars-to-fight-hunger/pillar-of-saving-food/>
- Food Recovery Network. 2017. *Annual Reports*. Accessed November 22, 2017. <https://www.foodrecoverynetwork.org/annualreports>
- Groupe Limagrain. *n.d.* "Regulation of Markets." Mission. Accessed January 2, 2018. <https://www.limagrain.com/en/regulation-of-markets-limagrain-supports-momagri-the-movement-for-a-world-organization-of-agriculture>
- Gunderson, Ryan. 2014. "Problems with the Defetishization Thesis: Ethical Consumerism, Alternative Food Systems, and Commodity Fetishism." *Agriculture & Human Values* 31 (1): 109-117.
- Heynen, Nik. 2006. "Bit It's Alright, Ma, It's Life, and Life Only: Radicalism as Survival." *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography* 38 (5): 916-929.
- Holt-Giménez, Eric. 2017. *A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism : Understanding the Political Economy of What We Eat*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Kubota. *n.d.* "Kubota Cares." Home. Accessed January 7, 2018. <https://www.kubotausa.com/kubota-cares>
- La Via Campesina. 2018. "The International Peasant's Voice." *Home*. Accessed January 25, 2018. <https://viacampesina.org/en/international-peasants-voice/>

- Land O' Lakes. 2018. "Foundation and Community." Responsibility. Accessed January 3, 2018. <https://www.landolakesinc.com/Responsibility>
- Land O' Lakes, Inc. Global Food Challenge. *n.d.* "Living Our Values." About the Program. Accessed January 3, 2018. <http://foodchallenge.landolakesinc.com/about-the-program/living-our-values/>
- Lang, Tim. 2010. "Crisis? What Crisis? The Normality of the Current Food Crisis." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 10 (1): 87-97.
- Lang, Tim and David Barling. 2012. "Food Security and Food Sustainability: Reformulating the Debate Food Security and Food Sustainability: Reformulating the Debate." *Geographical Journal* 178 (4): 313-326.
- Lappé, Frances M. (1971) 1991. *Diet for a Small Planet*. New York: The Random House Publishing Group.
- [Lee, D., Ainbinder, L., Erdembileg, S., Hurley, A., Morrison, L., Roig, M., Sibanda, A., et al.] 2011. "The Global Food Crises." In *The Global Social Crisis: Report on the World Social Situation 2011*, 61-74. New York: United Nations.
- Lindenbaum, John. 2016. "Countermovement, Neoliberal Platoon, Or Re-Gifting Depot? Understanding Decommodification in US Food Banks." *Antipode* 48 (2): 375-392.
- Mares, Teresa M. and Alison H. Alkon. 2011. "Mapping the Food Movement: Addressing Inequality and Neoliberalism." *Environment and Society: Advances in Research* 2: 68-86.
- Maye, Damian and James Kirwan. 2013. "Food Security: A Fractured Consensus." *Journal of Rural Studies* 29: 1-6.
- McMichael, Philip and Mindi Schneider. 2011. "Food Security Politics and the Millennium Development Goals." *Third World Quarterly* 32 (1): 119-139.
- Monsanto. *n.d.* Monsanto (website). Accessed January 2, 2018. <https://monsanto.com/>
- Oz Harvest. 2017. "Food Waste Facts." What We Do. Accessed November 22, 2017. <http://www.ozharvest.org/what-we-do/environment-facts/>
- Penn State. 2017. "Widely Accepted Vision for Agriculture May be Inaccurate, Misleading." *News*. Last Modified May 25, 2017. <http://news.psu.edu/story/452218/2017/02/22/widely-accepted-vision-agriculture-may-be-inaccurate-misleading>
- Poppendieck, Janet. 1986. *Breadlines Knee-Deep in Wheat: Food Assistance in The Great Depression*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Poppendieck, Janet. 1998a. *Sweet Charity?: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*. New York, NY: Penguin Press.

- Poppendieck, Janet. 1998b. "Want Amid Plenty: From Hunger to Inequality." *Monthly Review* 121 (7): 125-136.
- ReFED. 2017. "About ReFED." Home. Accessed November 27, 2017. <http://www.refed.com/about>
- Rieff, David. 2015. "Introduction." In *The Reproach of Hunger: Food, Justice, and Money in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by David Rieff, xi-xxviii. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Sage, Colin. 2013. "The Interconnected Challenges for Food Security From a Food Regimes Perspective: Energy, Climate and Malconsumption." *Journal of Rural Studies* 29: 71-80.
- Save Food Asia-Pacific. 2017. *Publications*. Accessed November 27, 2017. <http://www.savefood.net/publications-3/>
- Second Harvest Asia. 2017. "Hunger and Food Waste." Resources. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://foodbank.asia/resources/>
- Second Harvest Asia. 2017. "Our Vision." About Us. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://foodbank.asia/privacy-policy/about/>
- Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network (SAPRIN). 2002. *The Policy Roots of Economic Crisis and Poverty*. 1
- Syngenta. 2018. "The Good Growth Plan." What We Do. Last Modified 2018. <https://www.syngenta.com/what-we-do/the-good-growth-plan>
- The Global FoodBanking Network. 2017. "Global Hunger & Food Waste." Why We Exist. Accessed November 13, 2017. <https://www.foodbanking.org/why-we-exist/>
- The Hunger Project. 2014. "Hunger." Issues. Accessed November 10, 2017. <http://www.thp.org/issues/hunger/>
- Terstappen, V., Hanson, L., and Darrell McLaughlin. 2013. "Gender, Health, Labor, and Inequities: A Review of the Fair and Alternative Trade Literature." *Agriculture and Human Values* 30: 21-29.
- Vivero-Pol, Jose. 2017. "The Idea of Food as Commons Or Commodity in Academia. A Systematic Review of English Scholarly Texts." *Journal of Rural Studies* 53: 182-201.
- Wakefield, Sarah, Julie Fleming, Carla Klassen, and Ana Skinner. 2013. "Sweet Charity, Revisited: Organizational Responses to Food Insecurity in Hamilton and Toronto, Canada." *Critical Social Policy* 33 (3): 427-450.
- Wilson, Amanda DiVito. 2013. "Beyond Alternative: Exploring the Potential for Autonomous Food Spaces." *Antipode* 45 (3): 719-737.

Wood, Ellen. 2002. *The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View*. New York: Verso.

World Food Programme. 2017. "Food Systems." Home. Accessed November 9, 2017.  
<http://www1.wfp.org/food-systems>

World Food Programme. 2018. "Zero Hunger." Home. Accessed March 15, 2018.  
<http://www1.wfp.org/zero-hunger>