How Corporate Concentration Gives Rise to the Movement of Movements: Monsanto and La Via Campesina (1990–2011)

by

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ABSTRACT

HOW CORPORATE CONCENTRATION GIVES RISE TO THE MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS: MONSANTO AND LA VIA CAMPESINA (1990–2011)

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As of 2011 a revolutionary ‘movement of movements’ is emerging coterminous with environmental crises and various other crises including corporate globalization. This study sheds theoretical and empirical light on the origins of the movement of movements. Employing gendered, ethnicized class analysis, this study investigates Karl Marx’s (1867) central discovery in Capital volume one, chapter 32 that corporate concentration and organization impels workers to resist and become a revolutionary class for themselves. Data is derived from investigation into the social movement La Via Campesina’s (‘the peasant way’) struggle against Monsanto Corporation in India, the European Union and Brazil during two periods of Monsanto’s concentration (1996–1998 and 2007–2011). Findings indicate that, in the process of Monsanto’s concentration, there was a leap forward in the formation and actions of the movement of movements. This study concludes that corporate concentration and global organization significantly impels the formation of the movement of movements.
I have many people to thank for helping me create this thesis. My advisors Terisa Turner, Belinda Leach and Tony Winson have given me valuable knowledge and support. I particularly thank Terisa Turner who has helped me sharpen my analysis and strengthen my writing ability. Terisa has cultivated within me a sense of my own power to fight for humanity and the earth. I am forever grateful for her dedication to me.

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INTRODUCTION: WHERE DOES THE MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS COME FROM?

As of 2011 a revolutionary ‘movement of movements’ is emerging coterminal with environmental crises, various other crises and corporate globalization. According to Turner and Brownhill, (2010) “the movement of movements’ historic roots and current expressions derive from a whole web of social movements against capitalism and for humanity and the earth” (Turner and Brownhill, 2010: 106).

The context of this study is the ongoing 2011 global food crisis and the movement of movements in North Africa. In late January 2011 an estimated two million people in Egypt took to the streets to demand and build popular democracy. The non-violent and leaderless actions of a multitude of protesters — workers from all sectors of society, women, men, people of various ethnicities, young and old — signalled a major shift in power toward popular democratic control in Egypt, North Africa and the Middle East more broadly. The reverberations were felt throughout the world. The Egyptian protesters demonstrated a ‘theatre of the possible’ (Pilger, 2011). The uprising in Egypt originated in Tunisia in December 2010 and as of August 2011 has spread to Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, Jordan, Yemen, Morocco, Sudan, Algeria, Cameroon, Mauritania, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Greece, Israel, the United States and the United Kingdom.

The geographical spread of the struggle poses a major threat to capitalist powers. According to Marshall (2011) and others, the Arab Revolution has signalled the beginning of a world revolution. Marshall states that:

“It seems as if the world is entering the beginnings of a new revolutionary era: the era of the ‘Global Political Awakening.’ While this ‘awakening’ is materializing in different regions, different nations and
under different circumstances, it is being largely influenced by global conditions. The global domination by the major Western powers, principally the United States, over the past 65 years, and more broadly, centuries, is reaching a turning point. The people of the world are restless, resentful, and enraged. Change, it seems, is in the air” (Marshall, 2011).

In 2008, Egyptian rebels defiantly rejected high food prices in the tidal wave of food rebellions that swept the world. The 2011 resurgence of this movement has its roots in years of patient and consistent work, especially by young people involved in what is now being called the April 6 Youth Movement. Egyptian youth have been building a movement for democracy in Egypt and have been linking their work to communities in other parts of the world (Campbell, 2011).

Young women are prominent in these uprisings. According to Horace Campbell, the youth and the women have gone beyond demanding a new government to embracing change on many fronts. Campbell states that:

“It is imperative to note that one of the positive lessons from both Egypt and Tunisia is the unity of the people across regional lines. In this process, the women of Tunisia and Egypt have emerged among the foremost and clearest section of the revolution. For decades, Egyptian women have been struggling against a government that suppresses Islamic fundamentalism, but mobilized the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism to dominate women. The images of forthright women outlining the goals of the mass movement sweeping Egypt and Tunisia remain an inspiration to women across Africa and the Middle East. We want to repeat that the struggles for reproductive rights, bodily integrity and opposition to sexual oppression elevated the democratic struggle beyond the rights to freedom of speech to assemble and for workers to organize” (Campbell, 2011).

The movement of movements is this revolutionary, global transition to popular sovereignty. Key elements of the movement of movements exemplified by the Egyptian revolt include but are not limited to: (i) the active involvement and formation of movements and alternatives by a
multitudinous working class. (This study embraces both waged and unwaged workers including peasants, ‘informal’ workers, wives and mothers, in the definition of the working class (Midnight Notes Collective, 1992: xii)). (ii) The Egyptian uprising has demonstrated the ways in which simultaneous direct action across geographical borders poses a major threat to capitalist power (Marshall, 2011). (iii) Egyptian protesters have effectively formed revolutionary alliances between women and men united across religious and ethnic divides, in order to fight to establish popular democratic control over the organization of life.

Theory and analysis of the movement of movements is emerging. As of 2011, literature on the movement of movements has largely focused on analyzing global social movement alliances, or what many call globalization from below. Academics and independent media personnel have analyzed the formation and actions of social movement alliances at international conferences of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank. Scholarship and independent media sources have also provided rich accounts and analyses of the movement of movement’s formation and actions to build alternatives to capitalism. These include the (2001–2011) series of World Social Movement gatherings, (Sen, Anand, Escobar, and Waterman, 2004) the Zapatista ‘encuentros,’ (Esteva, 1998; Von Werlhof, 2001) the popular protests at the United Nations’ meetings on climate change (Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP UNFCCC)) and the Cochabamba first ever Peoples’ World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth (20–22 March 2010)\(^1\) (Turner, 2010).

\(^1\) In March 2010 in Cochabamba, Bolivia, hundreds of social movements came together from 140 countries to create a global People’s Movement and Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth to end climate change by ending capitalism.
However, as of 2011, a major ‘knowledge gap’ exists with respect to an in-depth understanding of the forces that are involved in creating and giving rise to the movement of movements. This study contributes to filling the knowledge gap by examining the relationship amongst corporate power, (exercised by a very small group of influential capitalists) and the many billions of waged and unwaged, dispossessed people who fight back, paying particular attention to those who seek to build a post-capitalist world. By ‘capitalists’ I refer to the world’s approximately 1000 billionaires (Forbes, 2011).

This study is an attempt to theorize Karl Marx’s (1867) discovery in Capital volume one, chapter 32 that:

“One capitalist always kills many. ... Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united and organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. Thus integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated” (Marx, 1867 in McLellan, ed., 2000: 525 emphasis added).

Marx insists that capitalist production and organization, as it expands and becomes more concentrated, gives rise to an ever more numerous and globalized working class that is organized, united and disciplined to become a class ‘for itself.’ The revolutionary working class for itself and not in the service of capitalists seeks to transcend capitalist social relations by taking control over the means of production.
More specifically, Marx found that as large corporations globalize and swallow up smaller firms, (what is known as concentration or amalgamation) these dominant corporations create a global network in order to commodify\(^2\) and exploit human labour power (workers) and nature. The two-fold process of concentration and commodification creates the conditions for workers to join social movements and to actively resist capitalist commodification and exploitation. As social movements develop and connect over time, resistance is concentrated into what is referred to as a *movement of movements*.

CLR James (1989) argues that this finding of Marx is his most important, original contribution to knowledge (James quoted by Turner, 2011a). I revisit this above quotation in chapter one for the purpose of a very close analysis. I now discuss how I apply Marx’s central discovery to an investigation of the origins of the movement of movements.

A central question in this study is ‘does the concentration of capitalist firms impel social movements to connect and (begin to) become a class for themselves?’ This study’s hypothesis is that as fewer and fewer corporations expand and globalize, more and more people are drawn into what Marx and others have called the *global social factory*. The global social factory is a highly centralized, global network of capitalist relations of commodification and exploitation. These relations extend beyond the point of production. Capitalists exploit and workers resist within waged and unwaged work environments, in shopping malls, households, schools, hospitals, government offices, and in nature. In the process of global social factory concentration and exploitation waged and unwaged workers participate in movements for themselves and against the capitalists. As these movements develop they interface with each other and form a movement of movements.

\(^2\) Commodification is here defined as the process whereby capitalists enclose or privatize human labour power and nature and convert them into measurable values from which capitalists can extract profits.
This study seeks to explain the forces that impel connections between movements. It does so by focusing on Monsanto as proxy for capitalists and La Via Campesina (‘the peasant way’) as proxy for the movement of movements. Monsanto is, as of 2011, the world’s largest seed company, controlling one fifth of the proprietary seed market. La Via Campesina is a global movement of over 200 million small-scale farmers, women, fisherfolk, landless people and indigenous people, from 79 countries fighting for popular control over all aspects of the agri-food system.

The relationship between Monsanto and La Via Campesina is examined during two stages in Monsanto’s concentration: (i) the first stage is the wave of mergers and acquisitions from 1996 to 1998 and; (ii) the second stage is the so called ‘greenfields’ (new enclosures) expansion into ‘agrofuels’ from 2007 to 2011. Both stages are directly followed by successively larger surges in social movement opposition to Monsanto. Figure 1 demonstrates the increase in instances of protest against Monsanto documented in the media. I return to a more detailed explanation and analysis of this illustration in chapter five.

![Figure 1](image)

Instances of Protest Worldwide

Instances of Protest Worldwide
The bulk of the case study material in this thesis is focused on the corporate-social movement dynamic in the first stage of Monsanto’s concentration (1996–1998). I focus on the first stage of Monsanto’s concentration because it highlights key elements of the movement of movements. Also, I briefly address the second stage of concentration. I do this in order to show the intensification and proliferation of movement connectivity that accompanies corporate concentration over time.

Although this study centres on Monsanto and La Via Campesina, it embraces the whole of the capitalist system and the entirety of struggles against capitalists. I emphasize working class struggles that affirm a post capitalist reality. There are three important provisos I want to underline here. (1) The first has to do with how one group of capitalists centred in one corporation and one group of workers centred in one movement can stand as proxies for all capitalists and all workers. In short, this question addresses the extent to which proxies are meaningful.

One important justification for this use of proxies is that a close examination of a small group of capitalists will illuminate characteristics and relationships relevant to a large group of capitalists. A careful examination of a small group of movements may illuminate characteristics and relationships relevant to a large group of movements. In fact, this proxy study intends to illuminate the trajectories of all capitalists and all movements.

(2) The second proviso relates to the specific choice of these particular proxies. Why choose Monsanto capitalists as proxies for all capitalists? Why choose La Via Campesina as a proxy for all movements? Monsanto and La Via Campesina are the largest contenders in the struggle over the agri-food system (in terms of market share and membership, respectively). The agri-food
system impinges on all aspects of life. Whoever controls the agri-food system controls the capacity for all human beings to sustain and reproduce life.

Another reason I chose these two proxies, apart from the manifold connections that the food system has with every other sector, these two actors though their involvement with food are intimately connected to all dimensions of social reality in every corner of the world. Food is an ‘intimate commodity’ (Winson, 1992). Monsanto and La Via Campesina’s connection with food opens avenues for explorations of particular importance in this study. These explorations address how class relations are gendered and ethnicized, how movements connect globally how all of life is implicated in the struggles and jubilees of the global social factory.

(3) There is one further reason that this study uses La Via Campesina as a proxy for the multitudes of exploited peoples in resistance. Since the 1990s La Via Campesina has been the most prominent global force fighting Monsanto and other agri-business corporations directly. La Via Campesina was founded in 1993 in Mons, Belgium by peasant organizations, primarily from Brazil, Mexico, Canada and Europe. The peasants’ organizations united globally in La Via Campesina in order to counter corporate power. La Via Campesina’s resistance, this study argues, was significantly stimulated by corporate globalization promoted by capitalists and world governments through the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to enforce and assert a system of increased rights for corporations to commodify and control nature and human labour power.

In 1996 La Via Campesina asserted food sovereignty as an alternative to capitalist agriculture. Food sovereignty refers to the popular control over all aspects of food production, distribution and consumption. La Via Campesina’s campaign for food sovereignty is in direct
opposition to the campaign of Monsanto and allied capitalists who strive to impose corporate
sovereignty in all sectors including agriculture. As I detail below in chapter four, the founders of this movement were strongly motivated by the actions of Monsanto and other agri-food capitalists in privatizing and controlling peasants’ seeds, in particular through the Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement of the World Trade Organization. This study also emphasizes Monsanto capitalists as they relate to other capitalists and, equally, the social movement La Via Campesina as they interface and connect with other social movements.

In sum, this study uses proxies to illuminate the trajectories of a large group of capitalists and a large group of social movements. I chose to focus on Monsanto and La Via Campesina as proxies for three reasons: (i) they are the largest contenders in the struggle to control food; (ii) because of their involvement with food, the ‘intimate commodity,’ they are connected to all dimensions of social reality, globally; and (iii) La Via Campesina is the most prominent global force fighting Monsanto and other agri-business corporations head on.

I now outline the content of the nine chapters comprising this study.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The study is divided into two parts. Part one focuses on the explanatory framework. Part two explores Monsanto’s concentration (1996–1998 and 2007–2011) and struggles between Monsanto and La Via Campesina in India, the EU and Brazil. In what follows, I briefly outline these two parts and their respective chapters.
**Part I: Framework for Understanding the Corporate-Movement Dynamic**

Part one frames the discussion of the movement of movements. Part one is comprised of chapters one, two and three. Chapter one analyzes Marx’s central discovery that corporate concentration and organization provides a template for the working class to act for itself. Chapter one also discusses key defining features of the movement of movements and presents a review of several approaches to the study of social movements.

Chapter two has four sections that comprise the bulk of this study’s theoretical-methodological framework. The first section defines the capital relation as a back and forth struggle amongst capitalists (those 1000 billionaires who own the means of production) and workers (those who work for capitalists) over control of that which is necessary to produce and reproduce life. In fact, as we shall see, there is a reciprocal shaping of one by the other. This back-and-forth or more accurately, the expanding spiral effect is captured in the perspective of composition, decomposition and recomposition discussed below.

The second section of chapter two, details gendered, ethnicized class analysis employing the fight for fertility (Turner, 1992). The fight for fertility frames the struggle between capitalists and workers as a struggle over the prerequisites for producing and reproducing life, or fertility. The fight involves cross-class alliances or male deals between capitalists and male members of the dispossessed class, to control and exploit nature and human labour power. Many social movements seek to break up male deals by uniting across gendered and ethnicized class divides imposed by the capitalists. These gendered, ethnicized class alliances as they interface become the

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3 Some women may be part of the stratum or group of dispossessed men who enter into deals with capitalists to facilitate capitalists in their project to exploit and commodify life. Overall most partnerships between capitalists and members of the dispossessed class are deals between and amongst men. However, this deal is socially and historically constructed rather than the result of any deterministic dynamic.
revolutionary movement of movements. This section also outlines the hierarchy of labour power enforced by capitalists to derive profits and cheap labour from the world’s dispossessed. Below I show how peasants, especially women amongst them, are protagonists in the fight against capitalism.

The third section outlines the circulation analysis. Circulation analysis explains how social movements are connected in three ways: across multiple terrains, (defined as sites of struggle, where different kinds of waged and unwaged workers enter into direct confrontation with capitalists to control fertility) across varied capitalist industries, (energy, food, finance) and across different geographic locations (globally). This study emphasizes the ways in which social movements assert power by acting concertedly and across geographical borders, to stop corporate enclosures and exploitation.

The fourth and final section of chapter two addresses how corporate concentration and workers’ struggles are strongly influenced by capitalist crises. This section explains how corporate concentration and crises alter the social relations of power in the capitalist system. As Marx discovered, and as I seek to illustrate in this study the perpetual concentration and centralization of power in the hands of fewer and fewer capitalists is a catalyst for the transformation of the working class which becomes a class for itself.

Chapter three is dedicated to explaining how I apply the above theoretical-methodological framework in order to test the accuracy of my hypothesis that corporate concentration and organization impels the movement of movements. This chapter explores the study’s hypothesis, discusses periodization and explains the two analytical steps — the fight for fertility analysis and the circulation analysis — that I employ in three case studies of struggles between
Monsanto and La Via Campesina in India, the European Union and Brazil. The two steps are as follows:

(i) The fight for fertility analysis involves identifying and examining, in each of the three case studies, how capitalists facilitate enclosure and exploitation by forming *male deals* and how workers fight back by forming *gendered, ethnicized class alliances*. (ii) Circulation analysis involves identifying and examining circulation or connection between struggles (across terrains, across industries, and across geographical borders).

I now turn to an outline of part two of this study.

**Part II Monsanto’s Concentration and La Via Campesina Movement of Movements (1990s–2011)**

Part two focuses on stage one of Monsanto’s concentration (1996–1998) with a brief discussion of the second stage of concentration (2007–2011). Between 1996 and 1998, Monsanto bought up or made deals with 15 of the top US and international seed companies. Immediately in 1996 and lasting well into the 2000s there was an immense surge in social movement resistance to Monsanto and its genetically modified (GM) food and seeds.\(^4\) Part two analyzes this back-and-forth struggle from chapter four to nine, paying particular attention to the ways in which workers form a revolutionary movement of movements.

Chapter four offers an overview of the relationship between Monsanto and La Via Campesina from 1900s to the 2011. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a brief history of Monsanto and explores how Monsanto increased its control over

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\(^4\) In this study ‘seeds’ refers broadly to all plant germplasm (genetic resources) including crops (rice, soy, corn, rapeseed and the like).
national and international seed and food systems. Monsanto was aided by the complicity of the World Trade Organization and world governments.

The second section of chapter four provides a brief history of La Via Campesina and food sovereignty alternatives to WTO-Monsanto capitalist agriculture. This chapter demonstrates how Monsanto significantly impelled farmers’ unity across geographical borders.

Chapter five outlines stage one of Monsanto’s concentration (1996–1998), and the surge in social movement resistance to Monsanto that arose in the context of the power relations of Monsanto’s concentration and its global seed enclosure project.

In chapter six, seven and eight I provide a deep anatomical analysis of how Monsanto’s concentration from 1996 to 1998 ignited La Via Campesina organizations and their allies to connect and fight Monsanto. In these three chapters we see how Monsanto facilitated the enclosure of food and seeds and how social movements acted locally and across geographical borders, to break up Monsanto’s GM ‘frankenfood’ project. These chapters also show that struggles against Monsanto are strategically aimed at expanding the global commons (that which enables access to the prerequisites of life for all (McMurtry in Turner and Brownhill, 2001: 820, 806)) and elaborating a post-capitalist future.

Chapter six analyzes the 1992 to 2001 struggle in India to stop Monsanto and other biotechnology companies from enclosing peasants’ saved seeds. This chapter examines the fight by Navdanya and the Karnataka State Farmers’ Association and their allies, beginning in 1992, against the commodification of seeds through a ‘satyagraha’ or non-violent resistance movement. In 1998 Monsanto purchased the Indian seed company, Mahyco, to usurp India’s
cotton. Chapter six examines how Navdanya and the Karnataka farmers’ intensified their struggle against Monsanto by connecting to movements globally and reaffirming the commons.

Chapter seven analyzes how, from 1996 to 2001 in the European Union, Monsanto’s efforts to enclose the EU’s food supply forced food buyers, non-governmental organizations and scientists to connect with each other and demand a moratorium on the sale and cultivation of Monsanto’s GMOs. Chapter seven highlights the ways in which Monsanto sought to break up or decompose struggles against it by employing tactics to silence and discredit their opponents. We see how movements comprising food buyers, farmers and scientists connected with social movements across geographical borders to coordinate action against Monsanto and to build alternatives.

Chapter eight analyzes how, from 1999 and 2008, Brazil’s Landless Workers Movement and the Workers’ Party government of Rio Grande do Sul attempted to stop Monsanto’s operations both within Brazil and globally. Chapter eight examines how the landless workers movement, La Via Campesina members and their allies from around the world stepped up their efforts to fight agri-business by taking direct action against Monsanto at the high profile, 2001 inaugural World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil. The movements used the power of the global media and other tactics to affirm the commons and undermine Monsanto capitalists.

Chapter nine considers how capitalists in Monsanto and related firms were hit very hard by a complex of obstacles, of which popular protest was prominent. Chapter nine is divided into three sections. The first section outlines Monsanto’s 1998–2002 financial collapse and the very negative impact that the social movement’s cross-border actions had on the company. The second section briefly discusses Monsanto’s expansion into agrofuels (the second stage of
concentration) and the corresponding second surge of resistance. I analyze how the so called ‘food riots’ of 2007–2011 were impelled by the food crisis that was induced by Monsanto and agrofuels.

The third section shifts the analysis from Monsanto and La Via Campesina to give attention to the reality of all capitalists and all movements. This third section discusses the connection between the global political economy of capitalist concentration and the movement of movements most acutely expressed in the formation of the World People’s Movement for the Rights of Mother Earth (2010) and the Arab Revolution (2011).

In the conclusion, I revisit the study’s hypothesis and summarize the study’s findings. I also provide examples of how social movements establish democratic control over capitalist forces and thereby transform them into elements of global commoning.

I have just outlined the two parts and the chapters which comprise this study. To summarize, part one focuses on the framework of analysis in the study and contains chapters one, two and three. Part two focuses on the social movement activity in India, the European Union and Brazil in stage one of Monsanto’s concentration, (1996–1998) (including a brief discussion of stage two of Monsanto’s concentration, (2007–2011) the food crisis, the Cochabamba People’s Movement and the Arab Revolution) and contains chapters four to nine.

I now turn to the first chapter in this thesis where I consider key defining features of the movement of movements and analyze Marx’s findings in the ‘one capitalist kills many’ quotation.
PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS THE MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS?

Theory and analysis of the interconnections between movements is emerging in tandem with the emergence of the movement itself. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section outlines four key defining features of the movement of movements as identified in the literature examined in this study. The second section examines in detail Marx’s discovery that working class opposition arises from corporate organization and concentration. A brief review of social movement literature is also presented.

SECTION ONE: DEFINING FEATURES OF THE MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS

This study defines social movements as organized groups of dispossessed workers (those who have had their means of production stolen from them) acting outside of institutional channels for the purpose of challenging capitalists’ power. This study examines the formation of what scholars and social movement activists identify as the ‘movement of movements.’ Below I identify and explain four key defining features of the movement of movements.

Leigh Brownhill (2009) provides insight into the question What is the movement of movements? in her treatment of struggles for democracy in Kenya in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Brownhill describes the connections between agents of social movements in Kenya and movements in other part of the world. The social movements in Keyna are occupying land and reclaiming public spaces and, according to Brownhill:

“As the numbers of activists’ organizations grew, so did the range of actions they undertook. Organizations began to relate to one another in what had become, by 2000, a multi-centred movement of social
movements. Massive demonstrations against corporate globalization in the Americas, Europe and worldwide signalled to social movements in Kenya that they were not alone in their dispossession or in their resistance” (Brownhill, 2009: 252).

Brownhill referred to two key movement of movement defining features. The first defining feature is that agents of the movement of movements often organize democratically and without leaders. The movement of movements is ‘multi-centred.’ The second defining feature outlined by Brownhill is that social movements in one geographical location are connected to movements in other geographical locations. Capitalist exploitation and social movement resistance is global.

Terisa Turner and Leigh Brownhill (2010) offer an analysis of the formation of the movement of movements. They reference the popular Kenyan revolutionary ecofeminist Wahu Kaara commenting on the formation of alliances amongst movements at the December 2009 ‘Klimaforum09’ in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Klimaforum09 occurred parallel and in opposition to the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP UNFCCC). Turner and Brownhill state that:

“if feminism is conceived as both the recognition that women are exploited and the fight against that exploitation, then the Kenyans’ movement of social movements is deeply feminist. It is from within this trajectory of gendered and ethnicized class conscious politics that Wahu Kaara points to a new social form emerging on the world stage: a ‘global peoples’ movement of reconstruction,’ a movement of movements focussed on ‘social transformation, economic reconstruction, political analysis and practical realization.’ The turn towards a new peoples’ movement crystallized in Copenhagen [at the December 2009 Klimaforum parallel climate change conference to governments’ COP15] and is advancing, as of this writing [April 2010], in Cochabamba at the world climate conference in defence of ‘Mother Earth.’ Its historic roots and current expression derive from a whole web of social movements against capitalism and for humanity and the earth. These include ‘Third World’ anti-colonial and other movements that defend the already-existing practices of commoning and local democracy, as well as movements globally, which have for generations grappled with how to overcome
exploitation and how to reinstate the earth’s and each person’s right to freely exist. This new social form, we suggest, signals nothing less than the historic emergence of the global working class for itself. The post-Copenhagen global movement of movements is an active and self-conscious movement that embraces the demands and organizations of the waged and unwaged working class, with revolutionary ecofeminist women and men at its cutting edge” (Turner and Brownhill, 2010: 106).

The third feature of the movement of movements that Turner and Brownhill point to is that the movement of movements is a process of the working class becoming a class for itself (understood as for life and against capitalism). The movement of movements is focused on becoming a class for itself by uniting across geographical borders and transcending gendered and ethnicized divisions imposed by the capitalists.

Another contribution to the analysis of the movement of movements is Tom Mertes’ edited collection entitled A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible? published in 2004. In the introduction Mertes contends that the movement of movements is what many people call ‘the anti-globalization movement’ or globalization from below. In the collection by Mertes, Naomi Klein (2001) contributes to an understanding of the third key feature of the movement of movements – the class becoming for itself. Klein argues that the movement of movements seeks to become for itself by taking back control over the commons. As stated above, the ‘commons’ is that which enables access to the prerequisites of life for all (McMurtry in Turner and Brownhill, 2001: 820, 806). Klein states that:

“I think it is more accurate to picture a movement of many movements — coalition of coalitions. Thousands of groups today are all working against forces whose common thread is what might broadly be described as the privatization of every aspect of life, and the transformation of every activity and value into a commodity. We often speak of the privatization of education, of healthcare, of natural resources. But the process is much vaster. It includes the way powerful ideas are turned into advertising slogans and public streets into shopping malls; new generations being target-marketed at birth; schools being invaded by ads; basic human necessities like water being sold as commodities; basic labour rights
being rolled back; genes are patented and designer babies loom; seeds are genetically altered and bought; politicians are bought and altered. At the same time there are oppositional threads, taking form in many different campaigns and movements. The spirit they share is a radical reclaiming of the commons” (Klein in Mertes, editor, 2004: 220).

As highlighted above on page 2, the Egyptian uprising involved a ‘plurality of subjects’ or the ‘multitudes’ of both waged and unwaged workers in the struggle for popular democracy. According to Negri (2003), the multitudes are “workers in the whole of society” that are exploited by capitalists including “men, women, people who work in services, people who work in nursing, people who work in linguistic relations, people who work in the cultural field, in all of the social relations, and in so far as they are exploited we consider them part of the multitude” (Negri, 2003). The fourth feature is the involvement of a multitude of workers in the movement of movements.

In sum, this study has identified four key defining features of the movement of movements. (i) The first feature is that the movement of movements is not a single ‘party’ or an ‘organization’ with a vanguard leader; it is largely decentralized and democratic. (ii) The second feature is that the movement of movements is global. Movements in one geographical location connect to movements in other geographical locations.

(iii) The third feature is that the movement of movements seeks to transcend capitalist relations and become a class ‘for itself.’ The revolutionary class becomes for itself by transcending ethnicized and gendered divisions and affirming the commons. (iv) The fourth feature is that the movement of movements is multitudinous — workers in different sectors of society, waged and unwaged women, men, people of different ethnicities, young and old.
Now that I have discussed what the movement of movements is, I turn to a discussion of where it comes from.

**SECTION TWO: WHERE DOES THE MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS COME FROM?**

In this section I outline two contrasting paradigms in sociology within which contrasting approaches to the study of social movements are embedded: (i) The stratification paradigm originally associated with the Max Weber and Emile Durkheim and (ii) the gendered, ethnicized capital relation paradigm associated with Karl Marx. These paradigms are different in two main ways. (1) The stratification paradigm makes distinctions between social groups based on a range of characteristics and qualities (including income, health, education) whereas the capital relation paradigm distinguishes between two main social groups (capitalists and workers) which are mutually constitutive (capitalists become capitalists by dispossessing and exploiting workers, workers become workers by being exploited and dispossessed by capitalists). The stratification paradigm embraces a number of non-class based approaches to the study of social movements. The capital relation paradigm takes a class based approach to the study of social movements.

(2) The stratification paradigm seeks to describe social groups and social phenomena (eg. the function of gender in society, gender and class are viewed as separate and distinct categories that may have no historical connection). The capital relation paradigm is deeply historical and seeks to explain the relationship between capitalists and workers. The capital relation paradigm makes clear reference to the connection between capitalist exploitation and enclosures and social movements’ formation and actions.
There are of course theorists who draw on both paradigms. The framework for analysis of the movement of movements in this study is rooted within the gendered, ethnicized capital relation paradigm. I return to an explanation as to why I choose the capital relation paradigm below.

I now outline four approaches within the stratification paradigm.

(i) The stratification paradigm

(1) Resource mobilization theorists examine the ways in which the emergence and character of social movements is shaped by the movements’ access to resources (including for example people, money, social legitimacy and related symbolic resources). Resource mobilization theorists propose that the emergence and persistence of social movement activity depends on the availability and acquisition of resources that can be accumulated and used to stimulate movements’ pursuits. John McCarthy and Mayer Zald (1977) hypothesize that the absolute and relative amount of resources available to social movements is contingent on “the amount of discretionary resources of mass and elite publics” and that “the greater the amount of [those] resources available to the SMS [social movement sector] within a society the greater the likelihood that new SMIs [social movement industries] and SMOs [social movement organizations] will develop” (McCarthy and Zald quoted in Snow and Soule, 2010: 88).

(2) Another approach to the study of social movements is the political opportunities approach. Theorists employing the political opportunities approach examine the relationship amongst social movements and national political systems. These theorists also analyze changes in movements’ structure and strategy over time (Tarrow, 1996: 878). The political opportunity approach is used to show how political opportunities (including changes in political
alignments, the opening of possibilities for collective legal action and the presence or absence of influential allies) shape movement mobilization, collective action, and the outcomes of such actions (Tarrow, 1996: 878, 880). According to Sidney Tarrow (1996) the political opportunities method is useful to provide “an aggregate of variables” to assesses the extent to which political structures and outcomes trigger movements into action (Tarrow, 1996: 880-81). Theorists that employ the political opportunities structure framework argue that social movements arise from within the context of the power relations of the state.

(3) The ecological approach to the study of social movements examines the ways in which movement emergence and mobilizations are influenced by ecological factors and the existence of free spaces. Ecological factors refer to spatial arrangement of physical places that facilitate or sustain collective action. For example, according to Dingxin Zhao, (2001) among the most important factors in the student movement in Beijing and Tiananmen Square were (i) the proximate location of most of Beijing’s 67 universities in relation to each other; (all within a 30 minute bicycle ride) (ii) the separation of most universities from the rest of the town by brick walls; (iii) the half-dozen or more students living together in a dormitory room for a four year period; and (iv) the fact that the students did not need to leave the university to shop for food and clothing or to get exercise (Zhao in Snow and Soule, 2010: 99). Some of the ways in which these ecological factors impacted the student mobilization in Beijing were by (i) facilitating the spread of ideas and information, (ii) allowing for students to create centres for networking and mobilization, and (iii) facilitating “mutual imitation and inter-university competition for activism among students from different universities” (Zaho in Snow and Soule, 2010: 100).
Social psychological approaches explain that people are brought together to form social movements because they are motivated by shared morality and feelings of injustice. Marta Fuentes and Andre Gunder Frank (1989) argue that:

“Morality and justice/injustice, perhaps more than the deprivation of livelihood and/or identity through exploitation and oppression through which morality and (in)justice manifest themselves, have probably been the essential motivating and driving force of social movements both past and present. However, the sense of morality and concern with (in)justice refers largely to “us.” The social group perceived as “we” was and is quite variable among the family, tribe, village, ethnic group, nation, country, first, second, or third world, humanity, etc., and gender, class, stratification, caste, race, and other groupings, or combinations of these. What mobilizes us is this deprivation, oppression, and especially injustice to “us,” however “we” define and perceive ourselves” (Fuentes and Gunder Frank, 1989: 181-182).

Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello and Brendan Smith (2000) also adopt a social psychological explanation for the origins of social movements. They view the movement of movements emerging from “concerns and experiences” (Brecher et. al., 2000: 1). The authors explain further when they state that “those affected by globalization from above [corporate globalization] have begun to converge, brought together by common interests, goals and a number of specific campaigns. This emerging movement — this network of networks — is the iceberg of which the street demonstrations form the most visible tip” (Brecher et. al., 2000: 1).

There are a number of other social movement approaches that fall within this social psychological framework including theories of identity politics. These theorists purport that social movement initiatives arise from shared experiences of oppression.

The stratification paradigm embraces these four approaches. As indicated above, theorists within the stratification paradigm have a similar interest in the question of from whence do
social movements arise. Some of their concepts and approaches to analysis, especially the historical approaches, are similar to my own.

I now turn to an explanation of the capital relation paradigm within which this study is embedded.

**(ii) The gendered, ethnicized capital relation paradigm**

The gendered, ethnicized capital relation paradigm is explained in much more detail in Chapter two. This paradigm frames the analysis in part two of this study on the relationship between Monsanto and La Via Campesina. Below I provide an explanation of the approach taken by theorists within the capital relation paradigm regarding the question of from whence does the movement of movements arise.

Following Marx, (1867) I argue that workers join in collective actions against capitalists because they are impelled by the two-fold process of (i) corporate concentration and (ii) the corporate organization of production. More precisely, Karl Marx in volume one, chapter 32 of Capital (1867) outlines that the process of corporate concentration and organization creates the conditions for the organized revolt of the working class. Workers are ‘organized, united and disciplined’ to reclaim the means of production and abolish capitalism. According to Marx:

“One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever-extending scale, the cooperative form of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as means of production of combined socialized labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but
with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united and organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated” (Marx, 1867 in McLellan, ed., 2000: 525 emphasis added).

Marx says that there are eight consequences or social forces that are concomitant with corporate concentration. The trajectories of these social forces appear throughout this study. In this study’s conclusion I return to a discussion of how social movements establish democratic control over these capitalist forces and thereby transform them into elements of global commoning. This is what becoming a class for itself involves.

These eight forces are: (1) centralization of the means of production; (2) the cooperative form of the labour process; (3) the conscious technical application of science; (4) the methodical cultivation of the soil (agro-industry); (5) the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common (the internet); (6) the economizing of all means of production by their use as means of production of combined socialized labour; (7) the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market (globalized production and exchange, the ‘McDonaldization’ of the world) and; (8) the international character of the capitalistic regime (the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the World Economic Forum, the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the Bilderburg Group, Rockefeller, Ford and Gates Foundations).

In addition, I outline four points to explain Marx’s findings.
As capitalists’ corporations and organizations grow larger they absorb smaller firms. This process of centralization is especially intense in times of economic crisis. Through mergers and acquisitions or ‘greenfield’ expansions (new enclosures) the dominant firms in each sector become fewer in number — they become oligopoly and, increasingly, monopoly powers. In Capital volume one, chapter 25 Marx distinguishes between corporate concentration and the process of centralization. Marx defines concentration as the process whereby capitalists commodify more and more (accumulation, greenfields expansion). Centralization, according to Marx, is capitalists’ tendency to become monopoly powers (mergers and acquisitions). In this study, I collapse these terms together. I use the term concentration to refer to the dual process of centralization and accumulation or new enclosures.

In distinguishing between concentration and centralization Marx states that:

“This splitting-up of the total social capital into many individual capitals or the repulsion of its fractions one from another, is counteracted by their attraction. This last does not mean that simple concentration of the means of production and of the command over labour, which is identical with accumulation. It is concentration of capitals already formed, destruction of their individual independence, expropriation of capitalist by capitalist, transformation of many small into few large capitals. This process differs from the former in this, that it only presupposes a change in the distribution of capital already to hand, and functioning; its field of action is therefore not limited by the absolute growth of social wealth, by the absolute limits of accumulation. Capital grows in one place to a huge mass in a single hand, because it has in another place been lost by many. This is centralisation proper, as distinct from accumulation and concentration” (Marx, 1867). Capital volume one, chapter 25. Retrieved from http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch25.htm#S4).

In the ‘one capitalist kills many’ quotation, Marx indicates that capitalists control the means of production. Capitalists also dominate, dispossess and exploit living labour power embodied in people who as a class are “always increasing in numbers.” In chapter two in
section two, this study considers the extent to which workers are divided by the capitalists according to a gendered and ethnicized hierarchy of labour power.

(3) Capitalists’ control is resisted. Workers refuse to cooperate with capitalists and instead seek to take back control over the means of production. Workers exercise control in many ways for example by refusing to sell their labour as a commodity to the capitalists, and by organizing simultaneous production and consumption strikes. Capitalists need labour but labourers do not need capitalists — the back and forth struggle grows and becomes more global and encompasses more of the gendered and ethnicized multitudes over time.

(4) Capitalists’ organization or ‘the mechanism of the process of production’ is designed to control labour power and make profits for the capitalists. The working class is organized, united and disciplined by ‘the process of the mechanism of production itself’ (enclosure and exploitation) to transform from being a class in itself to being a class for itself. In chapter two on page 59, I discuss how the transformation of the working class as a class for itself requires that workers transcend gendered, ethnicized divisions imposed by capitalists in order to regain control over the means of production.

A number of theorists have supported or refuted Marx’s claim. CLR James and others including Harry Cleaver, Terisa Turner, Leigh Brownhill, Peter Linebaugh and Nick Dyer-Witheford insist on the historical and empirical accuracy of Marx’s assertion. They reject entirely the notion that revolutionary movements arise only from shared morality and feelings of injustice and instead point to the capital relation (defined as a struggle between capitalists and workers) as the source of revolutionary power.

CLR James insisted that this discovery of Marx’s was his most important original contribution to knowledge (James quoted by Turner, 2011a). In their analysis of Nigerian
workers’ struggles against international oil companies, Turner and Brownhill (2003) explain that “[t]he systemic impetus to globalization from below revealed by the Nigerian insurgency is embodied in the corporate organizational and oil market ties that bind together all the world’s people engaged in producing and consuming oil. The exploited, waged and unwaged, are “disciplined, united, [and] organized” by the “process of production itself” (Turner and Brownhill, 2003a: 6-7).

Harry Cleaver (1977) explains why many political economists, such as those who identify as ‘critical theorists’ and others, do not give sufficient weight to Marx’s discovery. Cleaver asserts that political economists are too focused on the capitalist class as, in Cleaver’s words, the ‘self-activating monsters’ that have all the power to create history (Cleaver, 1977: Introduction, 20).

In so doing, political economists can easily overlook the ways in which the social movements harness the global organization of capitalist production and markets to organize against the capitalist and for themselves. Cleaver emphasizes that one cannot understand class struggle by focusing solely on the activity of the capitalists. This study seeks to show how an understanding of and contribution to the movement of movements must come from a detailed understanding of the power of the dispossessed. Cleaver asserts that:

“in the class war, as in conventional military encounters, one must begin with the closest study of one’s own forces, that is, the structure of working-class power. Without an understanding of one’s own power, the ebb and flow of the battle lines can appear as an endless process driven only by the enemy’s unilateral self-activity. When the enemy regroups or restructures, as capital is doing in the present crisis, [in the 1970s] its actions must be grasped in terms of the defeat of prior tactics or strategies by our forces — not simply as another clever move. That an analysis of enemy strategy is necessary is obvious. The essential point is that an adequate understanding of that strategy can be obtained only by grasping it in relation to our own strengths and weaknesses” (Cleaver, 1977: Introduction 32).
Cleaver refers to grasping the strengths and weaknesses of the working class struggles that seek to “transform and threaten the very existence of capital” (Cleaver, 1977: Introduction 32).

In contrast, by reading Capital as ‘political economy’ or as ‘ideology’ one is led to believe that workers need a vanguard party to lead them in class struggle as a ‘stage’ toward communism. A complete and holistic understanding of the capital relation, according to Cleaver’s interpretation of Marx, must centralize the power of the working class to make their own history.

In this connection, this study embraces Turner and Benajmin’s (1995) argument that:

“individuals and groups who directly produce the majority of the goods and services needed for the production of their own labor power and the labor power of others, have a direct interest in preventing capitalist commodification of communal relationships, natural environments, and public space. Furthermore, ... those individuals and groups whose relationship with capital is primarily defined by the work of producing labor power have a unique social power to appropriate and abolish the technical/structural divisions of the working class in the struggle against capitalist enclosure” (Turner and Benjamin, 1995, quoted in Turner et. al., 1997: 214-15).

Below I explain this unique social power in more detail. I also explain how capitalists’ profitability depends on the unwaged work of women and other exploited peoples, especially people from the global South. This study recognizes that the working class becoming for itself is a process of members of the dispossessed class joining in and supporting the initiatives and demands of indigenous women and women of the global south (Turner and Brownhill, 2006: 88; Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999).

In sum, following Marx and others, I argue that corporate concentration and organization impels the movement of movements. That is, with many fewer but larger capitalists flows a tighter integration of working class fight-back initiatives. This is not to say that there is an
automatic or inevitable progression toward revolution. On the contrary, corporate and social
movement expansion are contingent on a number of factors including the degree of class unity
and state sponsorship or repression. States, acting as functionaries for the capitalists, employ
repressive measures to break up social movements’ actions and unity including border control,
‗no-fly‘ lists, the prison and legal systems, and outright violence. As I discuss below in chapter
two, capitalists divide the working class, especially based on gender and ethnic constructs.
Social movement actors engage in democratic decision making processes and actively strategize
across borders in order to be effective and global (linguistic, cultural, ethnicized and gendered).
It is not a foregone conclusion that these alliances take place.

This chapter has advanced an understanding of this study’s argument in two ways. First it
outlined key features of the movement of movements which is defined as a globally
interconnected alliance of women and men workers from the global North and South against
capitalism and for the commons. Chapter two provides a more detailed discussion of the
gendered and ethnicized dimensions of exploitation and fight back.

Second this chapter advanced this study’s argument by providing a detailed analysis of
Marx’s central discovery that capitalist concentration and organization impels workers to
replace capitalist relations with commoning. This chapter has also outlined two paradigms that
have contrasting approaches to the study of social movements: (i) the stratification paradigm
which ranks social groups according to a range of characteristics and is largely descriptive and
(ii) the capital relation paradigm that is historical and seeks to explain how the power relations
of corporate concentration and organization provide a context for the emergence of cohesive,
organized groups of workers that assert power. I seek to further interrogate this second
paradigm.
There are three main reasons I have taken up the capital relation paradigm. (1) This study’s scope of inquiry is global. It focuses on the global struggle between a small group of capitalists who have a huge amount of power over the means of life relative to the rest of the population of workers whose power to maintain and reproduce life is significantly under threat. The stratification paradigm is commonly employed in studies that have a national scope as opposed to studies that have an international scope. I embed my analysis in the capital relation paradigm because it is global and embraces the class as a whole (as developed below, the class as a whole includes the vast majority of waged and unwaged workers).

(2) This study pursues a revolutionary thread. It is concerned with fundamental explanations with reference to systemic relations and their transcendence. The gendered, ethnicized capital relation paradigm integrates the analysis of class, gender and ethnicity. It recognizes that that sexism and racism are not accidental but the result of and inherent to the historical relations of capitalist exploitation (I explain this point further below in chapter two). The stratification paradigm abstracts gender and ethnicity from class. As I discuss below, an integrated analysis of gender, ethnicity and class allows us to “comprehend the anti-capitalist thrust of what appear to be non-working class struggles and demands” (Midnight Notes Collective, 1992: xii).

I now turn to chapter two which places the above analysis in the context of a larger theoretical-methodological framework.
CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter two is divided into four sections. These are listed here and then introduced briefly: (i) the capital relation; (ii) gendered, ethnicized class analysis; (iii) the circulation of struggle and; (iv) capitalist concentration and crisis.

(i) The first section considers the capital relation. The capital relation is a struggle amongst capitalists and workers to control that which is necessary to produce and reproduce life. This section is divided into three parts. The first part defines and explains commoning (a set of practices which are for life and against capitalism) and commodification (a set of practices that are for profit and against life). The second part outlines Marx`s distinction between working class in itself (all those forced to sell their labour power to capital) and the working class for itself (which exists when workers assert their autonomy though unity in struggle against commodification).

The third part defines and explains class composition. Class composition is a theoretical tool that seeks to explain the back and forth process amongst workers who assert their power and capitalists who seek to break up that control. Since the rise of large corporations, three historical cycles of class composition have emerged (1845–1914, 1914–1973 and 1973–20??). Each cycle has three phases: the first phase is composition, (workers asserting power) the second phase is decomposition, (capitalists break up workers` power) and the third phase is recomposition (workers increase power and unity). Each cycle is marked by significant surges in corporate concentration and new forms of working class resistance.
(ii) The second section emphasizes the gendered and ethnicized nature of exploitation and resistance. Capitalists’ exploitation and resistance by the multitudes is diffuse throughout society or what I, following Marx and others, call the *global social factory*. This section frames the social factory struggle as a *fight for fertility*. Turner and Brownhill define fertility in a broad sense as autonomous human and non-human creativity, community building, the production of children, food and other crops and animals, and nature’s fertility in soil, seeds and plants, water and microorganisms (Turner and Brownhill, 2003b).

The fight for fertility involves *male deals* amongst capitalists and dispossessed men to exploit and enclose that which is necessary to produce and reproduce life (fertility) and *gendered, ethnicized class alliances* between gendered and ethnicized members of the dispossessed class who are agents of revolution. Gendered, ethnicized class alliances attempt to end capitalist social relations and affirm commoning by transcending the hierarchy of labour power imposed by the capitalists and breaking up the male deal.

(iii) The third section explains the circulation of struggle. The circulation of struggle shows how gendered, ethnicized class alliances are connected in three ways: across different terrains, (defined as sites of struggle where different kinds of waged and unwaged workers enter into direct confrontation with capitalists to control fertility) across different capitalist industries (energy, food, finance) and across geographical borders (globally). Over time, the movement of movements is significantly shaped by the circulation of gendered, ethnicized class struggles in these three ways.

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5 It is important to note that women can be male dealers. But *housewifization* (the dispossession of women of the means of production) introduces a gender hierarchy that makes it more likely for dispossessed men to serve as capitalists’ functionaries.
(iv) The fourth and final section of this study’s theoretical-methodological framework addresses how corporate concentration and crises influences workers’ struggles. Corporate concentration (also referred to as amalgamation) is defined as the process whereby large firms get larger through mergers, acquisitions and so-called ‘greenfield’ expansion or new enclosures. In the process these concentrated firms absorb the workforce, markets and supply chains of smaller firms. These takeovers occur in an especially intense burst during or shortly after periods of capitalist crisis. Such crises have at their core a dramatic collapse of value (understood as claims by capitalists on workers and nature).

The analysis in part two of this study focuses on social movements’ actions and formation during two periods of growth in Monsanto’s power, (1996–1998 and 2007–2011) with an emphasis on the first period (1996–1998). The main hypothesis under examination here (that corporate expansion and concentration stimulates the expansion of a movement of movements) suggests that with capitalist crisis and successive waves of corporate concentration there develops more expansive social movements such that, as of 2011, it is possible to speak of a movement of movements (or a global class becoming for itself).

I now turn to a more detailed discussion of these four elements of this study’s theoretical-methodological framework starting with the capital relation.

**SECTION ONE: THE CAPITAL RELATION**

Capital is here defined as a social relationship between those who own the means of production (capitalists) and those who have had their means of production stolen from them (workers). The relationship is characterized by constant struggle to control life itself. I follow Marx in understanding struggle as social movement opposition to capitalist enclosure and exploitation.
Beyond opposition workers organized in social movements seek to both defend and extend the commons.

I now turn to a discussion of commoning and commodification.

**Commoning Versus Commodification**

The struggle over life has historically been violent and characterized by theft and enclosure of the commons. McMurtry defines the commons as “any co-operative construct that enables the access of all members of a community to life goods” or “that which is essential to life and its development” (McMurtry in Turner and Brownhill, 2001: 820, 806). Turner and Brownhill extend this definition to emphasize the various spaces, institutions and social relations which constitute commons such as universal education, nutritious food, adequate shelter and sanitation. It is within the civil commons that people are able to satisfy their needs, socialize children, grow and develop (Turner and Brownhill, 2001: 806). Shiva further elaborates this point by emphasizing that the commons are “owned, managed and used by the community” and that ‘commoning’ is a democratic and egalitarian process (Shiva, 2005: 21).

Commoning is a practice undertaken by workers or ‘commoners’ “aimed at ensuring for all members of society the essentials of life and its development” (Turner and Brownhill, 2001: 806). Commoning takes place within and constitutes the subsistence, ‘life-centred’ political economy. Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen (1999) offer a definition of subsistence:

“freedom, happiness, self-determination within the limits of necessity — not in some other world but here; furthermore persistence, stamina, willingness to resist, the view from below, a world of plenty. The concept of self-provisioning is, in our opinion, far too limiting because it refers only to the economical dimension. ‘Subsistence’ encompasses concepts like the ‘moral economy,’ a new way of life in all its dimensions: economy, culture, society, politics, language, etcetera, dimensions which
can no longer be separated from each other” (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999: 19).

The social relations of the subsistence political economy are non-capitalist. Commoners, people for the commons, expand and elaborate the social relations of universal sharing or ‘commoning’ against private property and enclosure. Brownhill points to the ‘ever-changing’ nature of the commons:

“Subsistence is ancient; but it is also contemporary, ever-evolving and capable of incorporating the highest technology and most elaborated social networks. In a capitalist world, to subsist is to resist. And resistance to enclosure changes the character of subsistence. At the same time, capital continues to incrementally or cataclysmically extract land, labour and resources from the subsistence sector. The loss of these life goods also transfigures subsistence relations and practices” (Brownhill, 2009: 21).

Commodification is the process whereby capitalists enclose or privatize the commons including land, labour, all natural systems and social relationships, and convert them into measurable values from which capitalists can extract profits. Commodification almost always involves a loss of power and autonomy for women (Shiva, 1989; Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999).

Capitalists’ power to commodify and exercise private (or state capitalist) control for ever expanding accumulation and profit is what enables capitalists to create or, in Cleaver’s words ‘accumulate’ the global working class. Enclosures force dispossession on peoples who previously depended on the commons, or the unenclosed aspects of reality for life. Dispossessed peoples then have few alternatives but to sell their labour power to the capitalists.

Unable to sell their labour power, many millions of workers have become destitute and impoverished; living in what Mike Davis calls a ‘planet of slums’ (Davis, 2006). Silvia Federici
(2004), in her book on the origins of capitalism, dramatically illustrates this historical and ongoing violence of capitalist enclosures. Federici states that:

“Capital, Marx wrote, comes on the face of the earth dripping blood and dirt from head to toe and, indeed, when we look at the beginning of capitalist development, we have the impression of being in an immense concentration camp. In the ‘New World’ we have the subjugation of the aboriginal populations to the regimes of the mita and cuatelchil [systems of forced labour imposed by the Incan empire and adopted by the conquistadores] under which multitudes of people were consumed to bring silver and mercury to the surface in the mines of Huancavelica and Potosi. In Eastern Europe, we have a ‘second serfdom,’ tying to the land a population of farmers who had never previously been enserfed. In Western Europe, we have the Enclosures, the Witch-Hunt, the branding, whipping, and incarceration of vagabonds and beggars in newly constructed work-houses and correction houses, models for the future prison system. On the horizon, we have the rise of the slave trade, while on the seas, ships are already transporting indentured servants and convicts from Europe to America” (Federici, 2004: 64).

As Federici points out in the above quotation, the development of capitalism, the on-going theft of the wealth of others, has required slavery and force. In Caliban and the Witch (2004) Federici details the gendered dynamics of the capital relation. She provides historical accounts of how the ruling class, during the witch hunts in the 16th and 17th century, forcibly stole and outlawed the means by which women controlled their bodies and produced their livelihood. Capitalists seek to control first and foremost, human beings as the carriers of human labour power and, especially, women who generate that labour power for the capitalists. Nature is also a prime object of control and exploitation. These points and themes will be discussed in detail in section two below.

Cleaver (1977) highlights the dynamics of coerced labour. Commodification forces people to sell their time as the commodity labour-power in order to survive. Cleaver refers to the ‘commodity-form’ defined as the capitalists’ forcible enclosure of living labour power and nature. Cleaver states that:
“it must be understood that the class struggle is over the way the capitalist class imposes the commodity-form on the bulk of the population by forcing people to sell part of their lives as the commodity labor-power in order to survive and gain some access to social wealth. In other words, the overwhelming majority of the people are put in a situation where they are forced to work to avoid starvation. The capitalist class creates and maintains this situation of compulsion by achieving total control over all the means of producing social wealth. The generalized imposition of the commodity-form has meant that forced work has become the fundamental means of organizing society – of social control. It means the creation of a working class – a class of people who can survive only by selling their capacity to work to the class that controls the means of production” (Cleaver, 1977: Chapter Two The Commodity Form).

John McMurtry (1999) explains that the corporate organization of life attacks the shared basis of people’s lives. He argues that society’s ‘life-ground’ is under attack by the global market paradigm wherein a “constituency of agents,” including financial speculators and transnational currency traders, live from enclosing and exploiting what society depends on for survival “without the production of any life good or service” (McMurtry, 1999: 116). Capitalist enclosures expand what McMurtry identifies as the ‘money sequence of value.’ The money sequence of value is defined as a process whereby money capital is “no longer a phase within the circuit of the production or distribution of goods or services, but is exclusively committed at every stage of its growth only to the multiplication of itself” (McMurtry, 1999: 117).

Governments are necessarily implicated and capitalists must fully instrumentalize the state. McMurtry states that “The omnivorous cycle [of the money sequence] becomes the master of global economies by its not being responded to. In order to continue its growth, it must in some way strip societies of their powers of self-government to ensure that they do not impede or fetter the increasing appropriation of social resources it requires to go on expanding” (McMurtry, 1999: 118).
Table 1

The capital relation from the perspective of capitalists and workers

In his Why Does Capital Need Energy?, Renfrew Christie (1980) explains the capital relation from the perspective of capitalists and workers. Christie shows how capitalists forcefully appropriate what workers produce in order to generate profits. The capitalists, he explains, are primarily concerned with producing commodities not for use, (not to consume or to fulfill wants and needs) but for the purpose of exchange (to buy in order to sell and accumulate more money). The capital relation is constantly being resisted, undermined, repudiated, and refuted as people take back command over their labour and lives and means of production. As Christie states:

“The essence of capitalism is the appropriation by the capitalist classes of surplus value [profit] generated by the working classes in the labour process, that is, in the process where workers interact with nature to produce commodities. This generation and appropriation of surplus value is not a voluntary system where individual free agents of their own accord band together in social production to provide the goods and services which humanity needs. Rather, workers, without ownership of the means of production are forced by that fact to work for capitalists. Capitalists, in turn, do not produce goods and services to meet the needs of people: they produce commodities from the sale of which surplus value can be accumulated.”

Christie states that “these commodities need not have high use values” and then quotes Marx as saying “‘[i]n capitalist production what matters is not the immediate use-value but the exchange-value, and, in particular, the expansion of surplus value’” (Marx, Karl Theories of Surplus Value, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1969, Vol. 2, p 495 quoted in Christie in Nore and Turner, editors, 1980: 13). Christie continues, “Capitalist production is not concerned with utility” and then quotes Marx again: “‘It is only concerned with demand that is backed by the ability to pay.’”

Christie goes on to explain the capital relation from the perspective of workers:

“Yet the capitalists cannot accumulate without struggle. They meet with continuous overt and covert resistance from workers and peasants. The methods of resistance are manifold, ranging from simple refusal to work whenever the boss has his back turned, to sabotage or even open warfare. In ruling ideologies these actions are explained by the use of words like ‘laziness,’ ‘lack of motivation,’ ‘carelessness,’ and ‘irresponsibility.’ Open warfare is explained by saying that the Irish navy, African miner, or Mexican fruit-picker is ‘naturally violent, barbarous, uncivilized, rough, and aggressive.’ Workers and peasants are, of course, no more or less ‘inherently’ lazy or violent than any other human beings. Their ‘carelessness’ and ‘aggression’ are the logical result of their class positions in which they are denied the full fruits of their collective labour. Far from being irresponsible, their resistance to capital is both sensible and necessary. It is this struggle which is the power plant of history...”


In sum, commoning and commodification are two elements of the capital relation.

Corporate concentration is the expansion of a system of commodification and enclosure. Social movements fight back by affirming and expanding the social relations of the commons or the
subsistence political economy. Before I turn to part two, I briefly explain the concept of ‘value chains’ which help us to understand the ways in which corporations and workers seek to establish control over life.

There are two opposing value chains: the corporations’ value chain and the commoners’ value chain. The corporations’ value chain is the channel through which capitalists extract profits and coerce labour. The corporate ‘for profit’ value chain is global and geared toward ‘economies of scale’ and efficiency. Corporations set up the value chain by way of establishing relationships with other capitalist firms (also known as vertical integration) and members of the dispossessed class (what Turner and Brownhill call ‘male deals’).

The commoners’ value chain is the network of horizontal social relations through which workers fight back by affirming and expanding the commons. The commoners’ ‘for life’ value chain is much more likely to be local and geared toward self-sufficiency. Workers set up value chains by way of uniting across gendered and ethnicized divisions imposed by the capitalists. Turner and Brownhill call this process of unity amongst workers a gendered, ethnicized class alliance.

Below I outline two key characteristics of the capital relation as it grows over time: the working class becoming a class for itself, and the diachronic growth of the capital relation.

*Class ‘in itself’ vs Class ‘for itself’ and Diachronic Nature of the Capital Relation*

A central point made by Marx (also highlighted by Christie above) is the difference between a class ‘in itself,’ a class working for the capitalists, and a class ‘for itself,’ a class that is engaged in a more or less conscious struggle to be free from the capital relation. As I note above in chapter
one, Turner and Brownhill argue that the movement of movements is the emergence of a class for itself from the reality of a class in itself.

Cleaver explains the distinction further:

“Herein lies the importance of the distinction between labour-power and working class. When it functions as part of capital the working class is labour power, and capital defines the class by this fact. This can be clarified by using Marx’s distinction between working class in itself and for itself. The working class in itself is constituted of all those who are forced to sell their labour-power to capital and thus to be labour-power. It is a definition based purely on a common set of characteristics within capital. The working class for itself (or working class as working class—defined politically) exists only when it asserts its autonomy as a class through its unity in struggle against its role as labour-power. Paradoxically, then, on the basis of this distinction, the working class is truly working class only when it struggles against its existence as a class. The outcome of the dialectic of working class in itself and for itself is not the creation of a pure working class after the revolutionary overthrow of capital but rather the dissolution of the working class as such” (Cleaver, 1977: Chapter Two, 2).

Another important point that Christie emphasizes is the diachronic (back and forth sequentially over a time line as opposed to synchronic or at the same time) nature of the capital relation. Capital is a relation that involves a back and forth struggle between capitalist owners and workers to control life. This struggle propels history forward in an ever expanding spiral-like motion and the forces of class struggle grow over time.

As I noted above, Marx argued that the working class is for itself when it is “disciplined, united and organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself.” This resistance or the working class becoming ‘for itself’ globally, must necessarily involve consciousness and praxis, or theorized action. The emphasis in this study is on the capital relation as the very springboard for the movement of movements.
One way to summarize this discussion of the relation of struggle between capitalists and workers is to say that capitalists construct a series of relationships that enable them to extract wealth from workers and nature (instituted through ‘value chains’). Simultaneously, workers seek to break that chain of extraction. In seeking to break and even succeeding to break this chain of extraction workers extend commoning. These dynamics are at the heart of this study’s examination of the genesis of the movement of movements. I now turn to a discussion of class composition.

Class Composition

Above I explain how the capital relation moves forward in a spiral like motion over time. Just as the capital relation can be understood as a spiral, it can also be understood as a series of phases which the Midnight Notes Collective (1992) and Dyer-Witheford (1999) call composition-decomposition-recomposition. I now turn to a discussion of these three phases.

These three phases have as their core content, relationships between and within both the capitalist and the working class. The first phase is composition. According to Dyer-Witheford who adopts an autonomist perspective giving full weight to workers as agents of

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6 Autonomist Marxism is a branch within Marxism which includes many of the theorists I have mentioned (Harry Cleaver, the Midnight Notes Collective, Silvia Federici, Antonio Negri, Nick Dyer-Witheford and others). According to Dyer-Witheford, central to autonomist Marxism is “a cluster of theorists associated with the ‘autonomia’ movement of Italian workers, students and feminists of the 1960s and 70s, including Raniero Panzieri, Mario Tronti, Sergio Bologna, Romano Alquati, Mariarosa Dalla Costa, Francois Berardi, and Antonio Negri. In the late 1970s, autonomia was destroyed in one of the most ferocious yet least-known episodes of political repression in the recent history of metropolitan capital. The work of this group of intellectual-activists was violently interrupted by exile and imprisonment. Their brand of Marxism, anathema to neoliberals, Eurocommunists and social democrats alike, came to constitute a largely clandestine tradition. Yet over the political winter of the 1980s and 90s it has continued to develop, undergoing new mutations and making fresh international connections. At a moment when all the accepted verities of the left are in confusion, heresy can make a regenerative contribution. Transgressing the conventional limits of Marxist thought, but built on the foundations of Marx’s work and extending it into the contemporary world, autonomist Marxism proposes not an ‘ex-Marxism’ or a ‘post-Marxism’ but a ‘Marx beyond Marx.’” (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 129-130).
transformation, workers compose or organize themselves collectively as a class for themselves to resist capital (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 66).

The second phase is decomposition. Decomposition occurs when capitalists break up workers’ unity by “recurrent restructurings… that divide, deskill or eliminate dangerous groups of workers” (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 66). The Midnight Notes Collective explains the process of decomposition:

“Capital responds to our struggles with a whole array of sciences and technologies of power, from psychology to ergonomics to urine testing. When working class organizational forms achieve sufficient power to threaten the existing social arrangements which guarantee the production of surplus value, capital must try to arrange the social relations in ways which thwart the centres of proletarian power and enable exploitation in a new social and technical form. Despite all its high-tech machines, space shuttles, laser beam weapons and genetic engineering, capital still depends on human work. That is what capital is: dead labour” (Midnight Notes, 1992: xiv).

The third phase in class struggle is recomposition. This recomposition takes place when workers overcome capitalists’ restructuring, and organize anew. This organization is possible because “machines cannot produce value, and however much capital tries to eliminate humans from production altogether — with automation, artificial intelligence, and space stations — it must still depend on workers to make a profit. The whole of capitalist civilization pivots on the performance of these workers, whether they labour in the sterile laboratories of Silicon Valley or the muddy fields of Bangladesh” (Midnight Notes Collective, 1992: xiv). The importance of class unity across gendered and ethnicized divisions and the revolutionary potential of this unity will be discussed in section two below.

One movement through these three phases of class composition-decomposition-recomposition constitutes a historical cycle of struggle. Each cycle is driven by workers’ attempt
to free themselves from the capital relation (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 134). According to the Midnight Notes Collective:

“the composition of the working class is a historically changing entity. Human classes no more sit still than biological species. Thus, we have also spoken of the recomposition and decomposition of the working class, where, simply put, recomposition involves the increasing power and unity of the working class, and decomposition involves increasing division, intra-class conflict and powerlessness. The history of our era is formed by the continual decomposition and recomposition of the working class” (Midnight Notes Collective, 1992: xiv).

The cycles are continuous because capitalists cannot exist without labour and therefore cannot entirely destroy their antagonist. Each cycle is propelled by the resistance and counter-initiative of labourers as they struggle to become a class for themselves.

In Cyber Marx, Dyer-Witheford outlines the autonomous Marxist conception of the three historical cycles of class composition beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Each cycle is characterized by a different kind of worker. The three cycles are those of the professional worker (1848 to 1914), the mass worker, (1914 to 1973) the socialized worker (1973 to 1999) and the global worker (1999–20??). These cycles, Dyer-Witheford suggests, reflect a global history but still demand “allowance for unevenness, overlap, regional and national variation, and so on” (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 143). The cycles are explained in more detail below in the discussion of corporate concentration.

In this study I consider this valuable three part conceptualization of the cycles of struggle. However, I add two new dimensions: (1) a gendered, ethnicized class analysis of decomposition and (2) a gendered, ethnicized class analysis of composition and recomposition. What does this involve? First, when we think of decomposition we can go into its anatomy and consider the ethnic and the gendered characteristics of the parties engaged in this breaking up of the
working class. With respect to both composition and recomposition, that is, the workers’ struggle for unity, I add to the three phase conceptualization of the capital relation an anatomical inquiry as to the gendered and ethnicized class relations of those at the forefront of the movement. Both of these new dimensions are integral to an umbrella framing known as the fight for fertility, addressed in section two below.

The beginnings and ends of each cycle of struggle are strongly shaped and influenced by capitalist crises. Capitalist crisis can be understood as a substantial breakdown in profit making by a large number of the Fortune 500 corporations. This breakdown presents an opening to the powerful corporations that survive to buy up and absorb weaker, smaller corporations. Corporate concentration and global expansion into and enclosures of land, markets and value are the outcomes of capitalist crisis (more below). Fewer corporations emerge as more powerful and more global players. This expansion is then echoed in more global impacts of enclosure and exploitation of people and nature.

To what extent is global resistance developing on the basis of this corporate globalization? The recomposition of class struggle is, this study argues, a recomposition on a more and more global basis. In the four time periods (1848 to 1914, 1914 to 1973, 1973 to 1999 and 1999 to 20??) we find not only three capitalist crises but also three major cycles of working class composition, decomposition and recomposition. This study focuses on the final two periods (1973 to 1999 and 1999 to 20??).

In sum, this section outlined the capital relation with respect to the ways in which capitalists enclose and exploit the commons and human labour time. In part one I explained that the struggle between workers and capitalists is a struggle to control life itself. Capitalists seek to
enclose and commodify the commons in order to generate profits and maintain a constant
supply of coerced labour. Capitalists create for-profit value chains. Workers seek to expand the
commons as a foundation for subsistence or control over that which is necessary to produce and
reproduce life on a collective and democratic basis. Commoning is also a process whereby
workers create for-life value chains to replace corporate value chains.

In part two of this chapter, I explained that workers resist capitalists’ control and expand the
commons in order to become a revolutionary class for themselves. The capital relation is
diachronic and expands over time. In part three I explained class composition and discussed the
cycles of struggle (composition-decomposition-recomposition). These cycles are defined by the
successive attempts of the working class to become a class for itself and capitalists’ attempts to
break up working class unity.

Section two below is more specific as to the gendered and ethnicized nature of the capital
relation. It shows how capitalists divide the working class according to gender and ethnicity. In
addition, section two demonstrates the centrality of the gendered, ethnicized class alliances that
this study shows are a key defining feature of the movement of movements.

SECTION TWO: GENDERED, ETHNICIZED CLASS ANALYSIS

Gendered, ethnicized class analysis is an extension of class analysis that allows us to see the
ways in which class formation and struggle within the social factory are fundamentally
gendered and ethnicized. In brief, I define the social factory as a network of markets,
institutions, factories, stores, households, government offices, and sites of nature within which
capitalists organize exploitation and enclosure and within which workers fight back. Gendered,
ethnicized class analysis has been used by revolutionary ecofeminists⁷ to document and expose the ways in which capitalists require a division of the working class and how workers undermine this division through *gendered, ethnicized class alliances* in the struggle against capitalism. In this study, I employ gendered, ethnicized class analysis to more deeply understand the capital relation as it engages both the exploitation of and resistance from women, people of various ethnicities, and third world peoples (people of the global south).

Below I outline four elements of gendered, ethnicized class analysis that are important to this study of the movement of movements: (i) housewifization and colonization; (ii) the *global social factory* and the *terrains of struggle* – production, consumption, reproduction and nature; (iii) the *hierarchy of labour power* and; (iv) the *fight for fertility* which is perhaps the most important element of this study’s theoretical-methodological framework. The fight for fertility is used as a conceptual tool to understand the anatomy of the back and forth (exploitation and resistance) struggle, the gendered, ethnicized class relation. It provides a framework for investigating how the movement of movements becomes a class for itself by uniting across gendered and ethnicized divides to stop capitalist exploitation and enclosure and affirm commoning.

I now turn to a discussion of housewifization and colonization.

**(i) Housewifization and Colonization**

Silvia Federici (2004) provides a careful study of capitalist domination over and exploitation of women though the ‘witch hunts’ (1450 to 1650). Federici states that:

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⁷ Revolutionary ecofeminism is a broad theoretical framework for understanding capitalism. It centralizes women’s fight against capitalism because it recognizes the relationship between capitalists’ need for profits and social control and the exploitation of nature and women.
“the expropriation of European workers from their means of subsistence, and the enslavement of Native Americans and Africans to the mines and plantations of the ‘New World,’ were not the only means by which a world proletariat was formed and ‘accumulated’. This process required the transformation of the body into a work-machine, and the subjugation of women to the reproduction of the work-force. Most of all, it required the destruction of the power of women which in Europe as in America, was achieved though the extermination of the ‘witches’” (Federici, 2004: 63–64).

The persecution of women as witches in the ‘New World’ and in Europe in the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries facilitated capitalist enclosure and the violent separation of women from the commons and the means of production. This was the same period during which merchants and planters from Europe forged the triangular trade, shipping African captives by the millions to island plantation export platforms in the Caribbean.

The witch hunts cut off women’s access to alternative means of livelihood and solidarity. The witch hunts forced women into slums as vagabonds or prostitutes or made them dependant on male ‘breadwinners.’ Rogers, (1980) Mies (1986) and others describe this process as housewifization. Housewifization is the violent separation of women from their means of survival, their bodies, minds, skills, and access to nature and public spaces.

Mies defines housewifization in detail in her groundbreaking work Patriarchy and Accumulation (1986). Housewifization, according to Mies, is the freeing up of labour costs for capitalists by forcing women out of trades and professions and off the land. Housewifized women are forced to produce and reproduce labour power (workers) for the capitalists without compensation. Mies states that:

“[H]ousewifization means the externalization, or ex-territorialization of costs which otherwise would have to be covered by the capitalists. This means women’s labour is considered a natural resource, freely available like air and water. Housewifizaiton means at the same time the total atomization and disorganization of these hidden workers. This is not
only the reason for the lack of women’s political power, but also for their lack of bargaining power. As the housewife is linked to the wage-earning breadwinner, to the ‘free’ proletarian as a non-free worker, the ‘freedom’ of the proletarian to sell his labour power is based on the housewifization of women. Thus, the Little White Man also got his ‘colony,’ namely, the family and a domesticated housewife. This was a sign that, at last, the propertyless proletarian had risen to the ‘civilized’ status of a citizen, that he had become a full member of a ‘culture-nation’. This rise, however, was paid for by the subordination and housewifization of the women of his class. The extension of bourgeois laws to the working class meant that in the family the propertyless man was also lord and master. It is my thesis that the two processes of colonization and housewifization are closely and causally interlinked. Without the ongoing exploitation of external colonies — formerly as direct colonies, today [as of 1986] with the new international division of labour — the establishment of the ‘internal colony’, that is, a nuclear family and a woman maintained by a male ‘breadwinner’, would not have been possible” (Mies, 1986: 110).

As Mies states above, dispossessed men and capitalists gain from housewifization.

Dispossessed men gain three-fold: they gain (1) a claim to monopolize waged work, (2) a claim to control all money income and (3) a claim to the free labour of women who have little other choice but to serve dispossessed men and their bosses in order to survive (Mies, 1986: 109).

Capitalists gain three-fold as well: they gain (1) the free labour of women, especially their labour reproducing the male waged worker, (2) ease of control over labour because men are instituted as the enforcers of control over women (more below) and (3) control over the reproduction of labour power (population control).

Regarding this third point, during the witch hunts, capitalists removed women from control over child birth and from control over their own bodies. Capitalist medicine transformed women into carrier of babies. Social policy reflected the ideology of ‘woman as womb.’

Capitalists require control over women because women are integral to the reproduction of life and profits, and because women cannot as of yet be replaced by technology. Furthermore, capitalists are not only concerned with profit. Capitalists require the unpaid labour of women
who produce labour power (children) for the capitalists. Mies and her co-authors explain that control over women is essential to capitalist production:

“This same mechanism of division into ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ ‘civilized’ and ‘savage,’ ‘progressive’ and ‘backward’ was also applied to the conquered and subjugated areas of Asia, Latin America and Africa. ... This process is not an instance of backwardness, but of systematic exclusion or colonization. Women and subjugated peoples are treated as if they did not belong to society proper, as constituted from (male) wage-workers and capitalists. Instead, they are treated as if they were means of production or ‘natural resources’ such as water, air, and land. The economic logic behind this colonization is that women (as the ‘means of production’ for producing people) and land, are goods that can in no way be produced by capital. Control over women and land is, therefore, the foundation of any system based on exploitation. What is paramount is to possess these ‘means of production’; the relationship with them is one of appropriation — the prerequisite for the emergence of the central relation of production between waged labour and capital, which in turn allows women and the colonies to be appropriated as ‘natural resources’” (Mies, et al. 1988, 5).

Mies and her co-authors show how housewifization is global. Housewifization and colonization are linked whereby women in the ‘third world’ are super exploited by capitalists as ‘flexible’ and ‘cheap’ labour. Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen explain that housewifization works hand in glove with colonization:

“[I]n Free Production Zones (FPZs), or in maquiladoras in Mexico, 80–90 per cent of the workforce were young, unmarried women who had to work under almost forced-labour conditions, without unions, without the protection of labour laws and often threatened by direct violence. These women were usually fired when they got married, because their employers did not want to pay any maternity benefits. I discovered that, in their case, as in that of many other women workers in the ‘colonies’, *housewifization international* was the theoretical device to devalue women’s work and to ‘construct’ them internationally as cheap labour” (Mies, 1999: 17).

Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen point out that women are not just exploited in households. Young women in factories, because of their separation from the means of production (enclosures) are forced to subject their bodies to poisoned conditions and work long hours for
little money just to survive. For example, Egyptian women textile workers in the state owned Mahalla al-Kubra’s Misr Spinning and Weaving Co. are unable to feed themselves and their families on 35 Egyptian pounds a month (US$6) (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2008). Yet, the thousands of women textile workers at the Mahalla al-Kubra complex have resisted housewifization international by organizing a series of strikes since 2006 to demand a 30 fold increase in pay. In fact, according to Paul Amar, (2011) the 24 January 2011 women workers’ strike at Mahallah al-Kubra textile complex signalled the beginning of the Arab Revolution (Amar, 2011).

Housewifization and colonization have created a mass of unwaged workers that are essential to capitalist profits and control. In what follows, I address two ways in which capitalists impose gendered and ethnicized hierarchies to divide and establish control over the multitudinous working class. The first is through the social factory which embraces four terrains of struggle and second is through the hierarchy of labour power.

(ii) Social Factory and Terrains of Struggle
Capitalists require a whole set of social relations for their successful operation. Capitalist create the social factory through what Marx saw as capitalists’ tendency to “subsume not only the workplace, but also society as a whole into its processes” (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 67). The social factory is the political economy terrain of class struggle. As capitalist firms expand and globalize, the social factory becomes a global social factory.

In the global social factory, the activities of all people as waged workers, students, consumers, mothers, wives, and peasants are “integrated into the production process” (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 157). Antonio Negri (2003) discusses ‘multitudes’ as those who inhabit the
social factory. Negri suggests that the working class became ‘multitudinous’ with the dawn of industrial capitalism. Negri states that:

“The factory stays no longer in the centre of value production. The value is created by putting to work the whole of society. We call multitude all the workers who are put to work inside society to create profit. We consider all the workers in the whole of society to be exploited, men, women, people who work in services, people who work in nursing, people who work in linguistic relations, people who work in the cultural field, in all of the social relations, and in so far as they are exploited we consider them part of the multitude, inasmuch as they are singularities. We see the multitude as a multiplicity of exploited singularities. The singularities are singularities of labour; anyone is working in different ways, and the singularity is the singularity of exploited labour” (Negri, 2003).

The social factory framing allows us to see how different kinds of workers (the waged and unwaged, women, peasants, students, consumers) are united by capitalist exploitation. In the Communist Manifesto, Marx makes two points on the distinction between communists and socialists: (1) Communists insist on internationalism and (2) communists always make reference to the movement as a whole. Marx states that “in the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they [communists] always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole” (Marx, 1848).

This study looks at the movement as a whole. The social factory framing provides a fertile opening onto the question of the extent to which corporate concentration facilitates enclosure and fuels resistance not only in the immediate workplace such as the factory or the agricultural field but at many different sites or what I term terrains of struggle⁸.

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⁸ Dyer-Witheford calls these four sites ‘circuits’. I have chosen to use the term terrains for two reasons. (i) The first reason is that ‘terrains’ highlights the fact that these are actual geographical locations of struggle. (ii) The second reason I have chosen ‘terrains’ is for clarity purposes. ‘Terrains,’ in contrast to the term ‘circuits’ used by Dyer-Witheford, are easily distinguished from ‘cycles’ and ‘circulation’.
The four terrains of struggle are production, consumption, reproduction and nature. Each terrain represents a particular expression of the capital relation. Each terrain represents the struggle of different kinds of workers to resist commodification and expand commoning. In all struggles or confrontations between capitalists and workers, each of the four terrains or relationships can be identified. It is, in part, a matter of conceptual choice to foreground one or another. The four terrains are central to this study because they highlight the ways in which workers’ struggles connect in the process of forming a movement of movements.

The first terrain, production, is where capitalists or agents of capital compel waged workers to work harder, faster and longer hours. In response to this discipline, workers come together to strike, unionize, commit sabotage, and use other forms of resistance to win more rewards (reform) or regain control over the means of production (revolution). (I may also use ‘employee’ to describe a waged worker, embracing both blue and white collar workers, both labourers in the agricultural field and professionals in think tanks, universities or state and law offices.) On the terrain of production, workers create alternatives to the commodified production relation which include activities within the ‘social economy’ (cooperatives and collectives).

Second is the terrain of consumption where, in order to make a profit on the commodities produced, capitalists convince workers to buy them though marketing, advertising, and the mass media. Many consumption struggles arise around price, labelling, quality, quantity, safety, and the nature of advertisements as instruments of social control. Workers on the terrain of consumption assert control by organizing boycotts and media campaigns, and lobbying the government for tighter safety and regulation controls. Workers on the terrain of consumption and production also assert power by coordinating simultaneous boycotts and strikes.
Alternatives on this terrain include localized ‘value chains’ and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) where farmers and consumers (growers and eaters) are partners in the process of food production and consumption, sharing risk and bounty. Consumption alternatives also include food sovereignty and the call by La Via Campesina and governments of the global South to take agriculture out of World Trade Organization.

The third terrain is social reproduction where households and public or social institutions including hospitals, schools and public places become sites of capitalist exploitation and fight back. Two main areas of life embraced by social reproduction are: (1) the generation, preparation and maintenance of human beings as effective workers (for capitalists) at the household level. The household is where people are shaped so as to have the requisite characteristics of labour power and consumption orientation.

The household is where other characteristics of self-expression and human creativity are either developed or stamped out and underdeveloped. This process of social reproduction is in force on a global scale, facilitated for example, by international organizations such as the United Nations’ agencies, especially UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) that strives to serve capitalist firms’ need for a minimum global level of literacy. Silvia Federici summarizes a complex analysis of how women’s bodies themselves are turned into factories by saying that “the female body has been appropriated by the state and men and forced to function as a means for the reproduction and accumulation of labour” (Federici, 2004: 16).

(2) The second area of life embraced by social reproduction is within social institutions including schools, hospitals and government ministries (eg. the courts). Social institutions are
mandated to protect, regulate and enforce protection of workers and their environments. People within government institutions either serve the capitalists or the public interest. Vandana Shiva explains where the interests lie for most governments: “Instead of acting on the public trust doctrine and principles of democratic accountability and subsidiarity, globalization led to governments usurping power from parliaments, regional and local governments, and local communities. For example, the TRIPs [Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights of the WTO] agreement was based on central governments hijacking the rights to biodiversity and knowledge from the communities and assigning them as exclusive, monopolistic rights to corporations” (Shiva, 2002). Shiva’s insight will be discussed in more detail in Part II below.

The terrain of social reproduction embraces struggles over: the recognition and social payment for housework, reproductive rights and abortion, the ownership and control of genetic material, the creation of standards and laws related to workers and the environment, the privatization of health care, increases in tuition fees and corporatization of university campuses.

Commoning alternatives on the terrain of social reproduction include free and universal child care, health care and education, research in the public’s interest and decentralized and local forms of government and decision making that are regionally and globally coordinated. These alternatives comprise what Vandana Shiva (2007) outlines as a living democracy movement, that is building alternatives and localizing economic and political systems by asserting people’s sovereignty and community rights to natural resources.

The fourth and final terrain is nature. Capitalists extract water, minerals, forests, land, air, animals and plants to produce commodities. On this terrain, capitalists collide with those who are struggling to defend and protect nature. Struggles on this terrain emerge around mining
and oil extraction, climate change, plant and animal genetic modification, contamination and pollution. Prominent on this terrain are indigenous people and peasants whose livelihood and cultural practices are dependent upon nature. Commoning alternatives include the Cochabamba People’s Agreement, (a global declaration on the rights of nature) the establishment of global legal systems that enforce the polluter pays principle, seed saving networks, agroecology, and alternative energies (The Council of Canadians, Fundación Pachamama and Global Exchange, 2011).

The four-part framing of the terrains of struggle defines the whole world of social relations of capitalism and calls forth the whole commoning reality of both pre and post capitalist social relations. The social factory and terrains of struggle framing shows how the capital relation extends beyond the walls of a factory and into all of society. Of particular note is the fact that all terrains except for production include workers who are unwaged.

The labour power of this majority of unwaged workers has been deemed by capitalists to be not ‘productive’ and therefore not worthy of payment. For example, Marilyn Waring (1988) points out that the standards of the United Nations System of National Accounts (UNSNA) do not recognize the economic value of women’s household production services. Household labour is excluded from national income and product accounts. Women’s work raising children and other reproductive activities are officially not valued as productive. Yet, Rosa Luxemburg (1923), Selma James and Maria Rosa Dalla Costa (1972) have emphasized the central historical and contemporary reality that capitalist production has always needed the unwaged reproductive work of women.
The Midnight Notes Collective’s definition of ‘working class’ includes the unwaged. This definition is central to the analysis of the movement of movements:

“For us, the working class is the class that produces capitalist wealth by carrying out unpaid labour. Marx’s theory of surplus value shows how waged workers produce a surplus over and above the value of the wages needed to reproduce themselves. But this result is usually restricted to describe only those workers who are paid. In doing so, Marx and Marxists have not been Marxist enough. For it is the unpaid part of the workday summed over all the work done that day which determines commodity values. In contemporary capitalism, this category of the working class would include the work of housewives (reproducing labour power), students (training to function as labour power), and agrarian workers (producing subsistence goods for urban workers and existing as a reserve supply of labour power). Capitalist profit no doubt derives from extracting surplus labour from waged workers—this is what defines it from previous modes of production also based on unpaid labour—but it also directly derives the surplus from the unpaid labour of many unwaged workers” (Midnight Notes Collective, 1992: xii).

The majority of unwaged workers in the world are women and third world people. Capitalists’ profits and social control require this kind of gendered and ethnicized division of labour on a global scale. In fact, according to Claudia Von Werlhof, the majority of the world’s population is unwaged. Von Werlhof states that:

“Eighty to ninety percent of the world population consists essentially of women, peasants, craftsmen, petty traders and such wage laborers whom one can call neither free nor proletarian [waged worker]. [This is] a fact that should have received the attention that is only now beginning to be afforded to it: in the debate on women’s work, Third World discussions and the revived discussion on agriculture and peasants, that is, on discussions on those who, in principle, are not free wage labourers. ... Now I ask: is capitalism so inept that so far it has failed to integrate these masses in its system ...? This seems unlikely. The solution of the puzzle is very simple: everything is opposite to what it appears. Not the 10 percent [of] free wage laborers, but the 90 percent [of] unfree, non-wage laborers are the foundation of accumulation and growth, are the truly exploited, are the real ‘producers,’ the ‘norm,’ the general condition in which human beings find themselves under capitalism” (Von Werlhof in Mies et. al., 1988: 171).
In sum, *housewifization* and *colonization* fuelled the expansion of the global social factory or the ‘factory without walls.’ Social factory workers are connected by the process of capitalist production itself. If capitalist production is society-wide, that is, not just in the factory but in schools, households, public spaces, farms, rivers and oceans, people will have more opportunity to act as a united force to stop capitalist exploitation and enclosure and elaborate post-capitalist alternatives. The more global capitalists’ enclosure and exploitation, the more global and integrated the social factory becomes.

Capitalist profits would not continue if all workers (peasants, wives, mothers) were paid for all of their labour time. Resistance by unwaged workers is especially potent and powerful. As stated above, workers with the power to reproduce life have a unique social power to stop capitalist exploitation and affirm the commons (Turner and Benjamin, 1995, p. 211).

I now turn to a discussion of how different groups of unwaged workers are related to each other on the hierarchy of labour power.

**(iii) Hierarchy of Labour Power**

Capitalists have succeeded in developing the social factory though the imposition of a hierarchy of labour power. This hierarchy subordinates women to men, so called ‘black’ people to so called ‘white’ people and nature to capitalists. This hierarchical form of class rule is global and enforced through war and military occupation. Referring to the historical development of the capital relation, Federici notes that “primitive accumulation, then, was not simply an accumulation and concentration of exploitable workers and capital. It was also *an accumulation of differences and divisions within the working class*, whereby hierarchies built upon gender, as well
as ‘race’ and age, became constitutive of class rule and the formation of the modern proletariat” (Federici, 2004: 63–64).

Maria Mies and Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen (1999) explain the hierarchy of labour power as like an iceberg where the different ‘colonies’ form an invisible base. I elaborate on the meaning of subsistence above which Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen define as “‘women’s unpaid housework, caring work, nurturing work, or, as we then called it, the production of life or subsistence production.” Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen state that:

“[I]n all economic theories and models this life-producing, life-preserving subsistence work of women appears as a ‘free good’, a free resource like air, water, sunshine. It appears to flow naturally from women’s bodies. ‘Housewifization’ of women is therefore the necessary complement to the proletarianization of men. We visualized this capitalist patriarchal economy in the form of an iceberg. We began to understand that the dominant theories about the functioning of our economy, including Marxism, were only concerned with the tip of the iceberg visible above the water, namely only capital[ists] and wage labour. The base of that iceberg under the water was invisible, namely women’s unpaid housework, caring work, nurturing work, or, as we then called it, the production of life or subsistence production. … it also included the work of small peasants and artisans in still-existing subsistence economies in the South, the work of millions of small producers who produce for local needs. All work conceptualized as ‘informal sector’ work is part of the invisible economy. And finally… nature herself was considered to be a ‘free good’, to be appropriated and exploited with no or little costs for the sake of accumulation. Therefore we called all those parts of the submerged ‘hidden economy’ which are under the water in our iceberg metaphor – nature, women, and colonized peoples – the ‘Colonies of the White Man’. ‘White Man’ stands here for the Western industrial system. With regard to the growth paradigm it is our thesis that permanent economic growth or capital accumulation can only continue so long as such ‘colonies’ exist which can be exploited free of cost or at very little cost. These are the areas for the ‘externalization of costs’” (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen: 1999: 32).
The problematic in this hierarchy is what is seen and what is hidden — what is hidden is free and inexhaustible and therefore unworthy of payment. Terisa Turner (1992) provides a second framing of the hierarchy of labour power which has a different problematic. Turner emphasizes the actors involved in channelling up commons and labour power from the world’s dispossessed to the capitalists.

**Figure 2**

People’s labour and nature become the basis of capitalists’ profits. In sum, Turner’s conceptualization illuminates the ways in which overwhelmingly male members of the dispossessed class are agents of capital. These working class men are essential participants and collaborators who Turner (1992) calls male dealers. All these workers have some (often very limited) choice as to whether to participate in the male deal or to fight exploitation. Turner’s conceptualization will be explained in more detail below.

I now turn to a more detailed discussion of the relations of power within the hierarchy. The image of the hierarchy of labour power (Figure 2) shows the ways in which capital divides the working class. At the top of the hierarchy of labour power, above the ‘class line,’ are capitalists. Next down, below the class line are the dispossessed.
The dispossessed are divided into four groups. (1) The first group is comprised of so called ‘white’ male labourers. (2) The second group is comprised of so called ‘black’ male labourers. Male labourers are used by capitalists not only in the factories, offices and agricultural and battle fields but also in the implementation of control over white and black women. This study recognizes that ethnicity is a flexible term. I use ‘ethnicity’ to refer to people from different geographical areas.

Historically, white men have enforced a system of racism and apartheid to control black men’s labour power. White and black men have also joined together in class struggle in order to win concessions from the capitalists, for example during the 1860s in the United States when black and white men excluded black and white women from gaining the right to vote.

(3) The next group below the male workers are waged and unwaged ‘white’ women or women of Western European ancestry. (4) At the base of the hierarchy of labour power are black women or women from the ‘third’ world who are mostly unwaged and informal workers.

So called ‘black,’ ‘third world,’ and indigenous women are at the base of the hierarchy of exploitation and are the cheapest sources of labour for the capitalists. In order to break up the hierarchy and eliminate capitalist control, the working class must generalize the interests and demands of third world women. According to Turner “[b]y embracing the interests of all the exploited, black women's revolutionary practice articulates for the first time what Marx called ‘the general class interest.’ Such an articulation is the precondition for unity across race and gender lines, of the exploited class worldwide” (Turner, 1994: 6).

There are at least two ways in which capitalists benefit from gendered and ethnicized divisions. (1) Capitalists gain ‘functionaries’ or what Turner and Brownhill call ‘male dealers’
who are members of the dispossessed class higher up on the hierarchy of labour power that enforce the capitalists’ control over all women’s labour power (examined in more detail below).

(2) Capitalists gain by breaking up working class struggle along gendered and ethnicized lines. The hierarchy of labour power framing reveals the ways in which working class struggle is decomposed by capital though gendered and ethnicized class divisions:

“The social power relations of the sexes, races, nations and generations are precisely, then, particularized forms of class relations. These power relations within the working class weaken us in the power struggle between the classes. They are the particularized forms of indirect rule, one section of the class colonizing another and through this capital imposing its own will on us all. One of the reasons why these so-called working class organizations have been able so to mediate the struggle is that we have, internationally, allowed them to isolate ‘the working class,’ which they identify as white, male and over 21, from the rest of us. The unskilled white male worker, an exploited human being who is increasingly disconnected from capital's perspective for him to work, to vote, to participate in its society, he also, racist and sexist though he is, recognizes himself as the victim of these organizations. But housewives, Blacks, young people, workers from the Third World, excluded from the definition of class, have been told that their confrontation with the white male power structure in the metropolis is an ‘exotic historical accident.’ Divided by the capitalist organization of society into factory, office, school, plantation, home and street, we are divided too by the very institutions which claim to represent our struggle collectively as a class” (James, 1975: 5).

Many social movement theorists tend to see class, race and gender as separate categories — as Turner describes it, like marbles in a fish bowl which are periodically shaken thus arbitrarily changing the relationship between marbles (concepts) with no specified, definite relationships amongst the concepts. The struggles of women and so called people of colour are often viewed as ‘outside’ of capital and their organized resistance as separate from struggle against capitalist exploitation. Within this framework, the unwaged are not understood to be revolutionary.

The Midnight Notes Collective takes this point a step further in their explanation of why it rejects the class-less social movement approach:
“Since the 1970s, many leftists have adopted a ‘social movements’ perspective in which the working class is just one sphere of some generalized movement for social change. The women’s movement, the environmentalist movement, the gay men and lesbian movement, the Black movement (among others) are theorized as spheres of a vaguely defined ‘liberatory politics.’ The ‘working class,’ narrowly defined as industrial waged workers, is not accorded any primacy. But the vision of all these spheres floating around is like the idea of the ancient astronomers who thought that the astral spheres orbited in a vacuum. The fact is that, regardless of one’s gender, race, sexual preference, or feelings toward the earth, we all move though capitalist space; we live on capitalist soil, we eat capitalist bread, we expend our body’s energy in capitalist work. Everything is a commodity — the water, the land, even the air (i.e., clean air) — and must be purchased though work. We experience the unity of capitalism in very different and at times apparently contradictory ways, but nonetheless the unity remains. A recategorization of the working class allows us to see the diversity of agents behind a distinctly anti-capitalist project. If capitalism is all pervasive, the struggle against it must operate on many fronts” (Midnight Notes, 1992: xiii). (Recategorization here refers to abandoning a fragmented notion of the working class and embracing all of humanity — the multitudinous waged and unwaged — in the struggle against capitalism and for the commons.)

Federici points out in her comment directed at many feminists who dichotomize ‘gender’ and ‘class’ that “if it is true that in capitalist society sexual identity became the carrier of specific work-functions, then gender should not be considered a purely cultural reality, but should be treated as a specification of class-relations. From this view-point, the debates that have taken place among postmodern feminists concerning the need to dispose of ‘women’ as a category of analysis, and define feminism purely in oppositional terms, have been misguided.” (Federici, 2004: 14).

What Federici is saying is that postmodern analyses of gender and ethnicity are abstracted from the history of capitalist exploitation. Following Federici, I integrate an analysis of gender, ethnicity and class and recognize that these divisions are imposed strategically by capitalists to divide or decompose social movements’ resistance.
In this study I analyze the gendered, ethnicized capital relation with a wide lens. I examine the capital relation in my case studies with a focus on the broad power relations of gendered, ethnicized exploitation and the fight against it. A closer and more in-depth analysis however would go more deeply into the differential power of dispossessed groups based on a range of qualities (including gender, ethnicity, sexuality, physical ability) and how oppression and exploitation are created and overcome. This intersectionality approach has, at the micro level, the great strength of appreciating the meanings of multiple dominations and multiple channels for resistance, overcoming and transformation. These diverse qualities open up avenues for alliances amongst the people who embody any one or more of these many identities. These alliances can be used to overcome oppression and exploitation.

Many scholars of the stratification paradigm recognize that there are people within the working class that have small advantages over others (for example in income and property ownership). They call this sector of the working class the middle class. Carchedi, (1977) Wright, (1978, 1985) Langford (1996) and others identify managers, supervisors and professional employees as the new middle class (Langford, 1996: 154). Middle class workers have more buying power and political clout than the propertyless, ‘blue-collar’ workers and those who have not been educated within the capitalist educational paradigm and capitalist-backed institutions. As of 2011 in many countries, the middle class’ security of income and state social service provision which supports them are under attack by the concentration of power and wealth of capitalists.

Middle class workers are potentially antagonistic to the working class. According to Abercrombie and Urry, (1983) the new middle class is composed largely of people who have an interest in (1) deskill the workers; (2) excluding workers from advancing into positions higher up the hierarchy; (for example by requiring education) and (3) maximizing the amount of social
wealth spent on science and education (Abercrombie and Urry quoted in Langford, 1996: 155). It is these people who maintain the hierarchy of labour power by acting as male dealers.

The middle class is an element within the stratification paradigm. The capital relation paradigm also deals with the question of how workers with relatively more power act against the working class. In this study, I do not use the terms upper, middle and lower class. I instead conceptualize what others view as the middle class within the hierarchy of labour power to see the ways in which the working class as a whole, or the multitudes of the social factory, organize against exploitation. Within the capital relation paradigm I understand how this differential power is expressed by mostly white male members of the dispossessed class. These dispossessed white men channel the labour power and resources of other dispossessed men and women upward to the capitalists. The concept of the male deal is central here (outlined below).

Members of what the stratification paradigm refers to as the ‘middle class’ can be revolutionaries. The middle class is equipped to help and be at the disposal of the working class, especially with respect to having greater access to modern means of communication (Petras, 2011). In the capital relation paradigm I use the concept of the gendered, ethnicized class alliance to investigate the ways in which those higher up the hierarchy align with others, especially insurgent third world women in an attempt to stop members of the dispossessed class from channelling up workers’ labour power and resources to the capitalists’ ‘bottom line’ (more below).

Gramsci (1971) uses the category ‘organic intellectual’ to describe those members of the professional and intellectual class who work against the capitalists and for the commons. In contrast to those who use their power to be a part of capitalist domination and dispossess,
organic intellectuals are counterhegemonic. Gramsci encouraged intellectuals to link theory to action (what he called *praxis*). Organic intellectuals live their lives in a state of ongoing praxis in an effort to practice and propose alternative ways of organizing in society that uproot and replace capitalist relations and that constitute a ‘politics of truth.’ According to Gramsci “the essential political problem for the intellectual is not to criticize the ideological contents supposedly linked to science or to ensure that his own scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology, but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. The problem is not changing people’s consciousness—or what’s in their heads—but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth” (Gramsci, 1971: 133). In part two of this study I highlight an example of an organic intellectual scientist joining workers’ struggle in an attempt to defend life from the onslaught of Monsanto’s enclosures.

In sum, this section has discussed a main distinguishing feature of gendered, ethnicized class analysis which is that it has an integrated analysis of gender, ethnicity and class. In contrast, theorists in the stratification paradigm, including most postmodern theorists, adopt a segregated analysis that does not treat gendered and ethnicized divisions as historical manifestations of the capital relation.

The integrated gendered, ethnicized class analysis sheds light on the revolutionary significance of movements that transcend capitalist divisions. As the Midnight Notes Collective states: “it is important that we redefine the working class in this [embracing all of humanity] way so that we can comprehend the anti-capitalist thrust of what appear to be non-working class struggles and demands” (Midnight Notes Collective, 1992: xii). The fight for fertility, described below, offers an analytical tool to explain how these divisions (social relations of power, mobilization, turmoil) are enforced and overcome.
(iv) The Fight for Fertility

Gendered, ethnicized class analysis uses the fight for fertility as a conceptual tool to understand the anatomy (ethnicized and gendered power relations) of popular struggle especially by the unwaged (Brownhill, 2009: 26). Turner and Brownhill define fertility in a broad sense as autonomous human and non-human creativity, community building, the production of children, food and other crops and animals, and nature’s fertility in soil, seeds and plants, water and microorganisms. Indigenous knowledges, land, bodies, labour and time itself, are important aspects of fertility (Turner and Brownhill, 2003b).

The fight for fertility framework was developed by Terisa Turner (1992) based on the work of Mies (1988). The fight for fertility provides a focused and operationalized (in methods) theoretical-methodological framing of gendered, ethnicized class struggle that enables us to clearly distinguish different class fractions engaged in class struggle. In contrast to the hierarchy outlined by Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen which is driven by the need to make visible the invisible ‘sectors’ of the working class, (namely women in the North and South, peasants, indigenous peoples) the fight for fertility is driven by the need to distinguish power relations. According to Turner:

“The fight for fertility directs attention to the reality that various class fractions and the two major classes under capitalism (capitalists and workers) struggle over life itself. The fight for fertility directs attention to the primary importance in the power struggles that are the capital relation of the drive of all participants to control the prerequisites of life and its reproduction. The womb, the soil, the seed – these are at the centre of the fight for control over the capacity to generate and regenerate life. The fight for fertility puts women’s life producing powers at the heart of social struggle under capitalism. This framing prioritizes unwaged work, especially the labour of women in producing people and human sustenance; and it centralizes soil’s fertility as the source of food along with other essentials of life” (Turner, 2011b).
Fertility is at the centre of the reproduction of life in all its forms. Three parties are involved in the fight for control over fertility: (i) women and men in a gendered, ethnicized class alliance, (ii) in-country parties to a male deal and (iii) capitalists, especially and primarily those in charge of Fortune 500 corporations and included in the world’s 1000 billionaires. In what follows I characterize these groups.

(i) The first party or group includes women and men in a *gendered, ethnicized class alliance*. Genderized, ethnicized class alliances are formed amongst members of the dispossessed class to fight class rule imposed by the capitalists. These alliances take place below the class line illustrated above in Figure 2.

A *gendered class alliance* is an agreement and concerted action between women and men in order to break up, that is stop, the process of exploitation and enclosure of the commons and undermine gendered divisions imposed by the capitalists. An *ethnicized class alliance* is the coming together of so called ‘black’ and ‘white’ people or peoples of the global North and South to break up capitalist exploitation and undermine the ethnicized divisions imposed by capitalists. Workers form gendered, ethnicized class alliances based on a shared interest in controlling fertility. The general class interest, the class becoming for itself is the interests and demands of those at the bottom of the hierarchy of labour power.

Women are “endowed with the unique capacity to bring forth life” (Brownhill, 2009: 27). Brownhill continues “This prime value in subsistence social relations is also the most strategic commodity under capitalism: labour power” (Brownhill, 2009: 27). Women are prominent in the gendered, ethnicized class alliance because capitalist social relations and enclosures threaten and undermine womens’ labour and autonomy.
Turner and Brownhill (2003) provide an example of a gendered class alliance:

“An examination of Nigerian women’s occupation and shut-down of oil company facilities in the Niger Delta reveals a pattern of resistance involving two distinct social constructions. Women first broke up ‘male deals’ between some of their own menfolk and personnel of the oil companies. Second, they formed alliances with other men, often their grandsons, and in this ‘gendered class alliance,’ successfully evicted the world’s largest corporations from their land (Turner et al, 2001; Turner 1997; Nore and Turner 1980). Both of these social de- and re-constructions [the male deal and the alliance] had national and international expressions. The global reach of cross-class ‘male deals’ is immediately apparent in the oil industry. In breaking these, Nigerian women built international solidarities and systemic co-ordinations with women and men similarly pitted against the commodification and war brought by oil majors and their corporate-state allies. In sum, to theorize women’s war against big oil is to recognize the erasure of subsistence which corporate commodification entails and both the imperative and the capacities of life-producers to stand against it‖ (Turner and Brownhill, 2003a: 6).

Turner, Brownhill and Kaara provide an example of a gendered class alliance in Kenya. In the late 1980s in Maragua, Kenya, when the price of coffee fell drastically, increasing numbers of women coffee producing small-holder peasants received nothing from the coffee payments. The government had directed payment only to male landowners. The Maraguan women began uprooting coffee trees and planting bananas and vegetables for home consumption. The women’s strikes drastically undermined export coffee production (Turner et. al., 1997: 219).

At first, many of the women’s husbands and the corrupt Kenya Coffee Board attempted to stop the women’s strikes. Yet by the late 1980s the majority of the men

“made a transition from resisting their womenfolk with threats, violence and divorce to accepting their initiatives. This acceptance, encouraged by factions within African Independent Church, grew into support and participation. It involved some men in breaking with the male deal in coffee which was centred in the thoroughly corrupt cooperatives, the coffee union and the Kenya Coffee
Board. Many husbands recognized that their wives' resistance contributed funds and organizational militancy which allowed men to hold onto their land in the midst of expanding and accelerating large scale enclosures” (Turner et. al., 1997: 220).

Turner and her co-authors explain that, in breaking the male deal, the alliance of women and men coffee producers simultaneously affirmed commoning and undermined gendered exploitation:

“Not only did Maragua women cultivators plant food. In addition the women reinstated producer control over land by taking control of their own labour. They also re-established and strengthened their collective women's groups. Through these groups widows, unmarried women and wives shared their particular strengths” (Turner et. al., 1997: 220).

In sum, the gendered, ethnicized class alliance is joint action amongst men and women and people of the global North and South to break up the male deal and affirm commoning. I now describe the male deal.

(ii) The second set of actors in the fight for fertility includes in-country parties to the two party male deal. These in-country male dealers are dispossessed men. The male deals always involve two groups: (1) dispossessed men and (2) capitalists. Male deals are called male deals because they almost exclusively involve men. These men have a common interest in controlling women’s labour. Women can also be male dealers but housewifization or the dispossession of women of the means of production makes men more likely to be male dealers.

Dispossessed male parties to the male deal, often by force and sometimes by compromise, facilitate the process of enclosure within and across national boundaries. The dispossessed parties to the male deal channel up labour power and profits to capitalists (Turner, 1994: 20–21). On the one hand, dispossessed parties to the male deal aspire to benefit themselves by using
their status (their powers, such as being a husband or being a government official or being one of the few with language skills or education or being an indigenous dignitary or ruler) to channel the fruits of nature and the labours of all women and men up to global firms’ bottom lines. On the other hand, the capitalists in global corporations set up male deals with dispossessed men in order to enclose and exploit labour and nature. The deal once struck, transforms both sets of actors, the dispossessed parties and the capitalist parties, into male dealers.

Turner elaborates the concept of the male deal in her study of the anti-colonial struggles in Africa and the Caribbean, and the emergence of the new Rastafari movement. Turner observes that dispossessed men fall into two opposed groups: (1) allies of women in the fight against slavery and exploitation or (2) collaborationist agents of capitalists and the colonial state. Capitalists require male deals in order to access and control women and the fruits of their labour. Turner states that:

“[p]rofit making depends on the male deal in two essential ways. Solidarity among men though the male deal is vital to capital first, because ‘all modern means of production, all classes of societies depend, for the supply of labour power, on the domestic community... and on its modern transformation, the family, which still maintains its reproductive function although deprived of its productive ones’. Second, capital needs a male deal because it mediates class struggle by reassuring men that they have a stake in power relationships though their continued subordination of women” (Turner, 1994: 10).

Turner, Brownhill and Kaara (1997) show how, during the period of intense structural adjustment in Kenya, rising dramatically in the 1980s, cash crop male deals destabilized and undermined subsistence relations around the use of land in Kenya. Cash crop male deals are contracts or relationships between male farmers and capitalist firms to profit from the products of the farmers’ wives’ (and childrens’) labour (coffee, bananas). The beneficiaries of this deal are
the capitalists and the husbands who receive payment from the capitalists on behalf of their wives who do not control the money income. Husbands often ploughed under their wives food gardens to plant coffee bushes for the export market. Cash crop male deals placed the wives of the men in whose names the coffee farms were registered in a position of exploitation by capitalists (Turner et al., 1997: 233).

In her book on Kenyan social movements, Brownhill (2009) shows how structural adjustment effectively shifted more control over women’s labour in the fields to peasant men. According to Brownhill:

“A high degree of control over an essentially unwaged female workforce was possible only though the extension of male deals to the large numbers of peasant men and others engaged in commercial farming. The cash crop male deal of the 1960s was further entrenched in the 1980s structural adjustment programs. These male deals relied upon husbands’ control over wives’ labour. At the same time, they fostered a new vulnerability confronting transnational capital: these cash crop deals were readily interrupted by wives’ demands and actions for family food security” (Brownhill, 2009: 233).

As outlined above on page 16, Brownhill traces the connection between these Kenyan women and international social movements as they linked up in joint action to form gendered, ethnicized class alliances.

(iii) The third party in the fight for fertility is the capitalist or group of capitalists in the capitalist firm or firms that act internationally. These are the (as of 2011) 1, 210 billionaires (Forbes, 2011). These are the owners and leaders of the corporations buying up value after the crash. The big mining, oil, private security, financial companies are included in this group. Everyone else works for these billionaires (and multi-millionaires) including governments acting globally though their militaries, aid agencies, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The non-governmental
organizations (NGOs) acting as fronts for corporations are also included in this category (Petras, 2008).

In sum, gendered, ethnicized class analysis employing the fight for fertility is used in this study because it centralizes the gendered and ethnicized character of fight-back and exploitation. Gendered, ethnicized class analysis also provides a framework for analyzing how the working class becomes a class for itself by aligning across the hierarchy of labour power to stop exploitation. The gendered, ethnicized class alliance involves solidarity with struggles initiated by those at the bottom of the hierarchy of labour power.

Linebaugh and Rediker (2000) have documented many instances of gendered, ethnicized class alliances that have taken place since the beginning of industrial capitalism. The gendered, ethnicized class alliance is an essential step for the working class to take in order to become a class for itself. The alliance breaks up the channels and networks through which capitalists extract profits from nature and human beings. Unity amongst the dispossessed, especially across geographical borders, significantly undermines capitalists’ power. For this reason, this study gives significant weight to the gendered, ethnicized class alliance.

This section has discussed four important elements related to this study’s argument that the movement of movements is impelled by the process of corporate concentration and organization: (i) The first element is housewifization and colonization which explains that the global, gendered and ethnicized dimensions of capitalist exploitation and fight back.

(ii) The second element is the social factory and the four terrains of struggle. Capitalists facilitate the process of housewifization and colonization throughout all of society and globally on four terrains of struggle — production, consumption, reproduction and nature. On these four
terrains, social movements against capitalism are undertaken by multitudes of workers who resist and affirm commoning. The struggle against enclosure and exploitation is undertaken by multitudinous (and mostly unwaged) agents of revolution.

(iii) The third element is the hierarchy of labour power which serves the capitalists’ interests by undermining or decomposing global working class solidarity. ‘First’ and ‘third’ world men and ‘first’ world women are placed strategically above nature and third world women. The exploitation of unwaged women and peasants in the global South is required for capitalists’ profits. A prerequisite for the development of the class becoming for itself (the general class interest) is there being at the centre of movements’ demands and actions, the interest and initiatives of those at the bottom of the hierarchy, third world women.

(iv) The fourth element is the fight for fertility. The hierarchy of labour power is enforced by male dealers and broken up by men and women in a gendered, ethnicized class alliance. The fight for fertility is used as a conceptual tool to understand the anatomy of this back and forth (exploitation and resistance) struggle (the gendered, ethnicized class relation).

In order to conduct a gendered, ethnicized class analysis of movements as they form, I pay particular attention to three characteristics or dimensions of circulation (across terrains, across geographical borders and across industries). The three characteristics of circulation outlined below are defining features of the movement of movements.

SECTION THREE: CIRCULATION OF STRUGGLE

Circulation refers to the interlinking, connecting or interfacing of gendered, ethnicized class struggles. Theorists of autonomist Marxism show how the circulation of capital is also a
circulation of struggle. On all four terrains of struggle workers refuse commodification and being turned into labour power for the capitalists. In their refusal, workers move toward becoming part of a global class for themselves. Workers begin to replace capitalist exploitation with commoning.

We can see that movements circulate or connect in three ways. The degree to which these connections are facilitated and impelled by corporate concentration is explored through the case studies that follow in chapters six, seven and eight.

This section presents the following three characteristics of circulation: (i) circulation between different terrains of struggle (eg. production and consumption); (ii) circulation between different geographical locations (eg. the ‘road of destruction’ mapped out by the Indigenous Environmental Network) and; (iii) circulation between different industries (eg. banking, extractive industries, services, telecommunications, agricultural, and parties to the weapon dollar-petro dollar coalition⁹). I now turn to an explanation of these three characteristics.

(i) The first characteristic of the circulation of struggle is the connection between struggles from one terrain to another. Earlier I described four terrains of struggle — production, consumption, reproduction and nature. Struggles have a domino-effect where confrontations in one terrain of capitalist exploitation can trigger or open the space for struggles on other terrains.

The more terrains that are implicated in a confrontation against the capitalists and for

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⁹ The Weapondollars-Petrodollars coalition is an alliance of arms dealers and oil companies to profit from the sale of arms and oil for war. According to Nitzan and Bichler: “In a nutshell, our argument is that, during the 1970s, there was a growing convergence of interests between the world’s leading petroleum and armament corporations. Following rising nationalism and heightened industry competition during the 1950s and 1960s, the major international oil companies lost some of their earlier autonomy in the Middle East. At the same time, the region was penetrated by large U.S. and European-based manufacturing companies which, faced with mounting global competition in civilian markets, increased their reliance on military contracts and arms exports. The attendant politicisation of oil, together with the parallel commercialisation of arms exports helped shape an uneasy Weapondollars-Petrodollars Coalition between these companies, making their differential profitability increasingly dependent on Middle East energy conflicts” (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002:201-202).
themselves the more powerful the working class becomes with respect to abolishing and replacing capitalism.

Turner and Brownhill provide an example of global circulation of struggles between workers on two terrains – production and consumption. They describe the initiatives of women in Nigeria who stopped oil production and went naked in protest against the oil multinational Chevron. Chevron’s exploitation in the region was destroying people’s land and lives. The Nigerian women were joined by consumers in other parts of the world refusing to purchase Chevron’s dirty oil. Turner and Brownhill state that:

“The [Turner and Brownhill’s] conception challenges those constructions of ‘globalization from below’ which are limited to liberal declarations or protestations for reform. A much more fertile form of anti-imperial, transformational ‘globalization from below’ was promoted by Nigerian women who, in defending their subsistence life economy, denied strategic crude oil to globally dominate capital. Their explicitly feminist actions provoked women outside Nigeria to defend subsistence as life-affirmation in the context of global anti-war mobilization. This historically unprecedented world-wide ‘no to war’ movement boosted already-existing campaigns to boycott the oil companies which were at the same time facing shutdowns in Nigeria as women and their rural allies denied crude oil to the majors. This embryonic world scale production-consumption oil strike foreshadows a future of globally coordinated strikes and boycotts which not only shut down oil corporations but re-start the petroleum system on a new, subsistence-positive basis. The systemic impetus to globalization from below revealed by the Nigerian insurgency is embodied in the corporate organizational and oil market ties that bind together all the world’s people engaged in producing and consuming oil” (Turner and Brownhill, 2003a: 6 emphasis added).

(ii) The quotation above by Turner and Brownhill also describes the second characteristic of circulation — the connection amongst movements across geographical borders. Turner and Brownhill show the global reality of a coordinated production strike inside Nigeria and the boycotts outside of Nigeria. We see how struggles on any of the four terrains in one geographical location can provoke or reinforce struggles on a terrain or terrains in a number of
other locations. The Nigerian women’s actions sheds light on the empirical accuracy of Marx’s finding regarding the following point: the more numerous, global and integrated the organization of capitalist firms, the greater, more global (and more highly integrated) becomes the struggle against it.

One of the most powerful examples of geographic circulation of struggle is simultaneous joint action across borders. For example, in January 2011 Anonymous Organization strategically organized occupations of corporate offices to protest tax havens (Anonymous Organization, 2011). Anonymous is a leaderless collective of on-line ‘cyber’ activists that act ‘anonymously’ but in a coordinated manner usually to mount global campaigns, protests and expositions in response to corporate corruption and enclosure.

Turner (1980) offers another example of this immensely powerful geographical circulation of struggle. The struggle circulated between oil workers on the terrain of production in Iran to the multi-terrain struggle against apartheid within South Africa, Namibia and Rhodesia (still under racist rule) in 1978–1979. Turner describes how oil workers in Iran shut down production for four months to demand democratic control over their product, oil, the use of its revenues and its destination. During this successful takeover, Iranian oil workers refused to sell oil to apartheid South Africa, joining a global United Nations boycott against South African apartheid. South Africa received most of its oil from the Shah of Iran who was being ousted by the Iranian people. Turner explains the significance of the Iranian oil workers’ actions:

“Iran, by cutting off oil to South Africa, has made a significant contribution to changing the balance of forces there, as well as in Namibia and Rhodesia which get their oil though South Africa. The racist regimes are still getting oil but at much higher prices. If Iranian oilworkers, along with others, are able to enforce their policy of no oil to South Africa, not only will they contribute substantially to bringing down the apartheid regimes, but they will expand their control and mastery of
the oil industry into the world market” (Turner in Nore and Turner, editors, 1980: 289).

This exercise in power on the part of Iranian oil workers reverberated much more widely. The oil workers held five million barrels of oil off the market. The holdup increased dramatically the world price of oil thus laying the groundwork for the 1980s economic recession. With foreign exchange reserves devoted to paying for oil, many third world governments were forced to borrow, under strict conditions, from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The price of these loans was to de-industrialize and open countries for transnational capitalists. This sparked waves of refusal, resistance and deenclosure by global social factory workers.

The 2011 on-going North Africa revolution also highlights the global or geographical spread of struggle. As outlined above, the Tahrir Square uprising, where hundreds of thousands of people gathered for a two week long protest, was ignited by workers’ struggles in Tunisia. From Tunisia and Egypt, the expressions of power by workers spread throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and North America between December 2010 and September 2011. Media reports identified an ‘infection’ or ‘contagion’ of insurgencies in the region. As of July 2011, as thousands of Spanish youth staged sit-ins and demonstrations across the country, it became well understood that the Arab countries are the centre point of an ever expanding geographic circulation of struggle.

The global circulation of struggle is important to this study for two main reasons. (1) Social movements strategically coordinate actions across geographical borders to attack different links on the corporations’ value chain. This study identifies these conscious strategies as ‘cross border, simultaneous direct actions.’ The more social movements strategically and
simultaneously attack different links on the value chain, the more the corporations’ ability to exploit and enclose nature and human labour is undermined and weakened. The global circulation of struggle indicates that both capitalists and social movements act on a globally coordinated basis.

(2) The global circulation of struggle is important to this study because the movement of movements’ revolutionary capacity is its ability to undermine global capitalism. The global alliance of movements stops capitalism by breaking up capitalists’ efforts to divide the class along gendered and ethnicized lines. Alliances in the global North and South express the general class interest by linking their actions and demands to the demands of third world women, and connecting across borders to stop capitalist exploitation.

(iii) The third characteristic of circulation is the linking up of workers organized by different capitalist industries (eg. energy and food). This circulation occurs because the workforce under one capitalist is integrated with the workforce of other capitalists by way of corporate alliances, relationships and supply chains. Firms connect in two main ways. The first is through mergers or acquisitions of one weaker firm by another, stronger firm. This kind of connection, and the impact it has on social movements will be described in more detail in section four below.

The second corporate connection that can impel circulation is through the linking up of different firms or the creation by chief executive officers (CEOs) of subsidiaries along one supply chain. Arrangements between firms take place through any merger or expansion into new sectors and industries (also called ‘vertical integration’). For example, in Brazil in 2009 Monsanto formed a joint venture with Cargill, one of the largest grain trading transnational corporations, (TNCs) to control the growth of crops and processing of those crops into agrofuels.
Because this study examines corporate trajectories as shapers of popular movements of movements, this issue of circulation is totally central and crucial. There are two additional points related to the circulation of struggles that help to explain how social movements connect to each other.

First, the four terrains of class struggle are all linked by communications technology and transportation. The huge apparatus of credit and financial transactions, canals, ships, trains, planes, pipelines, telegraph, telephone, railroad, radio, television, the internet, as well as stock and mercantile exchanges are all implicated in coordinating the activities of capital on different terrains around the planet. This apparatus ensures that bananas picked in Costa Rica are delivered to grocery stores in Canada year-round and that oil extracted from the tar sands in Alberta gets to the refining facilities and then to the factories in the Export Processing Zones of Mexico or Thailand or China where workers labour around the clock to produce commodities to be shipped and flown ‘just in time’ to retail outlets all across the globe. This globally networked and structurally interconnected system can be disrupted through joint actions by workers on different terrains.

Second, the more intense the confrontation or struggle, the more intense, more rapid and more expansive the circulation will be. Connected to this is the fact that circulation spreads more and more quickly over time. One cycle of composition-decomposition-recomposition builds upon the next as capitalists and workers learn from the past and develop new ways forward. The fourth and final section below explains how corporate concentration (the integration of capitalist firms and workforce) and crises (value termination or destruction) speeds up and globalizes the circulation of struggle.
In sum, the circulation of struggle framing helps to identify and explain how social movements connect. This section has discussed three characteristics of circulation. These are (i) circulation across terrains of exploitation; (ii) circulation across geographical borders and; (iii) circulation across industries. The next section outlines the final part of this study’s theoretical-methodological framework: capitalist crises and corporate concentration or ‘amalgamation.’

SECTION FOUR: CORPORATE CONCENTRATION AND CAPITALIST CRISIS AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRUGGLE

The central questions in this thesis are: Is the movement of movements shaped in significant ways by increased corporate concentration? Does the organization of capitalists as they become more concentrated impel the concentration and integration of social movements? These questions are posed with the understanding that both corporate and social movement elaboration occurs in the global arena.

In this fourth and final section of the study’s theoretical-methodological framework I take two further steps toward understanding these questions. The first step defines corporate concentration and seeks to connect the rise of corporate concentration to the rise of social movements. Marx argues that, from this concentration arises the revolt of the working class which is organized, united and disciplined by the process of social factory enclosure and exploitation. The second step explores how capitalist crises impel concentration and globalization.
Both of these steps are central to understanding the argument in this study because this study examines the formation of the movement of movements in the context of Monsanto’s concentration in two stages (1996–1998) and (2007–2011).

**Corporate Concentration**

According to Nitzan and Bichler, (2002) Corporate concentration (also here referred to as amalgamation) is defined as the process whereby firms grow in two ways: (i) by taking over of other firms (mergers and acquisitions) or (ii) by enclosing new aspects of life or what is called ‘greenfield’ investments. Greenfield investment is the expansion by one corporation into new territory through the purchase of more land, exploitation of new extractive industry resources, and the investment in and commercialization of new products (also known as new enclosures).

Firms grow in order to increase their profit relative to the average. Nitzan and Bichler call this “differential accumulation” (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002: 50). It is important to point out that, as stated above, firms do more than accumulate differential profit. They also accumulate coerced labour (Cleaver, 1977: Chapter Two, The Commodity Form).

Nitzan and Bichler explain that corporate concentration is a global process. They argue that

> “the underlying logic of mergers and acquisitions implies progressive ‘spatial’ unification, and, eventually, globalization. For amalgamation to run ahead of overall growth, dominant capital must successively break its ‘envelopes’, spreading from the industry, to the sector, to the national economy, and ultimately to the world as a whole. In this sense, differential accumulation is a prime mover of spatial integration and globalization” (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002: 51).

As corporations become larger and more globally integrated, more and more people are drawn into the capital relation through entanglement within one or more of the *four terrains* of the social factory. In the history of corporate formation and expansion the social factory is born.
As this social factory becomes more integrated, more global and more expansive, workers’ struggles become more integrated, more global and more expansive.

Nitzan and Bichler describe in more detail the ways corporations concentrate (takeovers and ‘greenfield’ growth). The authors define differential breadth as the process whereby firms expand employment faster than the average. They define differential depth as the process whereby firms raise their profit per employee faster than the average:

“[A]malgamation is a power process whose goal is to beat the average and redistribute control. Its main appeal to capitalists is that it contributes directly to differential breadth yet without undermining and sometimes boosting the potential for differential depth. Thus, everything else remaining the same, it makes more sense to buy than to build. But then everything else does not, and indeed cannot remain the same. The reason is simple: amalgamation transforms the very social conditions and power institutions on which it is based” (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002: 58).

Nitzan and Bichler refer to three particular transformations of social relations and power institutions that accompany the power process of corporate amalgamation:

“First, amalgamation is akin to eating the goose that lays the golden egg. By gobbling up takeover targets within a given corporate universe, acquiring firms are depleting the pool of future targets. Unless this pool is somehow replenished, mergers and acquisitions eventually lead to a highly centralised structure in which dominant capital owns everything worth owning. From a certain point onward, the pace of amalgamation therefore has to decelerate. Although further amalgamation within dominant capital itself may be possible (large firms buying each other), the impact on the group’s differential accumulation relative to the average is negligible: by this stage, dominant capital has grown so big, it is the average. Green-field growth [new enclosures], by adding new employment and firms, works to replenish the takeover pool to some extent. But then, and this is the second point worth noting, since green-field growth tends to trail the pace of amalgamation in both employment volume and dollar value, its effect is mostly to slow down the depletion process, not stop it. Indeed, the very process of amalgamation, by directing resources away from green-field investment, has the countervailing impact of reducing growth, and hence hastening the depletion process. Thus, sooner or later, dominant capital is bound to reach its ‘envelope’, namely the boundaries of its own corporate universe, with few or no takeover targets to speak of. Finally, corporate
amalgamation is often socially traumatic. It commonly involves massive dislocation as well as significant power realignments; it is restricted by the ability of broader state institutions to accommodate the new corporate formations; and it is capped by the speed at which the underlying corporate bureaucracy can adapt (this last point is due to Penrose 1959). The consequence is that as amalgamation builds up momentum, it also generates higher and higher roadblocks, contradictions and counter-forces” (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002: 58–59).

These three transformations refer to what Marx argued in the ‘one capitalist kills many’ quotation. The first transformation refers to centralization. Centralization is analogous to ‘killing the goose that lays the golden egg’ because, at a certain point, the corporation’s supply of existing wealth is exhausted. Corporations must then enclose new areas of nature and people’s wealth (greenfield growth). The second transformation Nitzan and Bichler refer to is crisis or the substantial breakdown in profit making by a large number of the top capitalist firms. Crisis leads to the third transformation, power realignments and social trauma. I discuss these transformations below.

Nitzan and Bichler argue that what I and others call the social factory arises under the force of corporate amalgamation. The authors highlight eight features of this transformed world society. These features include the wider power institutions of society, ‘jurisdictional integration,’ broad structure of power, the nature of the state, interstate relations, ideology and violence:

“The pivotal impact of mergers is to alter not the structure of production per se, but the broader structure of power. The reason is rooted in the double-sided impact of amalgamation. By constantly pushing toward, and eventually breaking through their successive social ‘envelopes’ – from the industry, to the sector, to the nation state, to the world as a whole – mergers create a strong drive toward ‘jurisdictional integration’, to use Olson’s terminology10 (1982). Yet this very integration pits dominant capital against new rivals under new circumstances, and so

creates the need to constantly restructure the wider power institutions of society, including the nature of the state, interstate relations, ideology and violence” (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002: 60).

Two points can be made about Nitzan and Bichler’s observation. First, unlike Cleaver and others cited in this study Nitzan and Bichler do not discuss the ‘other side’ of the capital relation, namely the working class. This study adds to the ‘new rivals’ workers organized in social movements.

The final point is related to Nitzan and Bichler’s observation that mergers alter the structure of power such that the world as a whole is drawn into the capital relation. This study asks: to what extent does ‘jurisdictional integration’ and ‘social dislocation’ connect movements to each other in a global circulation of struggle? In the final chapter of this study I show that the circulation of struggle and the concentration of movements are accelerated dramatically during and shortly after periods of capitalist crisis.

Before investigating the relationship between crisis and concentration, I turn to a discussion of this study’s periodization. The historical analysis in this study is based on Dyer-Witheford’s conceptualization of cycles of struggle. Each cycle includes the three phases of composition-decomposition-recomposition. Dyer-Witherford’s periodization emphasizes both sides of the diachronic struggle between capitalists and workers. In contrast, Nitzan and Bichler’s periodization focuses almost exclusively on corporate power as the main driving force of history. Nitzan and Bichler’s analysis is valuable to this study insofar as it illustrates the ways in which corporate concentration shapes the ‘broader structure of power.’

Nitzan and Bichler describe four historical waves of amalgamation. Mergers and acquisitions grow, according to the authors, in “cyclical patterns.” These patterns are marked by
corporations breaking through successive envelopes into new or already existing territory. The first wave is the ‘monopoly’ wave which occurred during the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century; the second wave is the ‘oligopoly’ wave which lasted though the 1920s; the third wave is the conglomerate wave which lasts from the 1950s and 1960s until the 1980s and; the fourth wave, the “all encompassing” ‘global wave,’ which began in the 1980s and continues into 2011 (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002: 58). Nitzan and Bichler state:

“The first, ‘monopoly’ wave marked the emergence of modern big business, with giant corporations forming within their own original industries. Once this source of amalgamation was more or less exhausted, further expansion meant that firms had to move outside their industry boundaries. And indeed, the next ‘oligopoly’ wave saw the formation of vertically integrated combines whose control increasingly spanned entire sectors, such as in petroleum, machinery and food products, among others. The next phase opened the whole U.S. corporate universe up for grabs, with firms crossing their original boundaries of specialization to form large conglomerates with business lines ranging from raw materials, through manufacturing, to services and finance. Finally, once the national scene has been more or less integrated, the main avenue for further expansion is across international borders, hence the recent global merger wave. This process, whereby dominant capital breaks through its successive envelopes, is of course hardly unique to the United States. It occurred in many other countries, and was repeated, almost to the letter, in Israel” (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002: 60).

Note that the second period, the oligopoly wave (1900s–1920s) is significantly influenced by the stock market crash of 1929. The importance of crisis to corporate concentration will be discussed below in section four. Nitzan and Bichler’s analysis of the broad social transformations attendant upon succeeding levels of corporate concentration, calls to mind Marx’s discussion of the consequences of ‘one capitalist  kills many.’ What Nitzan and Bichler do not mention is the most important consequence from Marx’s point of view which is the production of the organized, united and disciplined global class that is ever increasing in number.
Dyer-Witheford adds to this analysis by integrating a historical view of working class composition. As noted above in section one, the phases of composition-decomposition-recomposition constitute a historical cycle of struggle characterized by workers’ and capitalists’ continuous struggle and counter-initiative. This struggle propels history forward in a spiral like motion. According to Dyer-Witheford, each cycle is driven by workers’ attempt to free themselves from the capital relation (1999: 134). Dyer-Witheford outlines four ever widening historical cycles of class composition-decomposition-recomposition beginning in the nineteenth century. Each cycle has as its main defining characteristic new kinds of workers. Just as Nitzan and Bichler identify new kinds of corporations characterized by different degrees of concentration, Dyer-Witheford identifies new kinds of workers characterized by different degrees of skill and global connection.

The four cycles Dyer-Witheford outlines: professional worker (1848 to 1914), the mass worker (1914 to 1973), and the socialized worker (1973 to 1999). Dyer-Witheford identifies the emergence of a globalized worker forged at the Battle of Seattle (1999) which signalled the break-up of the WTO. This globalized worker (1999 to 20??) is the main protagonist in this present study. Dyer-Witheford’s identification of the global worker is entirely consistent with the framing of this study in so far as this study’s focus is on the global worker in the global social factory.

Struggles have become increasingly geographically connected over the time period 1973 to 2012. The globalized worker can be understood with reference to the global social factory which was discussed earlier in section two on page 47–53. These sequences of cycles encompass a global history (1845–2012). However within a global trajectory there is abundant variation amongst regions and peoples.
In sum this section on corporate concentration has established two main points: (i) corporate concentration significantly impacts the broader structure of power and (ii) corporate concentration moves in waves that include periods of crises. I now view the process of concentration and the impact that concentration has on working class struggle in the context of capitalis crises.

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**Capitalist Crises as Opportunities for Struggle**

Crises in the capitalist system, including war and financial crisis, provide opportunities for powerful corporations to buy up less powerful firms at bargain basement prices. At times of crisis, large corporations either self-destruct or become even larger and consequently fewer in number by way of their accumulation of smaller firms (mergers and acquisitions) or greenfields expansions (new enclosures) (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002; Stiglitz, 2001).

To what extent is corporate concentration the engine of the movement of movements’ formation. As companies suffer from a loss of value, (decrease of value on the stock exchange) predator corporations — larger and more powerful corporations — vie for majority control and buy up weaker, more vulnerable corporations. The following is a list (from first to tenth) of the Fortune 500 largest corporations in the world in 2010 (according to profits): Wal-Mart Stores, Royal Dutch Shell, Exxon Mobil, British Petroleum, Toyota Motor, Japan Post Holdings, Sinopec, State Grid, AXA, and China National Petroleum (Fortune 500, 2010).
Crises intensify class struggle because the loss of value alters the broader structure of power: the capitalists’ buying power and command over labour and ideas can be taken over. Large capitalists take over smaller or weaker capitalists. As a result there are fewer and much larger survivor corporations. Corporate concentration is deepened.

In 2001 interview by Greg Palast, Joseph Stiglitz, the former chief economist of the World Bank, outlines the four step program that the Bank prescribes for every country’s finance minister to implement. Each of these steps has a ‘shock and awe’ effect that is meant to decompose working class struggles. The first step involves privatization of state owned industries. The second step involves capital market liberalization which essentially allows foreign corporations to buy up and enclose more and more commons.

The third step is market based pricing which translates into raising prices on food, water, cooking gas and other essentials of life. This third step is what Stiglitz calls the ‘IMF riot:’ “when a nation is, ‘down and out, [the IMF] squeezes the last drop of blood out of them. They turn up the heat until, finally, the whole cauldron blows up” (Stiglitz quoted in Palast, 2001). For example, in 2008 in Haiti, as a result of IMF-eliminated tariffs on imported rice, the food crisis was further inflamed and thousands of people went hungry and rioted.

The fourth and final step is signing up for free trade by agreeing to the rules of the World Trade Organization and the World Bank whose main goal is to open markets to multinational and transnational corporations for ever expanding commodification and coerced enclosure.

Reading capital politically, from the perspective of the working class, Cleaver and Bell (2002) point to Marx’s observation that crisis is both a consequence of workers struggles and an opening for revolution. Cleaver and Bell explain this observation:
“Because of the fundamental class antagonism over the organization of society, crisis is permanently imminent in the system. Capital has created its society by imposing its organization of life on humanity, by creating a working class. This working class has developed from a capitalist-defined ‘class-in-itself’ to a self-defined ‘class-for-itself,’ a class that has developed its subjectivity from that of living labor to that of a potentially revolutionary class subject. In all of Marx’s work capitalist crisis is, from the point of view of the working-class subject, a moment not of breakdown but of breakthrough. If crises for capital are evidence of its loss of control (direct or indirect) over the working class, then we can also turn this relation around and see that the crises are simultaneously the eruption of working-class subjectivity that undermines capitalist control” (Cleaver and Bell, 2002: 58–59).

As Bell and Cleaver argue, crises provide openings and opportunities for workers to fight back and generate alternatives. Cleaver and Bell provide specific examples of what these opening look like:

“For workers the most important thing about capitalist crisis is that it is, for the most part, the consequence of their struggles. The rupture of accumulation by struggle is a moment of conquest. It is the opening of a breach in the enemy lines in the class war. When the struggle circulates rapidly the breach is widened and whole lines may give away. The working class widens the scope for its own organization and mobilization. The circulation of struggle to more and more sectors of the class and the widening of the space, time and resources available for organizing further struggle, strengthens the class. Even if the struggles that produce and grow out of a crisis are ultimately crushed by capital, they are still important experiences in the development of the working class as revolutionary subject. As Engels wrote in 1845, they are still ‘the military school of the working-men in which they prepare themselves for the great struggle which cannot be avoided’” (Cleaver and Bell, 2002: 58–59).

In sum, this section on concentration and crisis, has addressed three themes: (i) the ways in which corporate concentration and crisis alter the broader structure of power and influence the emergence of different kinds of workers; (ii) the emergence of the global worker which this study seeks to understand and (iii) crisis as an opportunity for workers to build organizational capacity and increasingly take back power over the means of life and create alternatives.
Chapter Two Conclusion

The four parts to the study’s theoretical-methodological framework outlined above are (i) the capital relation; (ii) gendered, ethnicized class analysis and the fight for fertility; (iii) circulation of struggle and; (iv) corporate concentration, crisis and openings. A brief recapitulation of each follows.

(i) The capital relation is here defined as a struggle to control the commons. Commoning is a set of practices which are for life and against capitalism. The history of the capital relation is a process of composition-decomposition-recomposition where workers compose themselves as a class to fight capitalists and capitalists decompose or dismantle that organization. Social movements are constantly composing and recomposing in the battle to control life. This struggle is an ever expanding back and forth dialectic which becomes more global and more intense over time.

(ii) Gendered, ethnicized class analysis facilitates our seeing the ways in which exploitation and fight back are gendered and ethnicized. Housewifization and colonization facilitates seeing the historical and material reality that places dispossessed women, indigenous people, and people of the global south at the centre of the fight for fertility. Social factory struggles by different kinds of waged and unwaged workers take place on four terrains of struggle — production, consumption, reproduction and nature. Each terrain constitutes a distinct power relation. Groups of waged and unwaged workers struggling against capitalists on one terrain interconnect with workers on other terrains. The hierarchy of labour power explains how capitalists divide and control based on gendered and ethnicized constructions. It also explains how these divisions are used by capitalists to extract value and decompose working class struggle.
The fight for fertility enables us to clearly distinguish the actors involved in class struggle. Male deals facilitate enclosures and commodification. Gendered, ethnicized, class alliances break up enclosure and commodification in defence of the commons. These alliances, as the following case studies attempt to show, increasingly come together as a movement of movements to become a class for itself. The actions by alliances of strugglers that interrupt extraction by capitalists is by definition revolutionary. Workers breaking up capitalists’ value chains also affirm commoners’ value chains. The wealth and power that is not channelled up to the corporate bottom line remains under the control of those who interrupt its extraction. The interrupters consequently have more power and capacity to intensify their interruptions.

(iii) The third element of this theoretical-methodological framework is the circulation of struggle that constitutes a global social factory. This study identifies four characteristics of circulation: (i) circulation between different terrains of struggle (such as between production and consumption), (ii) circulation between different geographical locations, and (iii) circulation between different industries (e.g., banking, extractive industries, services, telecommunications, agricultural, and parties to the weapon-dollar, petro-dollar coalition). The intensification of cross border simultaneous direct actions are an important indicator of the class becoming for itself.

(iv) The fourth and final element of this study’s theoretical-methodological framework addresses how corporate concentration and workers’ struggles are strongly influenced by capitalist crises. Corporate concentration (amalgamation this is one of the many mechanisms through which capitalists expand) is defined as the process whereby large firms take over other firms thereby absorbing the workforce, markets and supply chains of these firms. These takeovers occur especially dramatically during crises. This study seeks to show how global wave of
amalgamation (1980s to 2012) has been an engine for the development of the global worker (1999 to 2012).

The next section shows how this theoretical-methodological framework is operationalized in the case study struggles between Monsanto and La Via Campesina.
CHAPTER THREE: Method of Analysis: What Indicates That Corporate Concentration Gives Rise to the Movement of Movements?

This chapter is dedicated to explaining how I operationalize the above theoretical framework in order to test the accuracy of my hypothesis that corporate concentration impels the movement of movements. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section outlines the study’s hypothesis.

The second section outlines two analytical steps that I execute in the three case studies in order to test the accuracy of the hypothesis. (i) The first step is the fight for fertility analysis. (ii) The second step is the circulation analysis. These steps are outlined here in brief.

(i) Fight for fertility analysis involves identifying and examining, during a period of corporate concentration, how corporations and their allies form male deals to facilitate the process of enclosure and exploitation. The fight for fertility analysis also involves identifying and examining how workers fight back by forming gendered, ethnicized class alliances to stop exploitation and enclosure. (ii) Circulation analysis involves identifying and examining how social movements connect in three ways: across terrains, across industries, and across geographical borders. I undertake this two step analysis in the case study struggles between Monsanto and La Via Campesina in India, the European Union and Brazil.

The third section outlines this study’s periodization and the two stages of Monsanto’s concentration (1996–1998) and (2007–2011).

Now I explain the logic of this study’s hypothesis.
SECTION ONE: HYPOTHESIS

This study examines Marx’s central finding that corporate concentration and organization impels workers to fight back and become a class for themselves. The logic of this argument is as follows: As fewer and fewer corporations expand and globalize, more and more people are drawn into the social factory and are thereby open to participating in a process of self-activity whereby they become ever-more organized, united and disciplined in collective forces or movements against capitalists and for themselves. As these movements develop, they connect with each other and form the movement of movements.

I test the extent to which this hypothesis is accurate by employing a case study analysis that examines the dynamic relationship between Monsanto and La Via Campesina (standing in for capitalists and workers respectively). I examine the relationship during two stages of Monsanto’s concentration (1996–1998 and 2007–2011) with emphasis on the first stage (1996–1998). Monsanto is selected as a proxy because it is one of the largest and most powerful corporations vying for control over fertility. La Via Campesina is selected as a proxy because it is a prominent and powerful opponent fighting Monsanto and expanding the commons (see Introduction page 7–8 for a more detailed explanation). Although this study’s main focus is Monsanto and La Via Campesina, significant weight is given to other corporations and their state allies, as well as other movements and social agents.

To avoid teleology I consider the ways in which this hypothesis is falsifiable. If corporations enclose and exploit globally but the findings do not indicate that there is a globally connected social movement response than it cannot be argued that the global capital relation is the springboard for the movement of movements. If Monsanto’s concentration and organization is global but La Via Campesina (i) is acting nationally and without focus on interrupting global
value chains; (ii) has narrow and isolated pursuits and campaigns (each organization has its own issue that has no globally interconnected content) and; (iii) is not acting in concert with other movements (eg. movements fighting oil corporations) than it cannot be argued that the global capital relation is the springboard for movement of movements.

The next section outlines the two analytical steps I take to test this hypothesis.

SECTION TWO: TWO STEPS TO TEST THE HYPOTHESIS AND EXPLORE THE FINDINGS
This section outlines two specific steps that I follow in order to demonstrate that corporate concentration significantly contributes to stimulating the formation and action of a movement of movements. (i) The first step is the fight for fertility analysis and (ii) the second step is the circulation analysis. These are outlined in detail below.

(i) The fight for fertility analysis
The fight for fertility analysis has two dimensions.

(1) The first dimension involves identifying, during a period of corporate concentration, male deals involving global capitalist Monsanto that facilitates exploitation and enclosure;

(2) The second dimension of the fight for fertility analysis involves identifying, gendered, ethnicized class alliances involving La Via Campesina organizations that break up the male deal and expand commoning alternatives.

The fight for fertility analysis provides three types of evidence that will support this study’s hypothesis. If there is evidence during this stage of Monsanto’s concentration that there is ...
(1) an expansion and acceleration of enclosures facilitated by male deals,

(2) an expansion and acceleration of the breaking of male deals by gendered, ethnicized class alliances and;

(3) an expansion and intensification of commoning alternatives (the commoners’ value chain)

... Then the study has established that, workers, in a significant way, are impelled by the process of corporate concentration to move toward becoming for themselves on that local level.

Circulation analysis (outlined below) gives us an idea of how local alliances connect to other alliances globally to form a global movement of movements.

(ii) Circulation analysis

Circulation analysis is a tool for illuminating the extent to which gendered, ethnicized class alliances are connected to each other. There are three entry points to establishing circulation: (i) amongst and between workers and capitalists on four terrains of struggle (production, consumption, reproduction and nature); (ii) across different industries and; (iii) from one geographical location to another.

There are two reasons that this study focuses on the global circulation of movements.

First, corporations enclose and exploit globally. Social movements that connect and coordinate direct actions across geographical borders have a strategic power to break-up the highly centralized and global corporate value chain. An attack or threat to Monsanto at one, or more than one link on the company’s value chain, weakens the chain.
Second, the circulation of gendered, ethnicized class alliances across geographical borders is the movement of movements. The global alliance of the working class threatens the hierarchy of labour power upon which capitalists rely for global profit-taking and control. Alliances in the global North express the general class interest by undertaking actions that are consistent with the demands of alliances in the global South. Alliances in the South express the general class interest by taking actions that are consistent with the demands of alliances in the North. Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen (1999) have argued that there can be no commoning in the North without commoning in the South, and vice versa.

Circulation analysis provides two types of evidence that support this study’s hypothesis. If there is evidence in a period of concentration that there is ...

(1) an expansion of the connections between workers locally (in-country) across terrains of the social factory and across industries and

(2) an expansion and acceleration of cross-border (simultaneous) direct actions by local gendered, ethnicized class alliances against corporate power and for the commons,

... Then this study has demonstrated that the movement of movements is impelled by corporate concentration and the corporate organization of production.

Below I outline the periodizations that this study embraces.

SECTION THREE: PERIODIZATION (1970s–2011)

This study embraces two periodizations of the years 1845 to 2012 developed by Nitzan and Bichler and Dyer-Witheford.
The first periodization is that of the four waves of corporate amalgamation (1890s to 1900s, 1900s to 1920s, 1950s to 1980s and 1980s to 20??) outlined by Nitzan and Bichler in chapter two.


These two periodizations provide a macro, political economy framework for the discussion of the struggles between the proxy corporation and proxy movements in this study.

Nitzan and Bichlers’ analysis of the broad social transformations attendant upon succeeding levels of corporate concentration, calls to mind Marx’s discussion of the consequences of ‘one capitalist kills many.’ Just as Nitzan and Bichler identify new kinds of corporations characterized by different degrees of concentration, Dyer-Witheford identifies new kinds of workers characterized by different degrees of skill and global connection.

In this study I am concerned with Monsanto’s concentration and movements fighting Monsanto in the last wave, the ‘global wave,’ of amalgamation (1980s to 20??) and the two most recent cycles of class composition, that of the ‘socialized’ and ‘globalized’ worker (1973–1999 and 1999–2012). A more in-depth treatment of the histories of this relationship is outside the scope of the present thesis.

Since the 1980s ‘global wave’ of amalgamation, Monsanto has undergone two stages of intense concentration (1996–1998 and 2007–2011) each of which are directly followed by a surge in social movement fight back and an expansion of commoning.
(1) In the first stage (1996–1998) Monsanto concentrated by merging with and acquiring 15 of the top US and international seed companies. Directly in 1996, social movements globally exerted a counterforce to break up Monsanto’s value chain.

(2) In the second stage (2007–2011) Monsanto concentrated by expanding into agrofuels. This second stage is marked by a major food crisis (2007–2011) and an even larger and more globally connected social movement concentration.

The present study deals in detail with first stage of Monsanto’s concentration and fight back (1996–1998). I focus on the first stage for two reasons:

(1) I focus on the first stage because it allows me to apply my theoretical-methodological framework in order to identify and understand the significance of certain elements of the movement of movements, and

(2) an in-depth analysis of both stages is beyond the scope of this present thesis.

However I do provide a brief discussion of the second stage of concentration (2007–2011). The second stage is characterized by the so-called ‘food riots’ which erupted in 2007-2008 simultaneously in over 30 countries. The (2011) on-going activities of the Cochabamba People’s Movement for the Rights of Mother Earth and the Arab Revolution signal the existence of a much accelerated connection of social movement fight-back and commoning.

In sum, this chapter has outlined three aspects to this study’s method of analysis. First, it has outlined the hypothesis which is that corporate concentration draws more and more workers into the social factory who over time, build up experience and practice resistance such that workers’ capacity to participate in movements against the capitalists and for themselves is
enhanced. As these movements develop, they interface with each other and form the movement of movements.

Second, this chapter has outlined the two analytical steps that I take to prove the hypothesis. These are (i) the fight for fertility analysis and (ii) the circulation analysis.

Third, this chapter discussed the study’s periodizations. The macro framing embraces Nitzan and Bichler’s waves of amalgamation and Dyer-Witheford’s cycles of class struggle. This study focuses on the most recent time period (1973–2012). In this time period, I focus on Monsanto’s concentration from 1996–1998. Monsanto’s concentration in this first period is directly followed by a surge in social movement opposition. This study also considers the years leading up to and following this first stage of concentration, including a brief discussion of the second stage of concentration (2007–2011) and social movement activity.

I now turn to chapter four which outlines the relationship between Monsanto and La Via Campesina from the 1970s leading up to the first stage of concentration in the mid to late 1990s.
PART TWO: MONSANTO’S CONCENTRATION AND LA VIA CAMPESINA MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS (1990 TO 2011)

Part two contains chapters four to nine. Chapter four offers a historical analysis of the relationship between Monsanto and La Via Campesina. This chapter analyzes the ways in which Monsanto and the World Trade Organization gave rise to La Via Campesina. Chapter four also examines how Monsanto’s for-profit value chain is mirrored by La Via Campesina’s for-life value chain.

Chapter five details Monsanto’s two stages of concentration (1996–1998 and 2007–2011). Chapter five also offers a brief analysis of the surge in resistance to Monsanto that follow directly from these two stages of concentration.

Chapters six, seven and eight provide a deep anatomical study of the relationship between Monsanto’s concentration (1996 to 1998) and global organization on the one hand and La Via Campesina movements in India, the European Union and Brazil on the other hand. In each chapter I employ the two step fight for fertility and circulation analysis to expose the ways in which Monsanto attempted to enclose seed and food systems and investigate how La Via Campesina organizations and their allies in India, the European Union and Brazil organized to stop Monsanto and GM ‘frankenfood.’

Chapter nine analyzes the ways in which social movements’ cross-border actions impacted Monsanto’s bottom line. In this chapter I briefly discuss Monsanto’s expansion into agrofuels (the second stage of concentration from 2007-2011) and the surge of resistance that followed directly from the agrofuels induced food crisis. I also investigate the formation and activity of
the movement of movements that has emerged from the First World People’s Movement for the Rights of Mother Earth conference (2010) and the Arab Revolution (2011).

I conclude this study by revisiting the theoretical-methodological framework and presenting the findings in the case studies.

I now turn to chapter four where I outline the historical relationship between Monsanto and La Via Campesina.
CHAPTER FOUR: HISTORY OF MONSANTO AND LA VIA CAMPESINA 1901 TO 1990S

This chapter focuses on the history of the relationship between Monsanto and La Via Campesina since the beginning of the ‘global wave’ of amalgamation in the 1980’s. The first section provides a brief history of Monsanto and outlines six ways in which Monsanto enclosed and commodified seeds.

The second section provides a brief history of La Via Campesina and analyzes how Monsanto and its allies have significantly impelled farmers’ unity across geographical borders. The second section also outlines four alternatives to Monsanto’s GMOs that were and are promoted by La Via Campesina.

I now turn to section one on the history of Monsanto. A majority of the information below is derived from material in Robin (2009).

SECTION ONE: MONSANTO’S CORPORATE VALUE CHAIN AND THE ‘GENE REVOLUTION’

Monsanto Chemical Works was established in 1901 in St. Louis, Missouri as a manufacturer of the artificial sweetener saccharin. In the 1920s Monsanto expanded into industrial chemicals, notably sulphuric acid which is used for the production of car batteries, and in ore processing, fertilizer manufacturing and oil refining.

Shortly after the 1929 economic collapse (the Great Depression) Monsanto bought up several companies at bargain basement prices to become one of the top chemical companies in the United States (US). During WWII the US military sprayed millions of dollars worth of Monsanto’s now banned synthetic pesticide DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane) on its
enemies. DDT was said to control typhus among the allied troops in Western Europe and to eradicate mosquitoes carrying malaria in the South Pacific.

Monsanto has a long history of involvement in war. In the 1950s Monsanto’s research director, Charles Thomas, worked with the Pentagon’s Manhattan Project to isolate and then purify plutonium and polonium which would later be used to trigger the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 (Robin, 2010: 38).

In the 1960s and 1970s Monsanto became one of the most important producers of the defoliant, Agent Orange for US Military operations in Vietnam. From 1962 to 1971 the US military dropped 20 million gallons of defoliants on eight million acres of Vietnam’s forest, crops and nearby communities (Robin, 2010: 42). In 2004 the Vietnamese government estimated that three million Vietnamese were exposed to dioxin through contaminated food and water, and that at least 800,000 people continued to suffer serious health problems (Fawthrop, 2004). According to a 2003 Columbia University study, dissolving eighty grams of dioxin in a municipal water supply system could eliminate a city of eight million inhabitants (Robin, 2010: 42).

Monsanto knew about the toxicity of the product but remained silent and continued to allow the US military to expose its troops and Vietnamese civilians. Monsanto and Dow Chemical, both the main suppliers of dioxin, kept the toxicological studies secret for four years (Robin, 2008a).

During the 1980s and 1990s Monsanto expanded its operations globally and became a leading agri-chemical company. In the 1970s while Monsanto’s dioxin was under investigation in the United States, Monsanto was advertising the virtues of its new herbicide Roundup. In
1974 Monsanto gained governmental approval for marketing Roundup in the US and Europe. Roundup works as a weed killer, like dioxin, to destroy all forms of vegetation. Monsanto promoted Roundup as an ‘eco-friendly’ herbicide. The company claimed that Roundup was 100 percent biodegradable because the active ingredient, glyphosate, becomes inactive when it touches the soil. As of the 1970s Roundup became the most widely sold herbicide in the world (Robin, 2010: 70). Yet the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) workers discovered that Monsanto had ‘faked’ dozens of studies to conceal deaths and deformities of rats and mice involved in the tests. Monsanto’s Roundup was declared by the EPA to be safe when it had never been shown to be (Robin, 2010: 72).

Independent scientific data on Roundup was not published until the 1990s. Public researchers exposed the negative human health impacts of Roundup. Professor Robert Belle of the Station Biologique de Roscoff in France states that “Roundup affected a key point in cell division—not the mechanisms of cell division itself, but those that control it. … And that’s why we say that Roundup induces the early stages leading to cancer” (Belle quoted in Robin, 2010: 81). Scientists have also discovered that Roundup is an endocrine disruptor and “a killer of embryos” (Robin, 2010: 81).

Monsanto’s success as one of the world’s leading suppliers of herbicide (and its future as a leading international seed company) was facilitated by the 1950s green revolution. The green revolution set the stage for Monsanto to sell its herbicides and seeds in the third world.

*Monsanto and the Green Revolution*

The Green Revolution of the 1950s was a publically-funded project of governments in the North and South, promoted by the World Bank, US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. The aim of the project was to industrialize
agriculture and increase agricultural productivity. The end result was that it managed to hook third world peasants into the capitalist market.

Cleaver (1972) shows that the green revolution represented a capitalist counter-initiative to decompose the 1950s and 1960s independence struggles in the third world. Cleaver explains how the green revolution sought to incorporate third world peasants into capitalist agriculture and export production:

“[I]f increased food production has been the principal thrust of the [green revolution] strategy it has not been the only one. Closely tied to the effort to increase output has been the transformation of agrarian social and economic relations by integrating once isolated areas or farmers into the capitalist market system. This “modernization” of the countryside, which has been an important part of so-called nation-building throughout the postwar period, has been facilitated by the dependency of the new technology on manufactured inputs. The peasant who adopts the new seeds must buy the necessary complementary inputs on the market. In order to buy these inputs he must sell part of his crop for cash. Thus the international team widens the proportion of peasant producers tied into the national (and sometimes international) market as it succeeds in pushing the new technology into the hands of subsistence farmers. Obviously in the case of commercial producers, adoption only reinforces existing ties to the market” (Cleaver, 1972: 5).

By the 1970s and 1980s the new technologies, especially the chemical inputs, were supplied largely by Monsanto. In 1990 Monsanto began persuading governments and farmers to accept hybrid and GMO seeds.

The history of Monsanto’s foray into the global seed business begins in Mexico City at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT, Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maiz y Trigo). Funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, the CIMMYT scientists developed hybrid seeds that were used in the green revolution project. The proponents of the green revolution including the World Bank, the US Agency for International Development and the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations convinced third world governments that the CIMMYT
seeds (of which there were two types, wheat and rice) would increase yields and ‘feed the world’s hungry’ (Robin, 2010: 308). According to the capitalists these were ‘miracle seeds.’

The seeds were part of a green revolution ‘technology package’ which also included petroleum-based fertilizers and farm machinery. The green revolution techniques successfully increased yields. However these yields were temporary and the nutritional value of the monoculture crops decreased (AGRA Watch, 2011). But yield increases also came at the further expense of biological diversity and resulted in community violence (more below). The CIMMYT seeds demanded more intensive use of resources, especially water and fossil fuels (Shiva, 1991).

The CIMMYT scientists and corporate allies spread the ‘miracle seeds’ around the world. Third world governments, led by India, bought CIMMYT seeds and sent technicians to be trained at the Centre in Mexico. In the 1960s India’s government under Indira Gandhi bought eighteen thousand tons of the high-yielding seeds from Mexico, representing the largest transfer of seeds in history (Robin, 2010: 309).

Green revolution governments distributed the commodified seed and chemical packages to farmers. Governments encouraged farmers to abandon their local varieties. By the 1990s commodified seeds had begun to replace peasants’ saved seed varieties throughout the world.

The Indian government introduced the hybrid seeds amongst farmers in Punjab and Haryana with devastating effects. Although yields increased, the green revolution intensified inequalities and violence within regions that had been directly affected by it:

“We are always told that the green revolution produces more food but it does not. It produces more rice and wheat. But it destroyed our [India’s] pulses, it destroyed our oil seeds, it destroyed all the multiple sources of food, it has left farmers in debt. In the early phases, when farmers were angry, they took to guns and we have the violence of Punjab” (Shiva, 2009).
The 1950s and 1960s green revolution laid the groundwork for the 1990s ‘gene revolution.’ The gene revolution was designed to establish Monsanto’s biotechnology value chain. Below I discuss Monsanto’s value chain and the consequences for humanity and the earth.

*Monsanto’s ‘Gene Revolution’*

In 1982 Monsanto’s scientists became the first to genetically modify a plant cell. Genetic modification is the combining of genetic material in the laboratory between species that do not interbreed in nature. Conventional plant breeding, in contrast, can only transfer genes within the same or closely related species consistent with what might naturally occur.

Genetically modified (GM) (also referred to as ‘genetically engineered’) seeds are different than the ‘miracle seeds’ of the green revolution in two ways. First, the technology packages of the green revolution were physically divisible as seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. With the genetically modified seeds ‘the whole technology is packaged into the seed’ (Qaim, 2001: 3065). Monsanto and other biotechnology (hereafter referred to as biotech) companies engineered seeds to be both a pesticide and a herbicide.

In the 1990s Monsanto and other biotech companies promoted GM technology as the means by which governments and farmers could address the failings of the first green revolution. Monsanto argued that ‘gene’ revolution technologies would increase yields while decreasing pesticide and fertilizer use. The biotech companies and GM proponents argued that the GM seeds were more ‘cost-effective’ than the green revolution varieties (Kumbamu, 2006: 17).

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11 Biotechnology is a broad category encompassing a range of procedures for modifying or engineering living organisms.
Table 3

What is genetic modification?

Traditional plant breeding, what is known as the Mendelian technique, is the crossing of sexually compatible species to produce hybrid plant varieties that possess desired genetic traits. Genetic engineering, the process undertaken to genetically modify plants, uses a very different method. Genetic engineering allows breeders to insert specific genetic traits into a target hybrid; traits drawn from genetically foreign and sexually incompatible species, including other plants or even animals or fish. Genetic engineering recombines genetic material in the laboratory between species that do not interbreed in nature.

The products of genetic engineering are genetically modified organisms (GMOs). GMOs are significantly different than conventionally bred hybrid seeds and crops. Monsanto has developed two main types of genetically engineered crops: herbicide-tolerant (genetically engineered to withstand applications of Roundup, Monsanto’s most popular herbicide) and insect-resistant (varieties engineered so that a toxin normally produced by a naturally occurring bacteria, (Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)) is produced by the plant itself, killing a wide array of insects upon ingestion). As of 2008 one hundred percent of the world acreage planted with commercial GM crops have one or both of these two traits (herbicide-tolerance and insect-resistance).


The second way in which GM seeds are different from green revolution seeds is that GM seeds are “subdued to a system of ‘intellectual property’ rights (IPRs), which by law — though not necessarily in reality — convert such seeds into non-renewable production inputs that require them to be re-purchased by farmers every year” (International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture, 2006: 9).

Shiva defines the ‘gene’ revolution as a for profit project led by Monsanto to impose its patent (intellectual property) law around the world. Shiva, in defining ‘patents’ states that:

12 Intellectual property refers to creations of the mind that individuals or corporations can claim exclusive ownership over or ‘patent.’
“‘The patenting of life is a continuation of the first colonization. ... The word patent itself comes from the age of conquest. ‘Letters patent’ was the name given to an official public document — in Latin, patens mean ‘open’ or ‘obvious’ — bearing the seal of European sovereigns [and] granting to adventurers and pirates the exclusive right to conquer foreign countries in their name. At the time Europe was colonizing the world, letters patent were directed at territorial conquest, whereas today’s patents are aimed at economic conquest through the appropriation of living organisms by the new sovereigns, the multinational corporations like Monsanto’” (Shiva quoted in Robin, 2010: 312).

The history of Monsanto’s gene revolution begins in the United States in 1986. In June 1986 Monsanto and a host of other multinational corporations (MNCs) formed the Intellectual Property Committee (IPC) to establish a patent law on intellectual property. The IPC brought together thirteen multinational corporations from the chemical, pharmaceutical, and computer industries including Bristol-Myers, DuPont, FMC Corporation, General Electric, General Motors, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Johnson and Johnson, Merck, Pfizer, Rockwell International, Warner Communications, and Monsanto (Robin, 2010: 314).

The IPC’s intention was to “extend to the rest of the world the patent system that already existed in the industrialized countries, which all told, through the offices in Washington, Munich and Tokyo, registered 97 percent of the patents filed by companies (the vast majority from the North)” (Robin, 2010: 314–315). The companies argued that “‘disparities among systems for the protection of intellectual property result in excessive loss of time and resources in the acquisition of those rights’” (IPC quoted in Robin, 2010: 314–315).

In June 1988 the IPC worked with the Union of Industrial and Employers’ Confederations of Europe (UNICE, the “official organ of the European business world”) and Keidanren, the Japanese employers’ confederation. These capitalists in Europe, Japan and the IPC drafted a document that would form the basis of the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property

The GATT is an international organization put in place by major capitalist powers in 1947 to facilitate corporate globalization by lowering customs duties to international trade (Robin, 2010: 313). In 1994–95 in Marrakesh, Morocco 123 member governments signed the Uruguay Round\(^{13}\) of the GATT negotiations, ratifying the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and initiating the TRIPS agreement.

Before governments signed onto the TRIPS in 1994–95 living organisms had never been treated as a subject of patents. The corporations in the Intellectual Property Committee, the European and Japanese industrial capitalists and governments of the North and South facilitated the enclosure of seeds. They enforced intellectual property rights through the WTO in member countries’ national law. This was a male deal between capitalists and world governments that set up global corporate sovereignty that threatened to eliminate people’s food sovereignty. It is a male deal because the dealers aimed to enclose and exploit nature and labour power. Food sovereignty, as defined in detail below, refers to popular control over all links on the agri-food value chain.

Robin quotes the Chairman of the Forum for Biotechnology and Food Security in India, Devinder Sharma, explaining that:

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\(^{13}\) The Uruguay Round implemented four agreements: the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement, the Agreement on Agriculture, (AoA) the Trade Related Investment Measures, (TRIMS) and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).
“With the TRIPS agreement, every country has to follow the model of the United States [Patent Office] or else suffer severe commercial penalties, because the WTO has absolutely extraordinary powers of coercion and reprisal. That means that if a country doesn’t enforce respect for Monsanto’s intellectual property rights, for example, on a patented seed, the company will inform the American government, which will file a complaint with the WTO Dispute Settlement Body” (Sharma in Robin, 2010: 317).

Monsanto ushered in global political economy transformations through GMOs and patented seeds.

As stated above by Shiva, the TRIPS agreement allowed biotech companies to colonize the third world’s genetic resources. Shiva calls this theft ‘biopiracy.’ According Devinder Sharma TRIPS was “designed by multinational corporations to seize the genetic resources of the planet, chiefly in Third World countries, which have the greatest biodiversity. India is a particular target, because it is a mega-diverse country where there are 45,000 plant species and 81,000 animal species” (Sharma in Robin, 2010: 317).

In June 1990 a Monsanto representative, reflecting on Monsanto’s successful effort to, in effect, institutionalize biopiracy, stated that:

“Once created, the first task of the IPC was to repeat the missionary work we did in the US in the early days, this time with the industrial associations of Europe and Japan, to convince them that a code was possible.... It was not an easy task but our Trilateral Group was able to distil from the laws of the more advanced countries the fundamental principles for protecting all forms of intellectual property.... The industries and traders of the [sic] world commerce have played simultaneously the role of the patients, the diagnosticians, and the prescribing physicians’” (James R Enyart quoted in Robin, 2010: 315).

The TRIPS male deal involving Monsanto, other capitalists and governments in the North and South made it possible for Monsanto to set up its value chain throughout the world. It did so by creating a system of intellectual property rights (TRIPS agreement). The TRIPS agreement
required that all 132 (as of 1996) member governments create and enforce a national legal system of patent rights on living organisms. WTO member governments were legally obligated to comply with the rules and regulations stipulated in the TRIPS agreement. Monsanto required the patent law in order to profit from and control seeds.

According to Shiva, “the only way corporations can get intellectual property is by modifying and mutilating seeds through genetic engineering. So we have a double hazard. The hazard of genetic engineering and the hazard of patenting” (Shiva, 2009a).

Below I highlight six hazards or consequences of Monsanto’s genetic engineering and patents on seeds. The hazards relate to all of humanity. Yet women and peasants in the third world are under particular threat because of the hierarchy of labour power and because their livelihoods depend upon access to the commons.

(1) Patents restrict farmers’ access to and control over seeds. At the behest of the WTO, member governments have applied the intellectual property rights framework to national policy. For example, in 1997 in India, the central government amended the Patent Act to omit the word ‘plants’ from the list of resources and processes that could not be patented. The 1997 amendment allowed genetic modification of a plant to be counted as an invention and therefore be worthy of patent rights (Shiva, 2004: 719).

Furthermore, under the TRIPS agreement governments only guarantee the rights over seeds to the breeder which “in today’s context is increasingly ‘the company’” (Sahai, 2004: 60). For example, as of 2011 in India, various state governments were signing memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with seed corporations. The state governments were under pressure from the WTO and the central government of India to stop the free exchange of seed amongst
farmers. The government of Rajasthan had signed seven MoUs with Monsanto and other biotechnology companies (Shiva, 2011).

These laws define seed saving as intellectual property theft. Intellectual property rights have made it illegal for farmers to save and exchange seeds. Within India and many other countries, women have for centuries been the main custodians and breeders of seeds and crops. Women’s access to seeds ensures that they can provide adequate amounts of healthy food for their families. Patents on seeds restrict women’s access to and control over seeds and undermine household food security (Sahai, 2004: 60). According to Shiva, “changes in property rights to natural resources — land, water and biodiversity (including seeds) on which agricultural production rests is leading to deepening hunger and poverty in India” (Shiva, 2004: 716).

Farmers in the global North are also threatened by Monsanto’s patents. In the United States for example, farmers are forced to sign Monsanto’s Technology Use Agreement which requires that farmers do not save and replant Monsanto’s patented technology. Technology Use Agreements have been used by Monsanto since the late 1990s to take legal action against farmers who have found Monsanto’s technology in their fields without having planted it themselves. Neighbouring farmers’ fields had been contaminated by wind or other natural causes. The technology agreement can be used to investigate farmers’ fields (and the fields of their neighbours) without their consent and then prosecute the unwitting farmer (Centre for Food Safety, 2005: 17).

A particular threat to farmers in the global North and South is Monsanto’s ‘terminator technology.’ ‘Terminator’ refers to a technique in plant genetic engineering wherein seeds are bred to be sterile after the first use. In March 1998 Delta and Pine Land Seed Company and the
US Department of Agriculture developed the terminator technique, known as a ‘Technology Protection System’ or TPS (Anbarasan, 1999). In 2007 Monsanto acquired Delta and Pine Land and the terminator technology. Under intense pressure from social movements and even other capitalists including the Rockefeller Foundation and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, (CGIAR) Monsanto agreed not to commercialize the technology (Robin, 2010: 197).

The terminator technology would have been a major gain for Monsanto and other biotech corporations because the technology allows companies to ensure that their seeds are repurchased every year. Terminator seeds are a major threat to farmers’ autonomy and to the earth’s biodiversity. Robin quotes Pat Mooney stating that:

“you understand this [terminator] technique was a direct threat to food security, especially in developing countries where more than 1.5 billion people survive by saving seeds. Imagine that Terminator plants cross-breed with neighbouring crops and make the seeds gathered by peasants sterile. It would be a catastrophe for them, but also for the biodiversity they maintain, precisely because they continue to replant every year local varieties adapted to their climate and their soil’” (Mooney in Robin, 2010: 196–97).

(2) A second hazard of Monsanto’s value chain is that GM varieties contaminate conventional and organic crops. Contamination takes place when the wind, bees and other natural systems carry pollen and seed from one field to the next. Non-GM varieties can also be contaminated during transport and handling in human systems. Governments have been forced to develop biosafety\(^\text{14}\) regulations to prevent contamination. For example, in most countries where GMOs are legalized, farmers growing GM crops are mandated by law to establish

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\(^{14}\) Biosafety in agriculture refers to the protection of ecological and human health. Biosafety measures are meant to reduce the risk of contamination from genetically modified genes.
thresholds (areas of non-GM crop land that surround and ‘buffer’ the GM crop). These are only short-term measures that are considered ineffective (Meikle, 1999).

In 2000 nearly 25,000 acres of European rapeseed (canola) and maize were discovered to be contaminated with GM varieties that had not been approved by the government for cultivation (Friends of the Earth, 2004). In 2001 a food aid shipment to Bolivia that originated in the US was found to contain GM corn despite the fact that Bolivia had a moratorium on GMOs (Friends of the Earth, 2004). In the United States, where more than half of the world’s GM crop acreage is grown, widespread contamination of conventional and organic crops by GM varieties is threatening the organic food industry without legal recourse.

Contamination of conventional and organic crops has occurred globally. According to Carey Gillam, in 2007 alone there were 39 cases of crop contamination in 23 countries. Since 1997 there have been more than 200 cases of contamination in 57 countries (Gillam, 2008). The high likelihood of contamination of non-GM crops by GM varieties means that even those farmers who reject GM crops and do not buy GM seeds, are at risk of being drawn into Monsanto’s value chain. GMO contamination violates the rights of consumers to have access to non-GM and organic foods.

Farmers who find that their fields have been contaminated by GMOs are forced to forfeit their season’s crop. In effect, Monsanto expropriates farmers’ land. One example of the negative impact of contamination on farmers is illustrated by the famous case of Percy Schmeiser from Saskatchewan, Canada.

In 1997 Monsanto took Schmeiser to court for infringing the company’s patent law. Rapeseed had blown into Schmeiser’s field from a truck or a nearby farm and contaminated the
seeds that he had been saving and reusing for decades (Robin, 2010: 216). Monsanto accused Schmeiser of growing GM rapeseed without having rights to the technology. Yet Monsanto was responsible for irreparably destroying Schmeisers’ crops and seeds. Monsanto’s contamination separated Schmeiser from his means of making a living.

The outcome of the court case was that Schmeiser did not have to pay Monsanto legal damages. Schmeiser was nevertheless found guilty because he ‘knew or ought to have known’ that the seeds were Monsanto’s Roundup ready variety. The famous court case established a legal precedent that farmers were responsible for GM contamination in their fields (Robin, 2010: 216).

(3) A third hazard of Monsanto’s value chain is that GM seeds require expensive inputs and do not raise yields. The 2009 Union of Concerned Scientists’ Failure to Yield (2009) report arrived at the conclusion that GMO crops have produced no reliable increase in yields over equivalent non-GM crops. The Union of Concerned Scientists analyzed over two decades of peer reviewed research on the yield of GM crops in the United States. This report draws attention to intrinsic or potential yield (the amount that crops can produce under ideal circumstances) and operational yield (the amount that crops can produce after other environmental stresses reduce the potential yield). Gurian-Sherman states that:

“the two major types of traits now present in transgenic crops—insect resistance and herbicide tolerance—are often classic contributors to operational yield. Neither trait would be expected to enhance potential or intrinsic yield, and indeed there is virtually no evidence that they have done so. Thus commercial GE crops have made no inroads so far into raising the intrinsic or potential yield of any crop. By contrast, traditional breeding has been spectacularly successful in this regard; it can be solely credited with the intrinsic-yield increases in the United States and other parts of the world that characterized the agriculture of the twentieth century” (Gurian-Sherman, 2009: 15).
In effect, after 13 years of commercial cultivation and billions of (public and private) dollars in research, Monsanto’s GM crops fail to produce any yield increases. This evidence stands in direct opposition to what Monsanto itself promotes. On its website (2009) Monsanto states that:

“In agriculture, desirable crop characteristics are known as traits. One of the most important traits is yield. Improving yield can be accomplished through both breeding and biotechnology. GM crops generally have higher yields due to both breeding and biotechnology” (Monsanto, 2009).

The Monsanto has not delivered on its ‘gene revolution’ promises. Rather, the gene revolution promotes, according to Shiva, “an agriculture based on war that sells war chemicals to farmers, that sells genetically modified, patented seeds to farmers, [that gets] farmers into debt and either they leave the land and become refugees and migrants or they end their lives” (Shiva, 2009a).

Between 1998 when Monsanto began selling GM cotton in India, and 2009, over 20,000 farmers have committed suicide. The majority of farmers committing suicide were in the GM cotton producing areas. According to Shiva, the majority of the farmers committing suicide were in debt because of the high cost of the pesticides and seeds and the low yield performance of Monsanto’s technology (Shiva, 2009a).

(4) The fourth hazard of Monsanto’s value chain is that GMOs facilitate the world-wide trend toward fewer and bigger industrial farms. Industrial farming is based on monocultures. Industrial farming erodes biodiversity because it focuses on increasing yields of only a limited number of plant varieties. Furthermore, GM crops allow larger, wealthier farmers to cultivate more acres with less labour. Jorge Galeano, small-scale farmer from Argentina (2007) underlined the labour intensive nature of family farming. Galeano stated that “family farming the way we do it provides work for five people on every two acres cultivated, while RR

(5) The fifth hazard of Monsanto’s value chain is that GM seeds require heavy doses of Monsanto’s herbicide Roundup. GM crops lock farmers into a ‘pesticide treadmill.’ Farmers must constantly increase their use of pesticides to control pests that develop new resistances to the chemicals that are used in the first place to prevent infestations (Patel et al. 2005: 2–3). According to Villar and Freeze “Herbicide-tolerant [GM] crops are designed to permit ‘over-the-top’ application of chemical weed killers without killing the crop itself. HT [herbicide tolerant] crops allow farmers to spray a particular herbicide more frequently and indiscriminately without fear of damaging the crop” (Villar and Freese, 2008: 4).

For example, between 1994 and 2005 in the US the widespread cultivation of GM crops led to a 15 fold increase in the use of Monsanto’s Roundup Ready chemicals (Lopez Villar and Freese, 2008: 4). Between 2003 and 2006 in Parana, Brazil, the Brazilian Department of Agricultural Research Service found a 97 percent increase in Monsanto’s glyphosate residue in soybeans harvested in the state (Kenfield, 2008).

Roundup is highly toxic to human bodies and the environment. Studies conducted by scientists in Argentina in the mid 2000s have found that residents near GM soya producing areas in Argentina have higher rates of birth defects and cancers than people living elsewhere in Argentina. A medical doctor, Rodolfo Páramo, discovered that Roundup Ready causes birth defects. The scientist found that “in the northern farming province of Santa Fé, Páramo reported 12 malformations per 250 births, well above the normal rate” (Webber and Weitzman, 2009).
(6) The sixth hazard of Monsanto’s value chain is that GM foods have not been shown to be safe for human consumption. In a 2009 review of animal toxicity studies with certain GM foods, the authors, Artemis and Arvanitoyannis, conclude that:

“The results of most of the rather few studies conducted with GM foods indicate that they may cause hepatic, pancreatic, renal, and reproductive effects and may alter hematological, biochemical, and immunologic parameters the significance of which remains unknown. The above results indicate that many GM food have some common toxic effects. Therefore, further studies should be conducted in order to elucidate the mechanism dominating this action. Small amounts of ingested DNA may not be broken down under digestive processes and there is a possibility that this DNA may either enter the bloodstream or be excreted, especially in individuals with abnormal digestion as a result of chronic gastrointestinal disease or with immunodeficiency” (Artemis and Arvanitoyannis, 2009: 172).

GM foods have been shown to be particularly dangerous for pregnant women and children. According to Jeffery Smith, (2007) scientists have found that female rats fed GM soy had high rates of failed pregnancies, compared to 10 percent failed pregnancies among rats fed non-GM soy (Smith, 2007). This is a very important finding that raises the alarm on the high risks of this GMO experiment and the threats it poses to human life.

In sum, Monsanto, other capitalists including the industrial associations from Europe and Japan and the WTO member governments facilitated the globalization of Monsanto’s value chain. These parties enforced a global legal system for intellectual property, the TRIPS agreement. The TRIPS allowed biotech companies to privatize seeds. I characterize this as a male deal.

In the 1995, once the TRIPS legal framework was in place, Monsanto used the TRIPS to globalize its value chain. There are three ways in which Monsanto established and globalized its GMO value chain. (1) In the early 1990s Monsanto began marketing and selling its GMOs to
farmers. It did so successfully in the US, Canada, Argentina and China. As of 2002 these four
countries alone grew 100 percent of Monsanto’s crops (ETC Group, 2007).

(2) Beginning in the mid 1990s, Monsanto globalized its value chain by lobbying
governments around the world to create a regulatory environment that would be friendly to
GMOs. In the case study chapters to come I provide more detail on Monsanto’s lobbying which
often amounted to manipulation of public officials and backroom deals. (3) Starting in 1995,
Monsanto bought up other seed companies and began forming subsidiaries in countries around
the world. I deal with this in more detail in chapter five. These three moves plus the TRIPS male
deal made it possible for Monsanto to accumulate power and profits from seeds.

Above I outlined six ways in which Monsanto’s GM value chain represents a particular
threat to farmers in the third world and especially to women amongst them. Monsanto’s patents
and GMOs (1) undermine food security and prevent women, being the main household food
producers, from having access to the requisite materials to feed their families; (2) contaminate
non-GM crops (in effect, expropriating land from farmers); (3) place farmers in debt from the
high cost of pesticides and low yields with the result that many farmers in India have
committed suicide; (4) promote farming that decreases available employment in a community;
(5) require large amounts of toxic chemicals that damage the land and harm human bodies and;
(6) have been shown to be highly toxic for the environment and human bodies (especially
women’s bodies).

Monsanto’s value chain represents a war on subsistence and a war on women (Mies and
Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999: 5). All of humanity is impacted by Monsanto’s chemicals and the
industrial farming techniques that threaten biodiversity and farmer-centred food production.
Women’s bodies are especially at risk from Monsanto’s chemicals and genetically engineered
food. The Monsanto-authored intellectual property rights system undermines third world women’s seed systems and facilitates the housewifization and enclosure of women’s labour and bodies. As I indicate below, these same women who are being pushed out of agriculture and who are being forced to reproduce labour power (bearing and feeding children) for agribusiness and capitalist firms are prominent in the struggle to globalize resistance and commoning alternatives.

I now turn to an analysis of La Via Campesina’s formation and its fight to establish a commoners’ value chain.

SECTION TWO: LA VIA CAMPESINA’S COMMONERS’ VALUE CHAIN AND RESISTANCE TO THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

La Via Campesina is considered by many observers to be the most important transnational social movement in the world (McMichael 2006, Patel 2005, Martinez-Torres and Rosset 2010). La Via Campesina (the ‘peasant way’) is a global movement of men and women, small scale farmers, peasants, fisherfolk, artisanal producers, landless and migrant workers and indigenous peoples. This movement has come together to stop corporate globalization in agriculture and to promote commoning alternatives.

La Via Campesina emerged in 1993–94 at the same time as governments in the global North and South signed into force the Agreement on Agriculture and the TRIPS agreement. The 1990s corporate globalization accelerated the commodification of food and agriculture. It undermined institutions that had once supported peasant and family farmers. The World Trade Organization’s agreements as well as other neoliberal policies, worsened conditions for
peasants in countrysides throughout the world. Yet, as Martinez-Torres and Rosset (2010) point out, one of the consequences of corporate globalization has been that:

“class or cultural differences are no longer the barrier they once were for transnational collective action. In fact, rural organisations and peasantry around the world share the same global problems even though they confront different local and national realities. They have globalised their struggles from below, by forming La Via Campesina” (Martinez-Torres and Rosset, 2010: 150).

According to Bove La Via Campesina has created a “Farmers’ International, a living example of a new relationship between North and South” (Bove, 2001: 96). Below I provide an overview of this Farmers’ International and an analysis of the ways in which La Via Campesina farmers are impelled by Monsanto and other agribusiness capitalists to be for themselves.

This section is divided into two parts. The first part provides a history of La Via Campesina. The second part analyzes the alternatives it puts forward, highlighting the ways in which La Via Campesina has transcended the hierarchy of labour power.

Part One: La Via Campesina Globalizes the Struggle

Before La Via Campesina emerged in the mid 1990s many other groups struggled against Monsanto. Below I provide a brief discussion of two of La Via Campesina’s antecedents.

In the 1960s social movements and scientists in the US successfully got the US government to ban the commercial use of Monsanto’s DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane). As stated above, DDT was used by Monsanto and other agri-chemical corporations until the 1960s in the production of insecticides and pesticides. Marine biologist Rachel Carson was deeply engaged in this battle. In 1962 Carson published Silent Spring in which she exposed the environmental and human health side effects associated with DDT.
Carson branded Monsanto ‘public enemy number one’ by linking its products with environmental toxicity. Moments before Silent Spring was published, Monsanto and the organizations that Monsanto belonged to (including the National Agricultural Chemical Association) tried unsuccessfully to intimidate Carson’s publisher. Patel, Torres and Rosset (2005) outlined the impact Carson’s publication had on Monsanto:

“[Silent Spring] has arguably been one of the most important books for drawing attention to the environmental effects of agricultural chemicals. Its success is illustrated by a strategic move that Monsanto made just two years later: Monsanto Chemical Company changed its name to Monsanto Company. This change of name did not, however, result in a substantive change in Monsanto’s operations. Monsanto continued to produce some of the most toxic chemicals known, such as Agent Orange, PCBs, [Polychlorinated biphenyls] dioxins, and a wide range of pesticides and herbicides. Monsanto’s invention and reinvention has continued since then, in response to (and in turn constituting) changing political and popular environmental priorities” (Patel et al. 2005: 430).

Carson’s work reverberated globally. Patel, Torres, Rosset and others mark the publication of Silent Spring as the beginning of the environmental movement. Silent Spring was part of a movement of workers composing themselves in order to fight the exploitation of nature and human bodies. Monsanto’s attempt to silence Carson was aimed at decomposing struggle.

A second example of La Via Campesina’s antecedents’ battling Monsanto is the third world peasants’ resistance to the green revolution in the 1950s and 1960s. In the Contradictions of the Green Revolution, Harry Cleaver (1972) explains that peasant resistance had increased in areas affected by the green revolution. Cleaver asks, “will the Green Revolution turn Red?” “Is this growing class of dispossessed going to rise up in socialist revolution?” Cleaver argues that countries which had undertaken green revolution policies had significant levels of peasant rebellion:
“Eric Wolf\textsuperscript{15} has commented on the important role of ‘frontier areas’ in his studies of revolution in Mexico, Vietnam, Algeria, and Cuba. Today we can see this tendency to revolt by neglected or exploited regions within many of the Green Revolution countries: Bangladesh in Pakistan, Assam and West Bengal in India, the North and Northeast in Thailand, the North in Malay, West Irian in Indonesia, Guerrero in Mexico” (Cleaver, 1972: 12).

As outlined above on page 98, the green revolution commodified peasant production and shifted agricultural production from the reproduction of life to the reproduction of corporate profits and systems of control. In the 1970s and 1980s the transformation was further accelerated by the liberalization of agriculture instituted through the World Bank and International Monetary Fund’s budget-cutting structural adjustment programs. The decline in crop and livestock prices resulting from neoliberal policies forced many peasants out of agriculture (Martinez-Torres and Rosset, 2010: 153). Rural communities’ wealth was extracted and transferred to cities and to the shareholders of multinational corporations.

In the 1980s in Latin America, Asia and Africa, many farmers’ organizations were repressed by military governments. Non-revolutionary peasants’ organizations faded away or fundamentally changed as a result of declines in government financial support (Martinez-Torres and Rosset, 2010: 153). According to Martinez-Torres and Rosset, a new generation of peasant organizations emerged in the late 1980s in Latin America to respond to the crises of structural adjustment:

“These new [peasant] organizations, either born from the older ones or founded virtually from scratch (sometimes with former members of armed guerrilla movements in their leadership), were typically founded on principles of autonomy from political parties, government offices, the church, and NGOs. To a greater or lesser extent these new organisations rejected the clientelism and corporatism of their forebears and refused to be subordinated to urban interests. These organisations called for a mixture of restoring improved versions of the state services cut back by

\textsuperscript{15} E. R. Wolf, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, New York, 1969
neoliberalism and structural changes, such as agrarian reform and support for national markets, to favour peasant agriculture. They were, and remain, much more radical than the earlier generation of corporatist organisations, though it would be a gross exaggeration to say that they have eradicated clientelistic behaviours and attitudes, which vary from country to country and organisation to organization” (Martinez-Torres and Rosset, 2010: 153–54).

According to Martinez-Torres and Rosset, both revolutionary and reformist organizations found that “national problems could not be solved by just appealing to, or pressuring, weak national governments” (Martinez-Torres and Rosset, 2010: 154). I now turn to a historical overview of the international coordination of these (reformist and revolutionary) peasant organizations that is La Via Campesina.

In 1993 in Mons, Belgium, La Via Campesina (the ‘peasant way’) was born. It became an independent, peasant-led movement at a meeting with the Dutch non-governmental organization IFAP (International Federation of Agricultural Producers, a global NGO that advocated on behalf of farmers world-wide at World Bank and GATT-WTO meetings). La Via Campesina was formed by farmers’ organizations from Latin America including those from Brazil, (MST, Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra) Mexico, (Asociacion de Organizaciones Campesinas, Association of Peasant Organizations) Canada, (National Farmers Union) and the European Union (Coordination Paysanne Europeenne, European Peasant Coordination).

Peasant and farmer movements created La Via Campesina as an alternative to IFAP. According to Annette Desmarais (2007) IFAP was dominated by Northern farmer organizations that had close ties to Washington and the World Bank. IFAP “accepts the inevitability of the liberalization and globalization of agriculture” and “sees the WTO as a legitimate institution pursuing the legitimate goal of freer trade” (Desmarais, 2007: 105).
At the 1993 Mons meeting, the peasant organizations drafted the ‘Mons declaration’ which “asserted the right of small farmers to make a living in the countryside, the right of all people to healthy food, and the right of nations to define their own agricultural polices” (Desmarais, 2007: 105). Unlike IFAP, mainly composed of agro-industrial farmers from the North, La Via Campesina is mainly composed of small-scale farmers from the global South.

In the 1990s La Via Campesina was comprised of several dozen organizations from Europe and the Americas. By 2009 La Via Campesina had embraced membership from over 150 rural social movements from 79 countries across the globe (including 12 countries in Africa, and dozens of organizations in South and East Asia) (Holt-Giminez, 2009: 143). La Via Campesina has grown along-side and against the growth in the concentration of agri-business corporations.

Desmarais (2007) explains that:

“La Via Campesina emerged as an anti-corporate, peasant, and farmer-driven international movement as a result of a long history of exchanges between farmers from the North and peasant organizations in the South. In the context of an agricultural economy increasingly globalized through the mechanism of the GATT/WTO, peasant and farm organizations established even more common ground as they identified common interests, consolidated a collective identity as ‘people of the land’, and developed a collective analysis that identified transnational corporations as the enemy” (Desmarais, 2007:75).

Desmarais quotes a La Via Campesina farmer from Canada, Stuart Thiesson, who highlights the ‘common ground’ amongst farmers globally. The ‘exchanges’ Thiesson refers to are meant to build unity and solidarity amongst farmers from the global North and South and are a common practice amongst La Via Campesina organizations:

“the thing that maybe tied you [farmers] together, or the commonality of it, was the role of the multinational corporations in all of these areas…. Being able to bring back the experiences [of coming together in international exchanges] and have people understand the role of the multinationals was an important aspect of those exchanges because it
didn’t matter whether you were a peasant or whether you had a 1,600-acre farm, the multinationals had their influence in terms of your business. And now, of course, the encroachment of multinationals in terms of farmers is getting closer to home all the time” (Thiesson quoted in Desmarais, 2007: 82).

João Pedro Stedile of the Brazilian landless workers’ movement, MST extends this point by arguing that corporations have brought together individual organizations to form a global movement:

“as the reality of neoliberal internationalization has been imposed on us, we’ve begun to hear stories from farmers in the Philippines, Malaysia, South Africa, Mexico, France, all facing the same problems — and the same exploiters. The Indians are up against Monsanto, just as we are in Brazil, and Mexico, and France. It’s the same handful of companies — seven groups, in total, worldwide — that monopolize agricultural trade, and control research and biotechnology, and are tightening their ownership of the planet’s seeds. The new phase of capitalism has itself created the conditions for farmers to unite against the neoliberal model” (Setdile 2002 quoted in Desmarais, 2007: 74–75).

This study probes how ‘capitalism itself has created the conditions for farmers to unite against the neoliberal model.’

La Via Campesina and its alternative paradigm appeared for the first time on the world stage in the mid 1990s to oppose the WTO and corporate globalization. The statement by La Via Campesina below outlines the movement’s position on the WTO and capitalist agriculture. The testimonial underlines the reality that farmers are coming together in order to stop the enclosure of local and global food and agriculture systems. The statement also outlines how the agri-business value chain is a threat to farmers’ livelihood and autonomy:

“Neo-liberal agricultural policies have led to the destruction of our family farm economies and to a profound crisis in our societies and threatened the very coherence of our societies: the right to produce our food for our own consumers, with great diversity in production and consumption according to cultural preferences. This touches our very identities as citizens of this world. The clearest example of the violation of our identity is the fact that TNCs are imposing genetically engineered
food. In a recent [as of 1999] move the US and the EU tried to bring the discussion on biosafety and GMOs — in essence, whether we have the right to protect ourselves against the importation of GMO products — in the WTO through a ‘Biotechnology working group.’ We consider this a scandalous and provocative violation of our rights as citizens. Via Campesina rejects the neo-liberal policies that push countries into cash export production at the expense of domestic food production. These policies contribute to low commodity prices, far lower than the real costs of production. Developing countries are forced to adopt these policies in order to pay their external debt. These countries must also open their borders to the importation of food which leads to even greater debt. The governments of the rich countries are giving massive subsidies without limit per farm in order to compensate [for] price cuts and allow the TNCs to buy cheaply. This way these public funds are a direct support for industry and not for farmers. This is a vicious circle which benefits only the TNCs. There is no doubt that the WTO is an instrument that places greater control and profits in the hands of the TNCs. The WTO is a totally inappropriate institution for democratic decision-making and policy formulation on important issues such as food sovereignty, health and environmental legislation, management of genetic resources, water, forestry and land, and the organization of agricultural markets” (La Via Campesina, 1999 in Desmarais, 2007: 107–08).

La Via Campesina is the most prominent opponent of Monsanto and the WTO. It is global and millions strong. Below I provide a gendered, ethnicized class analysis of La Via Campesina’s alternatives. In so doing, I suggest that La Via Campesina’s alternatives signal a move toward the exercise of power by farmers and their allies as part of a global class for themselves.

**Part Two: Food Sovereignty: La Via Campesina’s Ecofeminist Commoners’ Value Chain**

La Via Campesina’s aims and interests are, by and large, to end corporate control in agriculture and replace it with commoning alternatives. Increased democratic control over food means increased democratic control over life and the ability to end the corporate enclosure and exploitation of life. Compared to non-food producing segments of the working class in the
global North, specific women and men peasants from the global South still have much of the commons under their control.

Women are the world’s main food producers and reproducers of people. Many men are still predominantly involved in male deals that fail to serve either themselves or their families. Women have consistently demonstrated their commitment to family-centred, life sustaining, commoning practices. Women and men farmers in the third world occupy a strategic position within La Via Campesina as the primary producers of the world’s food and capitalists’ main commodity — labour power.

Below I demonstrate that the actions taken by La Via Campesina women and men from the first and third world, reflect an understanding amongst Via Campesina organizers that control over food requires unity across gendered and ethnicized divisions to actively break up corporate power and build alternatives.

La Via Campesina takes a revolutionary approach in its battle against the WTO. La Via Campesina does not advocate reforming the WTO because the WTO’s very purpose, practices, and policies are fundamentally against ‘the peasant way.’ The Via Campesina insists that agriculture and food should be taken out of the WTO, or as they said “let’s take the WTO out of agriculture” (Desmarais, 2007: 108–09). The peasant way is revolutionary in so far as it rejects the capitalist food system and seeks to replace it with a food system that puts third world farmers, especially women amongst them, at the centre of decision making around food and agriculture.

Food sovereignty is at the heart of La Via Campesina’s alternative to the WTO and Monsanto. The concept is a driving force for action. The concept emerged out of the 1996 United
Nations (UN) Rome Food Summit. La Via Campesina recognized that food security as defined by the UN did not address issues related to control over food. For the UN and the World Bank, a country is food secure when it has enough foreign exchange to purchase food on the international market. Food security defined in this way allows governments and international institutions to enforce foreign exchange earning activities on workers, including industrial, cash-crop agriculture.

For La Via Campesina, food sovereignty prioritizes democracy. La Via Campesina is concerned with who makes the decision around food, what food is produced, how much food is produced, and at what scale. La Via Campesina promotes food sovereignty as a guarantee of food security, in its honest meaning as food production that promotes life for all. Peter Rosset (2006) argues that “if the population of a country must depend for their next meal on the vagaries of the global economy, on the goodwill of a superpower not to use food as a weapon, on the unpredictability and high cost of long-distance shipping, then that country is not secure; neither in the sense of national security nor in the sense of food security” (Rosset 2, 2006: 6).

In 2007 over five hundred women, men and youth representatives from farmer organizations from 79 countries met in Selingue, Mali to further develop the food sovereignty framework as an anti-capitalist alternative. The outcome of this meeting was the Nyeleni Declaration which defined food sovereignty as:

“the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national
economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal fishing, pastoralist led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just income to all peoples and the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage our lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes and generations” (Via Campesina, 2007).

In the Nyeleni Declaration, La Via Campesina outlines a fundamental form of commoning as an alternative to capitalist agriculture. This quotation exposes key elements of food sovereignty. Food sovereignty includes prioritizing producer-centred decision making, defending the environment, planning for future generations, prioritizing local and national food production and consumption, creating just trade relations, redistributing wealth and [collectively] owning the means of production.

In the face of hierarchy and division, one of the main objectives of the many millions of people organized in La Via Campesina is to build another world with social relations free of social classes. In effect, La Via Campesina seek to become part of a class for itself as opposed to for the capitalists en route to eliminating the class relation.

There were and are strong and assertive ecofeminist tendencies within La Via Campesina. Within this most global of movements, women from the first and third world are central as both analysts and the focus of the analysis of power relations and ways forward.

Desmarais notes a key position taken by La Via Campesina to centralize the commoning practices of rural women:

“if globalization has now become the essential framework of ‘development’ as we know it, and if three quarters of the world’s poor
live in the countryside and depend on agriculture for survival, then we need to consider carefully the demands of rural organizations and their ideas about what is important for development. Furthermore, if rural women are the poorest of the poor living in rural areas then it is also critical to look at how rural women are organizing for change” (Desmarais, 2007: 13).

As of 2011 there were at least four ways in which La Via Campesina was promoting a commoners’ value chain. Their statements and actions in the text below reflect the gendered, ethnicized class alliance which is a key element in this study’s theoretical-methodological framework. The following four initiatives of the women and men in La Via Campesina represent an attempt to transcend the hierarchy of labour power. Their unity contributed to a moving the working class toward becoming a class for itself.

(1) First, La Via Campesina promoted a commoners’ value chain by developing alternative models for an international legal framework to protect farmers’ seed saving and sharing rights. Central to food sovereignty is the democratic control over seeds and other resources necessary to produce food. La Via Campesina rejects patents on seeds and insists on seed sovereignty. Seed sovereignty is defined as farmers’ control over all aspects of the seed including decision making around what seeds to plant, what seeds to save, and who else might receive or be allocated their seed as either food or planting material (Kloppenberg, 2008: 3).

Seed sovereignty means that:

“Farmers are the first and last breeders. Farmers’ rights are collective rights based on collective, cumulative innovation. Farmers have a right to seed and to be free of seed monopolies. Biodiversity must be conserved and protected as a commons. Corporations are liable for seed failure and genetic pollution. ‘The polluter pays’ principle must be applied to genetic contamination of crops and food” (Shiva, 2004: 729).

La Via Campesina farmers recognize that patents trap poor farmers in a cycle of debt to corporations that own seed patents. Patents undermine small farmers’ autonomy and restrict
their age-old practice of saving and sharing seeds. The farmers claim that Monsanto and GM technology threatens biodiversity and native seed varieties and violates the rights of food buyers and small farmers by contaminating conventional and organic crops.

In contrast to Monsanto’s contamination agenda, La Via Campesina women and men are fighting for seed sovereignty because it allows peasants to prioritize the seed as a commons. As mentioned above on page 106, the selection, preservation and maintenance, as well as the development and passing on of seed stock has been, and is still today, the domain of women in most rural communities (Shiva, 1989: 120).

According to Bina Agarwal’s (1994) analysis of rural South Asia, any significant improvement in women’s economic and social situation is crucially tied to their having independent land rights (Agarwal, 1994: 1455). Women’s seed rights are also essential to women’s lives and their families’ lives. For example, women in India are the main household food producers. Because seeds are the main input for food production, women require control over seeds in order to carry out their life-producing activities.

La Via Campesina emphasizes the centrality of seed saving to women’s livelihoods and autonomy. For example, in 2008 in South Korea, La Via Campesina hosted the Women’s Seed Forum to establish the importance of women peasants in the struggle for food and seed sovereignty, and the importance of seed sovereignty in women’s lives: (La Via Campesina, 2008: 5)

“the ultimate goal of protecting native seeds is to realize food sovereignty and seed sovereignty. It’s not for cultivating cash crops but it’s for realizing the value of women peasants. Also we are going to start from scratch to establish [a] strong basis for it. Its continuous work until we, women peasants, can regain the role of women peasants which is gathering seeds and managing them. We oppose that companies and governments monopolize seeds to use them in a commercial way. We
have to get back our genetic resources which [are] exported abroad and we need to make clear that the right to the seeds belongs to the people. It’s the plan to inform people that the farmers have right to the native seeds gathered by farmers’ hands from the past” (La Via Campesina, 2008: 5).

At the Forum, Pinee Moonkaew of AOP-KAREN (Assembly of the Poor of the Karen community in Northern Thailand) stated that:

“the loss of seeds means the loss of food which burdens women who have responsibilities to look after the food security of a family and community. We can no longer let the states, dominated by supra-state organizations and transnational corporations, determine our way of life. We need to empower small peasants by globalizing our networks to defend our rights on native seeds and resources” (Moonkaew, 2008 quoted in La Via Campesina, 2008).

In March 2011 in Bali, Indonesia La Via Campesina organizations gathered for the Fourth Regular Session of the Governing Body of the United Nations International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (also known as the Seed Treaty). La Via Campesina insisted that the 127 government signatories to the treaty implement farmers’ rights to seeds.

The UN Seed Treaty upholds the WTO’s framework on intellectual property rights for corporations. According to La Via Campesina the Seed Treaty “is legally binding with respect to industrial [intellectual] property rights and the rights of plant breeders, while allowing states to respect Farmers’ Rights. It is a contradictory and ambiguous treaty, which in the final analysis comes down on the side of theft” (La Via Campesina, 2011a).

Women and men farmers of La Via Campesina were in favour of immediately and drastically amending the Seed Treaty to protect and establish farmers’ control over seeds. At the Bali gathering, La Via Campesina organizations drafted the Bali Seed Declaration which affirms that:
“peasant systems for rediscovering, re-valuing, conserving and exchanging seeds, together with local adaptation due to the local selection and reproduction in farmers' fields, maintain and increase the genetic biodiversity that underlies our world food systems and gives us the required capacity and flexibility to address diverse environments, a changing climate and hunger in the world. Our peasant seeds are better adapted to local growing conditions. They also produce more nutritious food, and are highly productive in agroecological [organic, working with nature] farming systems without pesticides or other expensive inputs. But GMOs and hybrids contaminate our seeds and put them in danger of extinction. They replace our seeds in their places of origin and lead to their disappearance. Humanity cannot survive without peasant seeds, yet corporate seeds put their very existence at risk. ... We demand public policies in favour of living, farmers' seed systems, systems that are in our communities and under our control. These public policies should promote reproducible local seeds, but not non-reproducible seeds, like hybrids. They should prohibit monopolies, and favour instead agroecology, access to land and good care of the soil. These policies should also facilitate participative research in farmers' fields and under the control of farmers' organizations, not the control of the industry. We call on our communities to continue to conserve, care for, develop and share our peasant seeds: this is the best form of resistance against theft and the best way to maintain biodiversity” (La Via Campesina, 2011b).

In their rejection of the United Nations and Monsanto-driven framework for intellectual property rights, La Via Campesina affirmed farmers’ rights and women’s seed systems. Patents on seed restrict women’s access to and control over seeds and separate women from their means of production and survival. In effect, this is housewifization. By fighting the WTO and the patent system, La Via Campesina women and men are fighting to end housewifization.

Campesina has made it possible for other social movements to read and circulate the declaration through the many thousands of on-line networks available to the movements.

(2) The second way in which La Via Campesina promoted a commoners’ value chain was by affirming the benefits and encouraging the practice of agroecological (also here referred to as ‘organic’ or ‘ecological’) and small-scale farming. Agroecology is farmer friendly. Ecological farming works with natural systems and prevents farmers from having to purchase (chemical) inputs. Shiva defines ecological farming and explains why such farming methods do not require chemicals:

“an agriculture that’s ecological works with internal inputs that the farm provides, the earth provides. The soil fertility comes from the crops that the earth gave. The pest control comes from the diversity that the earth gave. You do not need to buy anything in the market, the earth is generously saying ‘take everything from me’” (Shiva, 2009a).

Agroecology is crucial for food security. It centralizes peasants’ knowledge and expertise in food production (Holt-Giminez, 2006). Through agroecological farming, women’s century’s old knowledge around seed, nutrition and health is available so that it can be applied, maintained and transferred through generations. Agroecology allows peasants, especially women amongst them, to maintain control over local varieties of seeds and to conserve seeds as a vehicle for transmission of culture, history and resistance.

Agroecological farming is better than industrial monoculture agriculture for farmers because it yields more. According to Shiva, the research centre in Deradun, India “is showing that ecological systems, biodiverse systems can produce two to five times more food per acre than the industrial monocultures” (Shiva, 2009a).
According to Peter Rosset, (1999) the total output of food on small farms is higher than large farms (total output is the sum of everything a small farmer produces: various grains, fruits, vegetables, fodder, animal products and the like). Although Rosset does not specify the exact nature of the farming systems, he does point to elements of agroecological methods including intercropping (the practice of planting one crop in close proximity to another crop) and using natural inputs to manage soil fertility:

“small farmers, especially in the Third World, are much more likely to plant crop mixtures — intercropping — where the empty niche space that would otherwise produce weeds instead is occupied by other crops. They also tend to combine or rotate crops and livestock, with manure serving to replenish soil fertility. Such integrated farming systems produce far more per unit area than do monocultures. Though the yield per unit area of one crop — corn, for example — may be lower on a small farm than on a large monoculture, the total output per unit area, often composed of more than a dozen crops and various animal products, can be far, far higher” (Rosset, 1999: 5).

Small-scale farms that practice ecological methods produce more food and produce food that is more nutritious (Shiva, 2004: 731). Shiva explains that farmers in India have experienced the multiple benefits of small-scale and agroecological food production:

“Amidst the tragedy of farmers’ suicides and hunger deaths induced by policies of globalisation, another agriculture is being born in the country, building on the knowledge and wisdom of an agriculture that has survived over millennia and sustained millions for livelihoods and food. Ecological agriculture and organic farming are transforming the negative economy of high input industrial agriculture into a positive economy based on internal inputs. Direct marketing and fair trade are increasing the incomes of farmers and bringing consumers safe, healthy and affordable food” (Shiva, 2004: 731).

Small-scale, agroecological food production is also better for rural communities. Small-scale farms require far more labor per unit area than larger farms (Rosset, 1999: 7). Small farms are also more likely to purchase goods locally and contribute to local economic development (Giacomini, 2008).
Agroecological and small-scale farming are essential for healthy environments, biodiversity and water conservation. According to Rosset, “small farms embody a diversity of ownership, of cropping systems, of landscapes, of biological organization, culture and traditions. A varied farm structure contributes to biodiversity, a diverse and esthetically pleasing rural landscape, and open space” (Rosset, 1999: 3).

Agroecological farming is also better for human health and safety. According to Shiva, “The industrialized globalised food system is creating food hazards and unhealthy foods. Food safety and food quality requires ecological production, decentralisation and diversity, instead of chemical production, centralization and monocultures” (Shiva, 2004: 730).

In sum, agroecological and small-scale farming and central to the commoners’ value chain. Agroecological farming undermines Monsanto’s GM seed and chemical value chain. Agroecological farming values women’s knowledge and women’s seed systems.

(3) A third way in which La Via Campesina promoted a commoners’ value chain is by forming local and global seed saving and exchange networks. Seed saving and exchange is vital to biodiversity conservation and the continuation of life on earth. According to Jack Kloppenberg, (2008) historically “the sharing of seed resulted in the continuous recombination of genetic material, which in turn produced the agronomic resilience that is characteristic of farmer-developed crop varieties and landraces. This historic creation and recreation of crop diversity not only fed particular communities and peoples but collectively constitutes the genetic foundation on which future world food production must be based” (Kloppenberg, 2008: 3).
La Via Campesina’s allies including Seeds of Survival in Ethiopia and Navdanya in India have created new systems of saving seeds and enhancing community food security (International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture, 2006: 26). La Via Campesina organizations and their allies developed global seed campaigns and seed festivals. These initiatives are, at the same time, educational and practical; they promote seed saving and set up networks for resistance and biodiversity conservation.

Seed saving and exchange networks enhance common property systems and present a direct challenge to Monsanto’s patented seeds. Seed saving is essential for women because women are relatively more dependent than men on common property resources (Agarwal in Martínez-Alier, 2008: 147). As stated above, in resisting patents and conserving seeds, peasants are fighting to end housewifization (in short, the separation of women from their means of livelihood).

(4) A fourth way in which La Via Campesina undermines Monsanto and affirms commoning is by encouraging localized production-consumption systems. Localized food production decentralizes and seeks to replace capitalist markets. Capitalist global markets are responsible for the collapse of farm prices, increased redundant and ecologically destructive production and transportation. Long distance transportation significantly accelerates climate change. Decentralized agriculture prioritizes local markets and local distribution as a solution to climate change and GMO agriculture.

In sum, La Via Campesina’s value chain enhances peasants’ autonomy, and ecological and human health. La Via Campesina is establishing its value chain by (1) promoting an international legal framework for farmers’ rights to save seeds; (2) promoting and practicing
agroecology and small-scale farming; (3) actively subverting intellectual property laws by saving and sharing seeds and; (4) promoting and practicing localized food production and distribution systems.

La Via Campesina’s value chain defends and affirms seeds systems in women’s hands. Agroecology produces healthier food in greater quantities without requiring that peasants purchase and use expensive, toxic chemicals. La Via Campesina’s value chain is especially important for all women in the world who are the main food producers and reproducers of children. Pinee Moonkaew of AOP-KAREN (Assembly of the Poor of the Karen community in Northern Thailand) and other La Via Campesina participants at the Women Seed Forum in South Korea underline the importance seed sovereignty for women’s lives and autonomy.

The four initiatives mentioned above and the Nyelini Food Sovereignty Declaration (2007) indicate that women and men from the global North and South who are organized in La Via Campesina have fought for local control and community management systems that enhance women’s access to the prerequisites of life. This joining up of the global working class creates a gendered, ethnicized class alliance. By setting up commoning alternatives to the capitalist agri-food system, including agroecology and small-scale farming, La Via Campesina has created and promoted ideas and practices that undermine capitalist social relations. La Via Campesina was and is refusing to be a class for the capitalists.

In the chapters that follow, I provide a much more in-depth and detailed analysis of the actions that La Via Campesina organizations have taken to organize across gendered and ethnicized divides to fight Monsanto and affirm commoning.
La Via Campesina farmers maintain agricultural practices which promote life, rather than “the never ending accumulation of dead money” (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999: 5). The farmers’ movement is committed to promoting ecologically sound farming practices as a guarantee for life on earth. The food sovereignty framework centralizes the overall development of life and human health.

Chapter four has outlined the history of the relationship between Monsanto and La Via Campesina. The first section of this chapter highlighted Monsanto’s transition (from the early 1900s to the 1990s) from selling chemicals in the United States (mainly war chemicals to the US military) to selling agri-inputs (herbicides and genetically modified seeds) to governments and farmers around the world. This section analyzed Monsanto’s relationship with other capitalists and WTO member governments. I characterize this relationship as a male deal that facilitated the enclosure of the seed commons, human bodies and labour, especially the bodies and labour of all women and women especially in the global South.

This chapter’s second section showed how Monsanto and the WTO created the conditions for La Via Campesina organizations to join hands across geographical borders and form a global movement for the commons. Since 1993–94 women and men farmers and their allies in countries in the North and South have been organizing through La Via Campesina to break up the male deals facilitated by the WTO. This section has explained La Via Campesina’s commoners’ value chain and the gendered, ethnicized class alliance that seeks to implement it. La Via Campesina has grown to embrace 150 rural social movements in 79 countries. La Via Campesina’s growth throughout the 1990s parallels Monsanto’s growth.
According to Desmarais, “[La Via Campesina’s] very existence is evidence of new structures of collective action in the countryside; its strategies defy traditional patterns of organizing in the rural sector; and the sheer magnitude of its international presence—its dynamic nature, cultural diversity, and wide geographical distribution—speaks to its transformatory potential” (Desmarais, 2007: 9). My intention in chapter four has been to illustrate this transformatory potential.

I now turn to chapter five which addresses the struggle between La Via Campesina and Monsanto during the first stage of Monsanto’s concentration (1996–1998).

Over the past two decades Monsanto has undergone two stages of intense concentration: (1) mergers and acquisitions, especially of seed companies, from 1996 to 1998 and (2) greenfields expansion into agrofuels from 2007 to 2011. Both stages are followed by an expansion and acceleration of opposition to Monsanto.

There were two intense stages of Monsanto’s concentration. In the first stage from 1996–1998 Monsanto merged with, acquired and collaborated with seed companies in countries around the world. Of the 15 companies Monsanto purchased, ten operated in countries other than the US. In the second stage of concentration beginning in 2004 Monsanto merged with, acquired and collaborated with biotech companies mostly within the United States that had a global reach. A significant element of Monsanto’s expansion in this period was its greenfield investment in agrofuels (2007–2011) (discussed below).

Monsanto’s two stages of concentration took place within the context of the ‘global wave’ of corporate amalgamation as outlined by Nitzan and Bichler (2002). In the 1990s corporations were becoming larger but fewer in number and more global, abetted by the series of GATT-WTO negotiations which lowered tariffs (taxes on imports) which allowed corporations to further enclose nature and human labour power. By 1999 it was clear to all that the ‘globalized worker’ had emerged to disrupt and counter the corporations’ value chain.

This study seeks to understand and interrogate the relationship between Monsanto’s concentration and organized ‘globalized worker’ opposition to Monsanto within the global social factory. As discussed in chapter three, most of the analysis is focused on the first stage of Monsanto’s concentration (1996–1998). This chapter details this first stage of Monsanto’s
concentration and surge of resistance against the biotech giant. It also provides a brief overview of the second stage of concentration that coincided with even larger surge of resistance to Monsanto. This will lay the groundwork for the in-depth analysis of the struggle between Monsanto and La Via Campesina set out in subsequent chapters.

I now turn to a discussion of stage one of Monsanto’s concentration.

**Stage One of Monsanto’s Concentration (1996–1998)**

Table 4 below provides a list of Monsanto’s mergers and acquisitions between 1996 and 1998. In this period of concentration, Monsanto merged with and acquired 15 of the top US and international seed companies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Geographical location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calgene Inc.</td>
<td>California, US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asgrow Agronomics</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asgrow and Stine Seed</td>
<td>Missouri, US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agracetus</td>
<td>Wisconsin, US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holden’s Foundation Seeds, Inc.</td>
<td>Iowa, US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta and Pine Land</td>
<td>US, China, Australia, South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Greece, and Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agroceres</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cargill’s international seed divisions</td>
<td>with operations in Asia, Africa, Europe and Central and South America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeKalb Genetics</td>
<td>Illinois, US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Breeding International</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm Line seeds</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciagro</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds (Mayhco)</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Seeds Company</td>
<td>Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agro Seed Corp</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
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</table>

The architect of this period of concentration was Robert Shapiro, Monsanto’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) from 1996 to 1999.

Beginning in 1996, Shapiro set out to make Monsanto a dominant player — in terms of ownership and profits — in the global seed market (Robin, 2010: 187). As discussed above in chapter four, Monsanto’s 1980s and 1990s male deal involving the WTO member governments and Northern industrial capitalists made it possible for the biotech transnational to enclose and exploit the global seed supply.

Shapiro is known as Monsanto’s ‘image maker’ and ‘the guru of Monsanto’ (Robin, 2010: 187). In the mid 1990s he began to construct Monsanto’s public image as a new biotech enterprise. In 1997 Shapiro claimed that Monsanto’s technology was the key to ending hunger and working toward environmentally sustainable agriculture. Citing the typical Malthusian reference to the 1.5 billion hungry people in the world, Shapiro asserted that:

“in the best case, we have the same amount of land to work with and twice as many people to feed. It comes down to resource productivity. ... The conclusion is that new technology is the only alternative” (Shapiro quoted in Magretta, 1997).

Monsanto spent a total of eight billion dollars on acquisitions in its efforts to dominate the global seed market (Robin, 2010: 195). To finance this costly program, Monsanto sold its chemical division to Solutia in 1997. The company’s stock price climbed 74 percent in 1995 and 71 percent in 1996 (Robin 2009: 195).

As indicated in Table 4, Monsanto’s merger and acquisition project extended its global reach. In the early 1990s Monsanto operated primarily in the United States. By the end of 1998, Monsanto had operations in over 16 countries on four continents.
Opposition to Monsanto was equally global and, as I detail in the chapters that follow, opposition was also equally concentrated. Figure 1 shows the trend from 1980 to 2010 in instances of protests documented in the media.

Figure 1 indicates that there was a significant increase in reports of protests against Monsanto during the 1996–1998 stage of Monsanto’s mergers and acquisitions. Before 1996 there were significantly fewer reports of global opposition to Monsanto.

Figure 1 also shows that the reports of protest against Monsanto remain high throughout the 2000s and into the second stage of Monsanto’s concentration between 2007 and 2011.

One possible explanation for increased opposition to Monsanto during Monsanto’s concentration is that people were concerned about food safety and the ethics of biotechnology.
Protesters were motivated to join social movements by shared beliefs that biotechnology was morally wrong and unsafe.

While this social-psychological explanation is relevant, this study focuses on explanations that seek to uncover the intimate relationship between Monsanto’s concentration and the organized protesters. Why, after at least ten years of almost no opposition to the company, was there this dramatic eruption of struggle from below? To what extent has Monsanto’s concentration formed the impetus for this dramatic leap forward in opposition? To what extent are Monsanto’s opponents’ forming a revolutionary global movement of movements to become a class for themselves in direct relation to Monsanto’s concentration?

Figure 1 provides an initial perspective on the relationship between Monsanto’s concentration and social movement opposition. The illustration (Figure 1) shows that in 1996, as soon as Monsanto began its period of intense mergers and acquisitions, there was a dramatic leap forward in opposition to Monsanto.

I analyze how Monsanto sought to take control over the global food and seed system between 1996 and 1998 in India, the European Union and Brazil by forming cross-class male deals. The three case studies analyze the way in which La Via Campesina and its allies responded to enclosure by breaking up Monsanto’s male deals and uniting across gendered and ethnicized divisions imposed by the capitalists. I seek to show that as Monsanto becomes more concentrated and global, so does the movement against it.

In India, women and men farmers and scientists had been organizing against patents on intellectual property since 1992. In 1998 Monsanto purchased Mahyco, the largest Indian seed company and began conducting illegal GM cotton field trials. This underhanded contamination
tactic provoked an intense and globally connected response by women and men farmers. In 1999 the Indian struggle circulated globally, especially to movements opposing corporate globalization in the EU.

In the EU, Monsanto influenced EU regulators. Monsanto attempted to force EU food buyers to accept legislation that authorized GM food without adequate safety controls, without labeling guidelines and without public agreement. I demonstrate below how Monsanto’s male deals and enclosures created a social factory-wide opposition by EU scientists and food buyers (amongst whom women were prominent) to organize resistance and affirm commoning.

In Brazil, the state government of Rio Grande do Sul aligned with farmers by banning Monsanto from region. In 2001 Brazilian farmers and indigenous women fighting Monsanto’s illegal GMOs connected with the global social movements at the inaugural World Social Forum in Porto Allegre, Brazil to build opposition to Monsanto.

The evidence below that the movement of movements is impelled by Monsanto’s first stage of concentration (1996-1998) supports this study’s hypothesis. The hypothesis that corporate concentration and organization gives rise to the movement of movements is further underlined by the tremendous rise in opposition directly following Monsanto’s second stage of concentration (2007-2011).

**Stage Two of Monsanto’s Concentration from Agrofuels (2007-2011)**

The second stage of Monsanto’s concentration is characterized by a prolonged food crisis beginning in 2007 and expanding into 2011. Monsanto and other multinationals’ investment in agrofuels (food crops used as fuel) significantly contributed to the food crisis. The food crisis
involved a dramatic global increase in the cost of basic food stuffs, and agricultural inputs associated with food production.

The sustained opposition to Monsanto from 2007 to 2011 evident in Figure 1 is most significantly characterized by spontaneous, sustained and highly organized responses to the food crisis. Social movements’ opposition between 2007 and 2011 was, in important ways, driven by the agrofuels-induced food crisis. Insofar as Monsanto contributed to the food crisis, the multinational and its supporters impelled this surge in the formation and action of a component of the global movement of movements.

Capitalists’ food, financial and climate crises created an opening for social movements to fight back globally. Have the so-called ‘food-riots’ in Egypt, the Middle East and North Africa, interfaced to form the global movement of social movements that is the Arab Revolution?

I provide a brief treatment of the relationship between Monsanto and its opponents during Monsanto’s second stage of concentration in chapter nine below. A more in-depth analysis is beyond the scope of this present study.

I now analyze the struggle against patents on seeds and Monsanto’s GM cotton in India (1992–2001).

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section analyzes the early 1990s struggle against Monsanto in India. It shows that the non-violent resistance movement (seed satyagraha) organized by Indian women and their allies amongst men propelled the struggle against Monsanto onto the world stage. It investigates Navdanya and La Via Campesina’s Karnataka Stage Farmers Association (KRRS or Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha) and their allies’ struggle to stop patents on seeds.

The second section analyzes Monsanto’s 1998 attempt to colonize India’s cotton seeds. It explores the ways in which Navdanya and the Karnataka farmers scaled-up the fight against Monsanto by targeting Monsanto directly and connecting with movements across geographical borders.

I now turn to a discussion of the early 1990s struggle against Monsanto in India.


In 1993 half a million farmers and supporters of India’s peasant agriculture joined in a rally to resist patents on seeds. The rally was part of a seed (bija) satyagraha or non-violent resistance struggle. The participants in the satyagraha rally demanded that the Indian government refuse to sign onto the 1994–95 Uruguay Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

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16 The seed satyagraha movement drew on the non-violent civil disobedience movement of the 1930 salt satyagraha. The salt satyagraha involved thousands of Indians who walked 240 miles to the sea to collect salt in defiance of the British salt tax.
As outlined above on page 103, the Uruguay Round ratified the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement. The World Trade Organization member governments, at the behest of powerful corporations, proposed an international legally binding system of private ownership over living organisms. The TRIPs agreement would facilitate the enclosure of the seed commons it would transfer ownership and control over seeds from women and peasants hands and shift it into the grip of multinational corporations. According to Vandana Shiva, “most patents today are based on straightforward biopiracy, the theft of women’s innovation of centuries” (Shiva, 2004b).

For thousands of years women of India have been the main guardians of seeds essential for household food production. Commodified seeds replace women’s saved seed varieties and women’s work reproducing seed and household nutrition. Shiva explains that the loss of control over seeds associated with commodification “either destroys the basis of women’s work or devalues it. With the decline in the perceived or real productivity of women is associated a decline in their status in society and within the household” (Shiva, 1989: 117).

Shiva explains that the seed satyagraha “refuses to accept the colonization of life though patents and GM technology by multinationals and the destruction of food security by the free trade rules of the WTO” (Shiva et. al., 2004c: 43). Shiva is a scientist, ecofeminist, popular anti-corporate globalization icon and recipient of the 1993 Right Livelihood Award (also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize17).

17 The Right Livelihood Award established in 1980, is presented annually by the Swedish Parliament to honour and support those “offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today.” (Right Livelihood Award, 2011).
The satyagraha movement was spearheaded by India’s organic and seed saving movement Navdanya (Sanskrit for ‘nine seeds’ and ‘the new gift’) (Navdanya, 2009c). Navdanya was started in 1987 by Vandana Shiva and a group of women and men farmers and researchers. Navdanya focuses on linking up with other organizations globally to fight corporate enclosures and build an alternative value chain that replaces industrial agriculture, patents and genetic engineering with agroecology, seed sovereignty and biodiversity. Navdanya was joined by a coalition of over 2000 Indian social movements including groups of farmers, women, fisher peoples, tribal peoples (Adivasi), untouchables (Dalit, at the bottom of the caste hierarchy) and sweatshop workers. The satyagraha involved multitudinous groups of exploited peoples.

Patents on seeds separate women from their means of survival and security. In their refusal the men farmers joined women to affirm the freedom of seeds and the freedom of especially women amongst them (their ‘own’ womenfolk) to save seed and grow food. The women and men participants in the seed satyagraha were in a gendered class alliance to refuse seed theft and housewifization.

In their resistance, these exploited women and men affirmed commoning alternatives. Shiva calls these alternatives earth democracy. Earth democracy involves fossil fuel-free (food) production, localization, seed conservation and exchange, and decentralized and democratic community decision making. Navdanya is also the name of their research and education centre and seed bank. According to Shiva “our research is showing that ecological systems, biodiverse systems can produce two to five times more food per acre than the industrial monocultures. The lie of industrial monocultures, the lie of genetic engineering has been put to rest” (Shiva, 2009a). As noted on page 100, Monsanto says GM will feed the hungry but in reality, as Shiva (and Rosset, above on page 123) points out, women small-scale farmers feed the world.
Navdanya promotes the seed commons to ensure that seeds stay in women’s hands. Navdanya also partners with thousands of social movements within India and internationally, including La Via Campesina and Diverse Women for Diversity (Navdanya, 2009a).

In the 1980s Diverse Women for Diversity was founded by Dr. Jean Grossholtz and Ms. Beth Burrows (USA), Dr. Christine von Weizsacker (Germany) and Dr. Vandana Shiva. Diverse Women for Diversity is a global alliance of women to “demand of governments, international organizations, transnational corporations and individual men who share our rage, that they address the crisis that has been caused by the creation of mono cultures and the reduction, enclosure, and extinction of biological and cultural diversity” (Navdanya, 2009b). Grossholtz, Burrows and von Weizsacker of the global North joined Shiva and her allies in the South in a cross-ethnic class alliance committed to stopping capitalist enclosure and exploitation.

Navdanya is a movement composed of women and men who have organized across gendered and ethnicized divisions imposed by capitalists to strengthen the commoners’ value chain. The ways in which this alliance directly confronts Monsanto will be discussed below.

The seed satyagraha involved many other Indian social movements, including, most notably, the La Via Campesina’s Karnataka State Farmers’ Association (KRRS or Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha). In the early 1990s, Karnataka farmers in the North of India prepared to take direct action in defence of the food system. The actions were part of an India-wide ‘Quit India’ campaign to oppose corporate globalization through the WTO.

The Karnataka farmers employed non-violent direct action tactics to “oppose the ‘recolonization of India’ by global corporations, the GATT-WTO and the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank” (Ainger, 1999). The farmers undertook two actions in 1996.
in Bangalore. First the Karnataka farmers ransacked [and dismantled] the Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet. Second 1000 Karnataka farmers occupied the head office of the agribusiness multinational Cargill. According to the Times of India, (1999) the farmers broke into Cargill’s seed unit and “threw all the equipment through the windows and made a big bonfire”. Both women and men Karnataka farmers’ joined together to undertake the crop burnings of Cargill’s stolen seeds and the demolition of Kentucky Fried Chicken’s allegedly deadly fast food outlet (Karnataka State Farmers’ Association, 2001).

The Karnataka State Farmers’ Association is one of India’s (and the world’s) largest and most militant peasant organizations. As of 2000 the farmers’ association had ten million members in Karnataka State, the total population of which was at that time 60 million (D’Monte, 2000). The strength and dominance of this organization can be gauged by noting that one out of six people in Karnataka State belonged. As noted above, the Karnataka farmers’ actions involved women and men. The association more generally involves an alliance of women and men. There is an important dimension of autonomy that women secured. According to the group’s website, women have their own structures, mobilizations and programmes within the Association (Karnataka State Farmers’ Association, 2001). As indicated by the farmers’ actions to stop multinational corporations from enclosing food and seeds, the Karnataka farmers are working to break up the hierarchy of labour power and express the interests of the whole class by uniting across gendered divides.

The Karnataka farmers are active members of La Via Campesina. They have organized protests and campaigns with La Via Campesina movements globally, especially to oppose the

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18 According to the founding president farmer and professor M.D. Nanjundaswamy, the association is "based on Gandhian ideology" and the principle of non-violent civil disobedience (Nanjundaswamy quoted in D’Monte, 2000 Gandhi’s disputed heritage (UNESCO Courier, 2000: 29).
policies of the GATT-WTO (Desmarais, 2007: 116–118). By association with La Via Campesina, Karnataka farmers are globally connected to the gendered, ethnicized alliance of farmers in 79 countries.

In sum, the 1992 seed satyagraha was one of the first organized social movement responses to Monsanto’s patented GMOs. Monsanto’s male deal with the member governments of the WTO, including the Indian government, enforced a global system of intellectual property rights. The seed satyagraha represented a gendered class alliance of women and men farmers and scientists. Farmers and scientists at Navdanya on the one hand and the farmers and of Karnataka farmers’ association and their allies on the other, joined together to break the WTO male deal. Farmers declared that they would continue the centuries old practice of saving and exchanging seeds in defiance of patent rules. The gendered class alliance of the seed satyagraha movement demonstrates that the fight for fertility against Monsanto was launched onto the world stage by those on the bottom of the hierarchy — women in rural India. The 1990s corporate expansion and enclosures, facilitated by the WTO, have driven Indian women and their male allies to join actions in defence of the commons.

Navdanya’s commoning alternatives provided a framework for the replacement of Monsanto’s patent system. As I show below, these Indian social movement forces are globalizing resistance and alternatives in direct opposition to corporate expansion and capitalist theft.

I now turn to an analysis of the struggle amongst Monsanto and La Via Campesina organizations and their supporters in India shortly after Monsanto’s 1996–1998 first stage of concentration.

In this next section I provide an analysis of the struggle against Monsanto by the same sets of actors highlighted above. (1) First I investigate the actions undertaken by Navdanya to challenge the legality of Monsanto’s GM cotton trials. (2) Second I examine actions undertaken by the Karnataka farmers and their local and international allies. The objective of these two sets of actors was to stop Monsanto from enclosing Indian farmers’ cotton seeds.

In what follows I analyze the ways in which these social movements involved in the seed satyagraha stepped up their struggle against Monsanto in response to Monsanto’s concentration and enclosure of India’s cotton seeds. Immediately in 1998 when Monsanto purchased India’s largest seed company Maharastra Hybrid Seeds, social movements enhanced their connection with movements across geographical borders and targeted Monsanto directly.

(1) Monsanto Versus Navdanya (1998–2001)

In April 1998 Monsanto announced that it had purchased 26 percent share in India’s largest seed company Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds (Mahyco) (Robin, 2010: 295). Two years later the two companies formed a 50:50 joint venture (Mahyco-Monsanto biotech). The partnership reflected similar trends throughout India. According to Kambamu, “biotechnology boosted the already lucrative agricultural input industry, mergers, acquisitions and other strategic alliances [had] been increasing. In fact, almost all of the major Indian seed companies [had] collaborated with foreign partners to get access to the new patented technologies” (Kambamu, 2006: 596).

As noted above in chapter four, the green revolution introduced new commercial, so-called ‘high-yielding’ varieties onto farmers’ fields. These varieties required the use of more fertilizers and pesticides (Kambamu, 2006: 20). Against this background, Monsanto-Mahyco introduced Bt
(Bacillus thuringiensis) cotton into India. According to Monsanto-Mahyco Bt cotton had three advantages: (i) it yielded more per acre; (ii) it lowered pesticide and insecticide use and; (iii) it reduced the problems associated with the common ‘bollworm’ pest (Kambamu, 2006: 20–21).

In 1998 Mahyco-Monsanto began conducting large-scale open field trials of Bt cotton, contrary to Indian law. These field trials violated biosafety laws and were undertaken without the permission of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee, (GEAC) (the sub-committee of the federal Ministry of Environment and Forests) (Shiva et. al., 2004c: 43). The GEAC would not have been able to approve the trials because the Plant Varieties Act governing the release of GMOs into the environment had not been put in place (Parsai, 2001b).

Early in 1999 Shiva and Navdanya took Monsanto to the Indian Supreme Court denouncing Mahyco-Monsanto’s illegal Bt cotton trials (Robin, 2010: 296). Navdanya argued that the Bt cotton field trials bypassed and violated environmental laws. Furthermore, they were undertaken without involving and informing the local authorities and the local public (Navdanya, 2009d). The results of Monsanto’s field trials were never communicated publically because Mahyco-Monsanto said the trials were confidential (Shiva et. al., 2004c: 43).

Furthermore, the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee had asked Monsanto to carry out an extensive set of tests on the food safety of Bt cotton seeds. The Bt seeds were used by farmers as fodder for cows and buffaloes. The tests requested by the government were intended to determine whether the GM seeds when consumed by animals would reduce the quality of their milk. As of 2004, at least six years after the company began conducting field trials Monsanto had not conducted the safety tests (Shiva et. al., 2004c: 43).
The legal battle to stop Monsanto’s illegal field trials lasted for four years (1999–2003). In February 2002 the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee gave Monsanto clearance for the commercial planting of three Bt cotton varieties in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu (Shiva et. al., 2004c: 43). The Committee granted Monsanto approval before Navdanya’s case was officially rejected. Monsanto won clearance on four grounds: that Bt cotton had undergone biosafety tests in Indian conditions, that the cotton would require less pesticides, that it would produce higher yields and therefore would increase farmers’ income (Shiva et. al., 2004c: 43).

According to Shiva, “Monsanto did considerable lobbying” and had a significant amount of influence in the court system (Shiva quoted in Robin, 2010: 296). The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court that presided over the Navdanya’s legal suit against Monsanto was A.S. Anand. In 2001, before the Anand issued a decision on the appeal he attended a meeting with an US delegation of judges and scientists. According to Gargi Parsai, the objective of the delegation was to “impress upon him [Anand] and the judicial fraternity the benefits of biotechnology” (Parsai, 2001a).

The 2001 US delegation of judges and scientists was organized by the US based non-profit Einstein Institute for Science, Health and the Courts. According to Shiva, the delegation offered to set up workshops to “train judges on GMO questions” (Shiva quoted in Robin, 2010: 296). Monsanto also organized several meetings for Indian journalists, scientists and judges at its headquarters in St. Louis (Robin, 2010: 296).

Navdanya’s legal suit attempted to block the approval of Monsanto’s Bt cotton. Navdanya attempted to use the force of the law to restrict or stop the company from exploiting and
privatizing seeds in India. The regulators and judges facilitated Monsanto’s enclosure of India’s cotton by permitting Bt cotton trials contrary to the law. The judges also allowed Monsanto to violate the law with impunity. The Indian government promoted Monsanto’s enclosure project by permitting the company to expand its operations in the country. Navdanya organized to fight Monsanto in the courts in order to break up the male deal involving Monsanto and the Indian government regulators and judges.

Navdanya fought Monsanto in other ways. In 2000, one year after the movement launched the court case against Monsanto, the farmers and scientists of Navdanya reasserted the seed satyagraha movement on a global basis.

In September 2000, over 400 farmers from across the world came together at Navdanya’s education centre in Deradun. The farmers and scientists hosted the People’s Seed Tribunal or ‘Beej Panchayat.’ The tribunal encouraged farmers to provide “evidence of the crisis of seed and agriculture in the wake of globalization that is pushing small farmers to suicide” (Navdanya, 2009c). As noted above on page 110, by 2000 India was facing a wave of farmer suicides related to debt from the low yields and high cost of agricultural inputs, including Bt cotton seeds.

According to Navdanya, the tribunal mobilized knowledge about Monsanto’s deceptive practices and the negative results for farmers who became trapped by Monsanto’s patented GMO seeds. The tribunal also sought to create and expand global resistance to Monsanto and encourage farmers to join hands across borders (Navdanya, 2009c).

The tribunal was among the dozens of global actions undertaken by Navdanya to keep seeds under the control of women and men farmers. Vandana Shiva has herself globalized the
alliance. Shiva’s many hundreds of publications and lectures internationally have expanded the reach of the ideas for and praxis of alternatives to capitalism.

In what follows I examine the Karnataka farmers’ second action against Monsanto in 1998, the uprooting of GMOs. Above I outlined the ways in which the Karnataka farmers targeted Cargill and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Below I present an analysis of how, by uprooting Monsanto’s crops in 1998, the women and men of the Karnataka State Farmers’ Association amplified and enhanced the struggle against Monsanto. This second action in 1998 highlights the ways in which Monsanto’s concentration (1996-1998) significantly impelled a more globally integrated response that directly targeted the biotech giant.

(2) Karnataka Farmers Uproot Monsanto’s Crops (1998–1999)

For India’s 17 million cotton farming families, Monsanto’s expansion into Bt cotton was a direct threat to generations of breeding and biodiversity conservation. The GM seeds threatened to contaminate non-GM seed varieties with Monsanto’s patented technology.

As stated above, Monsanto’s field trials were organized without biosafety controls in place. In fact, Monsanto’s field trials were undertaken on fields owned by individual small-scale farmers without them knowing that the seeds were not approved by the government. The farmers were also not informed that the seeds were genetically modified (Kingsnorth, 1999).

According to Paul Kingsnorth (1999) “[i]n order to avoid having to persuade farmers of the case for GM crops, [Monsanto] has tried a different tack: growing GM crops on the farmer’s land without telling him” (Kingsnorth, 1999). Monsanto distributed the Bt seeds for free to farmers. Monsanto’s seed distributors told the farmers that the Bt cotton would be resistant to the common boll weevil pests and would have higher yields. The farmers planted the seeds and
applied the chemical pesticides that came with them. Not knowing that they were planting this novel and risky crop, farmers did not inform their neighbours or create buffer zones around the field (Kingsnorth, 1999).

In addition, farmers found that the Bt cotton seeds “grew miserably” and reached “less than half of the height of the traditional strains” of their own seeds (Kingsnorth, 1999). The cotton was also heavily infested with boll weevils.

As noted above, contamination is a serious hazard related to GM seeds and crops. Threats from contamination include a loss of biodiversity, a decline in food security, threats from legal recourse by biotech companies and an increased risk related to pests and diseases which can annihilate a country’s entire production (Robin, 2010: 288). According to Shiva:

“India is the land of cotton. We used to grow one thousand five hundred varieties of cotton. This is the land where Gandhi spun freedom through cotton. I started Navdanya inspired by the spinning wheel. I said ‘the seed is today’s spinning wheel.’ And today [2009] the seed itself is under threat because today, all the cotton that we could spin is under the control of one company, Monsanto. That is why, if we do not save seeds, all of that diversity will go forever, and with it the memory that is with the seed—the ecological memory, the cultural memory. With it, the livelihood of farmers” (Shiva, 2009a).

In 1998 the Karnataka farmers mobilized a militant response to preventing contamination. The farmers, their families and communities tore up and burned entire fields of Bt cotton at various test field sites across Karnataka state. The Karnataka farmers called the burnings the ‘Operation Cremate Monsanto’ campaign. The campaign was launched in November 1998 and lasted into the 2000s.
One campaign slogan warns Monsanto and its investors, “'You should rather take your money out before we reduce it to ashes'” (Swamy, 1998). The farmers’ action to burn Monsanto’s seeds was a direct threat to the company’s present and future profits.

Kingsnorth provides an account of how the ‘cremations’ were undertaken by Basanna, from Sindhanoor, Karnataka state and his allies. Mahyco-Monsanto had given Basanna Bt cotton seeds and chemicals for free as part of the company’s ‘field testing’ operations. Kingsnorth states that

“With the help of Basanna’s [the farmer] neighbours, a number of KRRS [Karnataka State Farmers’ Association] members, other local grassroots organizations representing ‘untouchables’ [dalits] and landless farmers, they proceeded to tear up every one of the genetically modified cotton plants growing there. They stacked them in a heap in the middle of the field, and set them on fire. In minutes, Monsanto’s test crops were reduced to ashes” (Kingsnorth, 1999).

Monsanto’s ‘field trials’ brought farmers together to fight the company. Women who were already organizing to stop Monsanto and patents on seeds were joined by men to confront Monsanto directly. The crop burnings involved farmers’ families and communities.

The Karnataka farmers’ Operation Cremate Monsanto action was launched in tandem with the India-wide ‘Monsanto Quit India’ campaign. A coalition of Indian NGOs, community groups and farmers’ organizations (including the Karnataka farmers and Navdanya) launched the Monsanto Quit India campaign symbolically on 9 August 1998. On this date 57 years ago (8 August 1942) Gandhi defended peoples’ freedom by telling the British to ‘Quit India.’ The coalition sent the same message to Monsanto’s headquarters in Illinois. As of January 1999, only four months from the launch of the campaign, over 10,000 people had signed ‘Quit India’ postcards and sent them to Monsanto’s headquarters (Kingsnorth, 1999).
The Monsanto Quit India campaigners demanded that the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Science and Technology

(1) ban all genetic engineering trials,

(2) reform the biosafety regulations to ensure people's participation in decisions about genetic engineering in public hearings through Gram Sabhas (local governments) before trials, and

(3) declare a five year moratorium on all commercial releases and a total ban on the import of genetically engineered foods and crops (Shiva, 1998).

The Monsanto Quit India and Operation Cremate Monsanto campaigns had global dimensions. In November 1998 Nanjunda Swamy, a professor and spokesperson from the Karnataka State Farmers’ Association, made this statement in a public call to action:

“We know that stopping biotechnology in India will not be of much help to us if it continues in other countries, since the threats that it poses do not stop at the borders. We also think that the kind of actions that will be going on in India have the potential not only to kick those corporate killers out of our country: if we play our cards right at [the] global level and coordinate our work, these actions can also pose a major challenge to the survival of these corporations in the stock markets. Who wants to invest in a mountain of ashes, in offices that are constantly being squatted (and if necessary even destroyed) by activists? For these reasons, we are making an international call for direct action against Monsanto and the rest of the biotech gang. This call for action will hopefully inspire all the people who are already doing a brilliant work against biotech, and many others who so far have not been very active on the issue, to join hands in a quick, effective worldwide effort” (Swamy, 1998).

Swamy’s statement sheds light on at least two dimensions of the struggle against Monsanto in India. First, Swamy called on social movements to organize cross-border, simultaneous direct actions to break up Monsanto’s value chain. The Karnataka farmers’ representative insisted on
the imperative of organizing internationally to use the media and direct action tactics to devalue Monsanto’s stock market shares.

Second, Swamy’s statement shows a conscious strategization on the part of Indian social movements to think and act globally in order to stop Monsanto and other ‘corporate killers.’ In other words, there can be no end to Monsanto in the South without an end to Monsanto in the North (and vice versa).

I now examine how this stratization was put into practice by Karnataka farmers less than one year after the farmers launched the Operation Cremate Monsanto campaign in May of 1999.

**Inter-Continental Caravan ‘99: EU-India Actions Against Monsanto**

In 1999 the call to action by Indian social movements crossed international borders. The Karnataka farmers and their allies in the European Union joined together to undermine Monsanto’s global value chain. In May 1999 a group of 400 Karnataka farmers, including many women, toured Europe for one month as part of the *Inter-Continental Caravan ‘99* (D’Monte, 2000). A caravan is a travelling group of people. Caravans have often been used by social movements to build solidarity for local struggles amongst peoples from different geographical locations.

The May 1999 Caravan was organized by the Karnataka farmers and grassroots NGOs in the EU. One of the more prominent groups involved in the caravan was Peoples’ Global Action against ‘Free’ Trade and the WTO. People’s Global Action is a network of international grassroots organizations based in Geneva, Switzerland. The network aims to be “an instrument for communication and coordination for all those fighting against the destruction of humanity by capitalism, and for building alternatives” (People’s Global Action, 2001).
The Karnataka farmers and People’s Global Action organized the caravan in tandem with and in opposition to the 1999 European Union Summit and the Group of Eight (G-8) conference in Koln, Germany. The caravan involved street demonstrations and a public hearing on ‘People vs. Corporations’ (Inter Press Service, 1999). Inter Press Service reported that

“For many women, like Kumud Chowdhary of Gujarat, India, joining the caravan meant leaving their homes, family and village for the first time. They promptly packed pancakes, spices and pickles for their maiden voyage on an aeroplane. ‘My husband is taking care of our eight hectare farm and children, while I am here to ‘Kill Monsanto’ before it kills families like mine,’ quips Kumud, draped in her turquoise sari. She grows mustard and wheat and had not heard about genetically modified foods or the US corporation Monsanto until she became interested in the caravan” (Inter Press Service, 1999).

Monsanto was targeted by the farmers and NGOs in the EU as a common threat to life. Kumud Chowdhary quoted above has identified Monsanto as a criminal and a common enemy of all farmers in the EU and India.

The caravan also involved direct action against GMOs. On 2 June 1999 the La Via Campesina’s French affiliate, Confederation Paysanne, organized a raid of a GM canola test-field site in the French village Gaudies (Seifert, 2007: 11). The GM crop was owned by a public research facility in France. The Indian and EU farmers practiced global solidarity and militant resistance against Monsanto and GMOs.

The caravan represented an effort on the part of Indian and EU social movements to align across ethnic divides in order to stop Monsanto and corporate globalization. The caravan linked the farmers’ alliance in India to the EU social movements and challenged Monsanto in at least five ways.

(1) The crop raid allowed farmers to undertake and practice organized direct action.
The caravan sought to build international solidarity and cross-ethnic alliances against Monsanto and all capitalists.

The travelling caravan disseminated information publically about GMOs and the exploitation of farmers that get hooked on GMOs.

Workers from different terrains of struggle joined to mount a social factory-wide offensive against GMOs. Farmers (producers) uprooted Monsanto’s crop. Food buyers (consumers) asserted their solidarity with farmers to fight GMOs. This amounted to an effort by farmers and EU food buyers to coordinate action at different links on Monsanto’s value chain and undermine the company.

The caravan provided a space for movements to coordinate future actions against Monsanto in-country and across geographical borders. The caravan was organized only five months before the 1999 WTO ministerial meeting in Seattle, Washington. The groups were able to plan how to coordinate their actions in preparation for the WTO protest. Below in chapter nine I discuss the ways in which La Via Campesina organizations enhanced the struggle for food sovereignty by connecting with social movements at the 1999 ‘Battle of Seattle.’

In sum, the caravan was a vehicle for communication and connection amongst the Indian and EU social movements. The movements were able to successfully connect across geographical borders to challenge Monsanto directly. They weakened the company’s value chain by challenging the for-profit activities of a whole series of male deals. The caravan involved women and men from the global North and South. This global coordination
undermined capitalists’ attempt to divide the working class along ethnicized and geographical lines.

This joint initiative provided an opportunity for movements in the North and South to develop resistance and global strategies against Monsanto. The EU-India caravan constituted a globally coordinated ethnicized class alliance that mirrored capitalists’ global coordination.

Below I discuss how Monsanto’s tactics to control aspects of the EU’s food system were implemented through legitimate channels rather than illegally as in the case of India. This shows that Monsanto is reinforcing colonial control by treating third world people’s resources as if they were freely available. Monsanto acted as if these resources were without systems of regulation and protection from corporate plunder.

This chapter has shown how, in 1998–99, at the height of Monsanto’s centralization and growth in power, the company’s enclosure of cotton seeds sparked resistance across India. The same groups involved in resistance to the TRIPS and the WTO recomposed on a much larger basis to target Monsanto’s Bt cotton value chain directly.

The above analysis demonstrates the accuracy of Marx’s discovery that the process of corporate concentration and enclosure organizes, unites and disciplines a revolutionary working class.

This study argued that with respect to India, Monsanto’s in-country GM cotton value chain organized Navdanya and the Karnataka farmers to fight back and affirm commoning. Below I examine the finding from this case study. I do so in two steps. (1) In the first step I examine social movements’ in-country struggle against Monsanto. (2) In the second step I examine the
ways in which social movements connected the in-country struggle against Monsanto to movements in other parts of the world, in particular, in the European Union.

1) Social Movements’ actions Inside India

From 1992 to 1998 the Indian government debated and finally signed onto the WTO’s Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights agreement. The TRIPS agreement was authored largely by Monsanto. This attempt to enclose Indian people’s seeds constituted a cross-class male deal. Women and men farmers, scientists and their allies responded by uniting in a seed satyagraha movement to affirm the freedom of peasants to save seeds. This attempt on the part of social movements to de-enclose Indian people’s seeds and reinforce women’s seed systems constituted a gendered class alliance. The social movements affirmed earth democracy alternatives.

Over a four-year period (1998–2001) the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee and Indian judges allowed Monsanto to bypass Indian law. In 1998 the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee approved Bt cotton trials. This enclosure constituted a cross-class male deal to enclose India’s cotton seeds and Indian farmers and women’s labour. The same forces involved in the early 1990s campaigns, Navdanya and the Karnataka farmers, were forced by Monsanto’s enclosures (and the expanding organization that these enclosures entailed) to join hands and target Monsanto directly.

The most significant change I draw attention to is, in 1992 Navdanya and the Karnataka farmers were oriented toward in-country campaigns with some international connections. In 1998, the same women and men farmers and their allies who united in the seed satyagraha united again on a much more global basis to challenge Monsanto legally and to take direct
action against the company by uprooting its crops. The men and women farmers and scientists from Navdanya, the Karnataka State Farmers Association and the dozens of grassroots social movements united within India to break up Monsanto’s illegal and surreptitious field trials of Bt cotton. Their actions subverted the hierarchy of labour power.

Monsanto’s 1996–1998 concentration and enclosure of seeds increased the company’s global reach. I now turn to analysis of the ways in which Monsanto’s concentration impelled both Navdanya and the Karnataka farmers to connect with alliances internationally.

(2) Social Movement’s Actions Globally

In 2000 Navdanya’s seed tribunal involving farmers from across the world reflected Monsanto’s global pattern of enclosure. Navdanya’s seed tribunals were opportunities for farmers from many countries to testify on the impacts that Monsanto’s patented and GM technology. This globalized resistance threatened the company’s operations globally. The tribunals foreshadowed the 2010 Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth (discussed below).

In 1999 the Karnataka farmers and their allies in the EU expressed a firm ‘no’ to Monsanto’s global corporate enclosure by uprooting Monsanto’s crops and building up global solidarity. In so doing the farmers in the North and South subverted the hierarchy of labour power and used Monsanto’s global organization to undermine the company. This represented an ethnicized class alliance across North and South divides imposed by the capitalists to extract super profits from third world peoples and the nature which they protect and upon which they rely.

At this point in the analysis of the struggle between Monsanto and La Via Campesina I have demonstrated that Monsanto’s global organization had, by 1999, laid down a template on which social movements coordinated global, direct action to legally challenge, uproot and burn down
the physical plant underpinning company’s profit making activities. Farmers in India and farmers and waged workers buying food in grocery stores in the EU connected to resist Monsanto. The resistance was undertaken by a multitudinous group of waged and unwaged social factory workers in India and the EU. Women in rural India launched this popular global attack onto the world stage in 1992.

Indian women were joined by men in India and women and men in the EU. This gendered, ethnicized class alliance prefigured the global movement of social movements that was, by 1998, moving toward becoming a global force for transforming the global working into a class for itself rather than for the capitalists. The negative impact on Monsanto was immensely significant, as we shall see in chapter nine.

I now turn to an investigation of Monsanto’s 1996–1998 European Union GM enclosure project and resistance to Monsanto.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section one analyzes the ways in which Monsanto’s supporters in the European Union government and international institutions aided Monsanto by permitting GM food to be sold in the EU.

Section two investigates the ways in which Monsanto’s GM enclosure and organization of a market for GMOs shaped the formation of an EU-wide, globally connected (EU contingent of) movement of social movements to oppose Monsanto and affirm alternatives.

Section three explores how Monsanto attempted to decompose or break up the EU struggle for a moratorium. The movements called on governments to impose a moratorium in order to stop all aspects of the operation of Monsanto’s GMO food and seed value chain. I outline how Monsanto tried (1) to influence public opinion through advertising campaigns and (2) to utilize its functionaries in the US government to prevent the circulation of commoners’ anti-GMO struggle across geographical borders, in particular, to Africa.

I now turn to an analysis of the biotech giant’s attempt to enclose the EU food system.

SECTION ONE: MONSANTO’S ‘PRINCIPLE OF SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE’

In 1996 Monsanto created the principle of substantial equivalence to bypass EU regulation of GMO food. Incredible as it may seem, Monsanto originated the principle to serve a particular purpose. This principle of substantial equivalence is perhaps one of Monsanto’s most deceptive and dangerous practices. Monsanto’s principle is an egregious instance of how the capitalist
food system is a food dictatorship (Shiva, 2003). Substantial equivalence was adopted by
governments and international institutions in 1996 with only Monsanto’s science to validate the
accuracy of the assertion and before the long-term human health impacts of GMOs were
determined by independent science. Details of these momentous manoeuvres are presented
below.

In the autumn of 1996 US grain producers began exporting Monsanto’s Roundup-Ready soy
beans to Europe (Gene Watch, 2006). The imports had been approved by the European
Commission despite the fact that labelling and traceability (classification) provisions governing
genetically engineered foods were not finalized at the EU level (Mendelson, 1998: 270). In early
1997 the Commission, under pressure from the public and several EU member governments,
(including France, Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg, Belgium and Austria) implemented the
Novel Foods Regulation.

The Novel Foods Regulation is a set of policies intended to govern the labelling and
traceability of GM foods. The regulation represented the first time in the EU’s history that
genetically engineered foods were approved for human consumption.

The Novel Foods Regulation was based on the principle of substantial equivalence. As
stated above, substantial equivalence is a legal sleight of hand by Monsanto to bypass testing
procedures that are devised to determine the safety of genetically modified food for human
consumption. The principle established that “if a new food or food component is found to be
substantially equivalent to an existing food or food component, it can be treated in the same
manner with respect to safety (i.e., the food or food component can be conclusively assumed to
be as safe as the conventional food or food component)‖ (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, 1996: 4).

In effect, what this means is, if the chemistry of genetically modified food can be categorized as being more or less similar to that of unmodified food, GMOs must be approved for sale without further testing. The Novel Foods Regulation also had the outcome of significantly relaxing requirements for labelling genetically engineered food as such (Lilliston and Cummins, 1997: 217).

Ho and Steinbrecher (1998) argue that the principle of substantial equivalence is “unscientific and arbitrary, encapsulating a dangerously permissive attitude toward producers, and at the same time [it offers] less than minimalist protection for consumers and biodiversity, because it is designed to be as flexible, malleable, and as open to interpretation as possible” (Ho and Steinbrecher, 1998: 52).

Professor Erik Millstone of Sussex and his co-authors explain why substantial equivalence is ‘unscientific,’ ‘arbitrary’ and ‘open to interpretation’. They state that “the concept of substantial equivalence has never been properly defined; the degree of difference between a natural food and its GM alternative before its ‘substance’ ceases to be acceptably ‘equivalent’ is not defined anywhere, nor has an exact definition been agreed upon by legislators. It is exactly this vagueness that makes the concept useful to industry but unacceptable to the consumer” (Millstone, et al., 1999: 526).

The principle of substantial equivalence was adopted by the European Commission in 1997 without any independent scientific data verifying the validity of the assessment procedure (Robin, 2010: 181). There is no data to show that such a claim can be made. Only Monsanto’s
data supported the claim that GMOs were ‘substantially equivalent’ and therefore safe for the public to consume. The European Commission accepted the principle as a basis for approving GMOs without scientific evidence. The bureaucrats allowed Monsanto and other biotechnology companies to undermine the possibility of a rigorous scientific approval process.

The 1997 Novel Foods Regulation represented an attack on the European public’s food sovereignty. EU food buyers were forced to accept GMO food that had not been rigorously tested by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Furthermore, food buyers were forced to accept regulations that allowed products containing GM ingredients to be on supermarket shelves without being labelled as such. Monsanto and the EU Commission coerced, in particular, European women, who do most of the purchasing, to feed their families beef and milk from animals raised on GM soy or corn.

Why did the EU take such an unscientific (or anti-scientific) approach to the regulation of GMOs? The principle of substantial equivalence was adopted in 1996 by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Former Monsanto employees James Maryanski and Dr. Roy Fuchs authored the FAO and WHO documents that supported substantial equivalence (Robin, 2008b). Monsanto was accumulating wealth by stealth.

European Commissioners responsible for drafting the document for approving GMOs had close links to the biotech industry. The Commissioner was Harry Kuiper. Kuiper was the Chair of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) panel on GMOs and was responsible for advising the European Commission on the safety of GM food. According to Robin “Harry Kuiper has very close links with the biotech industry, as do certain other members of EFSA like
Mike Gasson, Hans-York Buhk and Detlef Bartsch. Conflicts of interest and the absence of independent experts constitute a recurrent problem in the area of GMOs” (Robin, 2008b).

For Monsanto, the 1997 Novel Foods Regulation meant that it would soon have a market for the millions of acres of GM crops being grown in the US. For the EU public, the Novel Foods Regulation meant that they would be eating GM food without their knowledge and before the long term human and environmental health and safety effects of GMOs were confirmed.

According to Millstone and co-authors,

“Substantial equivalence is a pseudo-scientific concept because it is a commercial and political judgment masquerading as if it were scientific. It is, moreover, inherently anti-scientific because it was created primarily to provide an excuse for not requiring biochemical or toxicological tests. It therefore serves to discourage and inhibit potentially informative scientific research” (Millstone, et al., 1999: 526).

As noted above in chapter four, by 2011 the principle of substantial equivalence of genetically engineered food had been disproven. The potential threat to human health is clear (more below). This is a dramatic example of how Monsanto ‘inhibited informative scientific research.’ Below in section two, I provide a second example of how Monsanto attempted to silence scientific inquiry into GMOs.

In sum, Monsanto and the EU Commission facilitated the enclosure of the EU’s food supply by using the phoney principle of substantial equivalence to permit GMOs. This constituted a cross-class male deal. The Regulation allowed Monsanto to use its privately owned seeds to grow the products sold to EU food buyers, primarily women. The upshot was that in 1996 a wide cross section of EU workers demanded an end to Monsanto and GMOs.

I now turn to an analysis of how EU food buyers, farmers and scientific experts challenged Monsanto and the European Commission’s male deal by linking across borders. The
international alliances employed direct action tactics, used the media and scientific evidence to mount an EU-wide and global resistance movement to stop Monsanto from selling GMOs.

**SECTION TWO: FOOD BUYERS, FARMERS AND SCIENTISTS’ OPPOSITION TO GMOs**

Before 1996 there were very few protests against Monsanto in the EU. A Factiva search indicates an immediate and drastic surge in opposition to Monsanto beginning in 1996 and lasting until 2010 (consistent with the global pattern highlighted above in chapter five).

Which social forces impelled this resistance? The struggle for and against a moratorium on Monsanto’s GMOs in the EU (1996–1998 and beyond) involved three groups of social agents:

1. food buyers united in non-governmental organizations;
2. La Via Campesina farmers and;
3. scientists working in public institutions

I consider the extent to which gendered and ethnicized agents of revolution connected within the EU and globally to undermine Monsanto’s EU as well as global male deals. I highlight the ways in which EU workers made progress toward implementing a global, commoners’ value chain. I also highlight the circulation of struggle across *terrains* of the social factory and across capitalist industries.

As noted above, the male deal between Monsanto and the European Commission represented an attack on the food system and on people’s bodies. The Novel Foods Regulation was set up by Monsanto and the European Commission in order that the US transnational might profit from the sale of food that was not, by any independent scientific standards, determined to be safe. Women, as the main food buyers, were central to the struggle and made strategic demands and alliances to defend the food system.
I now turn to an analysis of the EU food buyers’ struggle against Monsanto.

**(1) EU food buyers**

One of the first signs of organized and large-scale public opposition to GMOs in the EU emerged in November 1996 at the United Nations Food Summit in Rome. A group of women and a few men stripped naked at a news conference in protest against the sale of genetically modified food. The protest targeted US Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, a supporter of GM technology and Monsanto. A woman painted her body with the slogan “The Naked Truth.” Protesters had a banner saying “Ban the Gene Bean” (Reuters News, 1996).

Much could be said about the use by women resisters of nakedness and its meanings. Nakedness is a militant and deeply feminist form of resistance and an expression of the defence of life. Nakedness exposes the source of life. In going naked, women call for a sex strike and refuse to reproduce labour power for the capitalists until their demands are met (Tobocman et. al., 2004). These European women and their allies amongst men used nakedness to oppose GMOs and break up Monsanto’s EU and global male deals. The resisters affirmed the human body as creative and autonomous rather than a source of profits and deposit for hazardous food and chemicals.

In the fall of 1996 the non-governmental organization, Greenpeace, launched its ‘frankenfoods’ campaign. The frankenfoods campaign had two main dimensions. (i) The first involved direct action tactics to physically disrupt the flow of profits to Monsanto and other corporations. Frankenfoods campaigners occupied head offices, ports and processing facilities, and organized other media-grabbing stunts. The frankenfoods campaign began in 1996 and escalated into the 2000s.
In December 1996, Greenpeace activists in France blocked the first shipment of GM maize coming into European ports. About 15 women and men took part in the protest at the Montoire grain terminal inside St Nazaire harbour. Greenpeace said in a statement that the protestors chained themselves to cranes and silos to demand that governments and food buyers stop GMO imports. Greenpeace organizers cited concerns that genetic engineering puts human health at risk (Lloyd's Information Casualty Report, 1996).

In January 1997 Greenpeace campaigners demonstrated in front of multinational food companies in nine European countries to demand a moratorium on GM food. Hundreds of women and men blocked the entrances and unfurled banners at the national offices of Unilever and Nestle in Belgium, Italy, Germany, Austria, Finland, France, Spain, the Czech Republic and Switzerland. (Blackburn, 1997). Greenpeace’s multi-city action showed an acceleration in the formation of a cross-border movement of movements. At this point in the study, we see the EU contingent of the movement of movements grow exponentially before our very eyes.

Greenpeace’s campaign for a moratorium was global. In October 1998 Greenpeace Brazil activists blocked a vessel from unloading 33,960 tonnes of Roundup Ready soy beans from the United States at the port of Sao Francisco do Sul (Reuters News, 1997a). Greenpeace Brazil argued that their scientific evidence found that GM products may cause harm the environment and human health (Osava, 1999).

(ii) The second dimension of the frankenfoods campaign involved successfully securing media coverage with a powerful direct message to an audience of millions. The frankenfoods campaign was designed to re-frame and re-brand Monsanto’s GMOs as dangerous. The campaign slogan drew on the popular horror story by Mary Shelley (1779 to 1851) about an
experiment — Frankenstein — gone wrong. The campaign highlighted the hazardous nature of the food and the interests driving the high-risk experiment. Overall, Greenpeace’s Frankenfoods campaign attempted to give Monsanto a bad name, decrease the value of Monsanto’s stock market shares and delegitimize the corporation and its project on all fronts.

The Greenpeace actors in this campaign were multi-ethnic. Their actions were undertaken and coordinated by people from dozens of countries in the EU and worldwide. GM foods represented a particular threat to culinary diversity. Monsanto agriculture promoted genetic uniformity and monoculture. These represent a threat to the cultural heritage and the diversity of peoples.

In April 1997 a multitudinous range of social factory workers united across geographical borders to simultaneously break up Monsanto’s project. The global citizens targeted Monsanto’s head offices. In London, (UK) more than fifty men and women occupied part of the British headquarters of Monsanto. The protesters hung banners from the roof of Monsanto's offices in High Wycombe, North London. They gained access to the second floor of the building and occupied the board room. A spokesperson from the Women's Environmental Network said the protest marked the beginning of a week of actions in 30 different countries. The global protesters demanded a moratorium on genetically engineered food, animal and human cloning, and the patenting of body parts (Reuters News, 1997b).

In the late 1980s and 1990s in the EU, there was a great deal of debate on human cloning, genetic screening and biotechnology related to human reproduction. Corporations were attempting to use biotechnology to control all aspects of life including women’s wombs and the children that women conceive and give birth to (Ho, 1997). The women and their allies amongst
men in this action connected the struggle for food sovereignty to the struggle for the ability of humans to maintain control over their own bodies or what I call ‘body sovereignty.’

Ordinary citizens were forced into action by giant monopolies and their own usurped governments. These capitalists and their supporter’s of global enclosure undermined women’s control over their bodies and the bodies of their family members. The EU movements and movements in the global South linked their struggle for food and body sovereignty. The groups united in a gendered and ethnicized class alliance in order to build a global movement for a moratorium on biotechnology, including genetically engineered seeds and food.

So far we have considered two actions undertaken by women in the EU. Yet another instance of direct action organized by women took place in June 1998. Five women from the UK group GenetiX Snowball uprooted Monsanto’s GM field trials at an undisclosed location near London. One of the members is quoted by Reuters as saying "[t]hese genetically engineered crops are an assault on our food and the environment. In the face of all responsibility being waived by those in a position to wield it, the responsibility falls on us” (Reuters News, 1998a; Rowell, 1998).

In the act of uprooting Monsanto’s crops, the women of GenetiX Snowball signalled and provoked consumer militancy in defence of fertility. The militancy with which the women from GenetiX Snowball fought Monsanto is a further indication that GMOs are a feminist issue.

In sum, EU food buyers sought to connect across gendered and ethnicized divides to undermine Monsanto’s attempt to enclose aspects of the EU and global food and seed supply. Food buyers’ struggles circulated across geographical borders globally and within the EU. Many millions of food buyers, buyers’ organizations and non-governmental organizations
struggled against Monsanto. These included Friends of the Earth, the UK Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the UK Soil Association, Slow Food International as well as organizations of autonomous food buyers (citizens acting independent of any official organization). A large number of these organizations coordinated internationally.

Many of the protesters focused their actions against the field testing of GM crops by Monsanto, AgrEvo, Novartis and other companies. Maria Margaronis, referring to EU anti-GM protests, observed that “Media-savvy eco-activists in decontamination suits or grim reaper outfits began to pull up trial plantings and leaflet supermarkets; by the summer of 1998, hardly a week went by without reports of some new, inventive, nonviolent protest” (Margaronis, 1999). This festival of activism underlines the fact that the EU struggle against Monsanto was consistent, organized and sustained.

I now turn to an analysis of a second set of actors involved in the EU struggle for a moratorium on GMOs — La Via Campesina farmers.

(2) La Via Campesina Farmers in the EU

Farmers across the EU were engaged in battles against Monsanto. A prominent instance occurred in September 1998 in France when 200 La Via Campesina farmers and their allies uprooted maize and soya crops at a crop testing site owned by Monsanto in Monbequi in the Tarn et Garonne province. The action was led by the French farmers’ union, Confederation Paysanne, a French affiliate of La Via Campesina. The farmers and their allies demanded a ban on the sale and cultivation of GMOs (Reuters News, 1998b). Between 1998 and 2011, smallholders have repeated their action against GMO field trials by Monsanto and other companies.
I now briefly investigate the ways in which the EU movements are connected across terrains of struggle. The multitudes of the social factory link up across terrains of struggle in order to assert a broad-based counterforce against the corporations’ value chain. As I discuss in part one of this study, capitalists bring waged and unwaged workers into the corporate nexus through one or more of the four terrains of struggle (production, consumption, reproduction and nature). Struggles on one terrain trigger or reinforce struggles on another terrain.

In 1998 French farmers (producers) were joined by French women food buyers (social reproduction) in action and effort to stop Monsanto’s field trials and the cultivation of GMOs. Confederation Paysanne affirmed food and seed sovereignty and localized agricultural production and consumption.

A partner organization of predominately of food buyers, Les Amis de la Confederation Paysanne, (Friends of Confederation Paysanne) sought to support and enhance the farmers’ struggle (Friends of Confederation Paysanne, 2011). Confederation Paysanne and their allies have a deeply rooted sensibility about the importance of local, small-scale farming and food culture — a concept the French call ‘terroir.’ The groups seek to replace industrial-scale farming and global production with agroecological and localized farming. In joining Confederation Paysanne, these food buyers called for and supported farmer-centred alternatives.

Women and their demands are prominent in Confederation Paysanne. Confederation Paysanne women were key participants in a La Via Campesina working group that drafted the February 2011 Letter of Solidarity to the Struggle of Women in the World. The Letter states that “As of today we are facing always the same global crises — economic, food, environmental and social — and we are concerned that these attacks continue and deepen. We reformulate our analysis that these crises are not isolated but are the expression of the crisis of the model characterized by over-exploitation of labor and the environment, and financial speculation in the economy. That's why we women, we continue
to say that we must change this model of society, this economic model, this model of production and consumption, which generates increased poverty for our people and especially for women. We women are sensitive to the respect and defend the principles of justice, peace and solidarity, we need to advance in the construction of alternatives addressing these crises, however, palliative answers based on market logic does not concern us now. We cannot accept that attempts to maintain the current system in place are made at the expense of women” (La Via Campesina, 2011c).

Women and their male allies in Confederation Paysanne and the Friends of Confederation Paysanne aimed to stop housewifization on a global scale and return means of production to the control of women in households and small family farms. This gendered class alliance, insofar as it subverted the hierarchy of labour power and sought to defend fertility, enhanced the movement of the working class becoming for itself. The alliance enhanced commoning.

Confederation Paysanne, because of its revolutionary approach, is considered to be one of the leading forces against GMOs and Monsanto in the European Union (Seifert, 2007: 1). Confederation Paysanne’s approach is global. As indicated above in chapter six, in 1999, Karnataka farmers and Confederation Paysanne joined in an action to uproot GMO crops in the France. The Indian women and men were joined by women and men from the global North. This constitutes an ethnicized class alliance aimed at breaking the Monsanto’s in-country and global male deals. In chapter eight below I examine another example of the French farmers connecting with movements across geographical borders to stop Monsanto.

Uprooting GM crops is a popular tactic for anti-Monsanto protesters and has been repeated across the globe (as highlighted above in the account of the India struggle). The field trials are conducted by Monsanto and other biotech companies, often with public institutions as their partners. These trials are a direct threat to farmers’ saved seeds because of the high risk posed
by genetic contamination. Monsanto was enforcing, on a global scale and within the EU, the social relations of industrial farming (capitalism) that weaken family farming (commoning).

Monsanto’s field trials provided a target for farmers and their allies. The social agents were organized and united by Monsanto’s very own corporate arrangements. The French crop burning was strategically organized and timed to coincide with Monsanto’s ‘open house’ day to circulate opposition through the media.

In sum, La Via Campesina farmers in France actively formed gendered, ethnicized class alliances to break up Monsanto’s male deal with the European Commission to effect the back door approval of GMOs in the EU. These alliances were built across the social factory terrains of production and reproduction. The 1998 action by farmers and their allies was part of a global social factory-wide surge in opposition that was undertaken in direct response to Monsanto’s new 1996 expansion and enclosures based on GMOs.

Protests and actions by consumers and other groups against GMOs in the EU had an impact on capitalists in other sectors of the food system. Public pressure was so great that several food processors and supermarkets in Austria, Denmark, Germany, the UK, France and other countries would not stock genetically modified products. Other companies called for the labelling of any foods containing GMOs. Unilever and Nestle, two of the largest food producers in Europe, stated that they would not use genetically engineered soy in their products in Austria and Germany (Lilliston and Cummins, 1997). Capitalists across the agri-food value chain were impacted by the EU movements’ opposition. The social movements in the EU were organized, united and disciplined the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself.
European retailers and distributors were also compelled by public opposition to say ‘no’ to GMOs. In March 1999, J.S. Sainsbury in the United Kingdom, Marks and Spencer of the United Kingdom, Carrefour of France, Effelunga of Italy, Migros of Switzerland, Delhaize of Belgium and Superquinn of Ireland refused to sell brands containing GMO ingredients, in response to public demand (Agri-Industry Europe, 1999).

This social factory-wide opposition to Monsanto in the EU also circulated to public institutions. Below, I provide an analysis of the third set of actors involving the struggle of scientist Arpad Pusztai in UK on the terrain of social reproduction.

(3) Public scientists defend food safety
In 1997 Arpad Pusztai, an eminent Hungarian-born scientist from the Rowett Institute in Aberdeen, warned the public about the potential threats of GMOs. In a British ITV television interview Pusztai was asked, “Does the lack of tests of GMOs worry you?” Puztai responded “Yes.”

“Would you eat transgenic potatoes?” the interviewer asked.

“No” said Pusztai, “[a]nd as a scientist actively working in the field, I find it’s very unfair to use our fellow citizens as guinea pigs” (Pusztaí 1997 cited in Robin, 2010: 182).

Pusztai’s denunciation of GMOs followed logically from his research which generated preliminary results. These results from rat-feeding experiments showed unexpected and worrying dangers of GMOs. Pusztai was lead researcher of a project contracted by the Scottish Agriculture, Environment, and Fisheries Ministry with financing of 1.6 million pounds. The research on the health impacts of GMOs involved thirty scientists. The government charged the researchers with the task of assessing the impacts of GMOs on human health (Robin, 2010: 180).
The research results challenged the veracity of the claim that foods derived from GMOs are substantially equivalent to their non-GMO counterparts.

The researchers fed GMOs to rats. They found that the test groups of rats developed a variety of illnesses. Some groups showed brains, livers, and testes that were less developed than those in the control groups. Some groups developed allergic symptoms, had pregnancy problems and miscarriages, expressed changes to their gut tissue, showed signs of suppressed immunity and some even died without any explanation (Robin, 2010: 180). Pusztai’s findings exposed the dangers of GMOs. His findings, at the very minimum, affirmed that genetically modified foods could not conclusively be found to be ‘substantially equivalent’ to non-genetically modified foods.


Soon after his public warning on the dangers of GMOs, Pusztai was condemned by his colleagues and suspended from his position at the Rowlett Institute. The Royal Society of Scotland published an analysis of Pusztai’s study claiming that it was “flawed in many aspects of design, execution and analysis” (Robin, 2010: 185).

Robin explains that this very Society was in league with Monsanto: “The Guardian [UK] discovered that the Royal Society had established a ‘rebuttal unit’ whose [sic] purpose was ‘to mould scientific and public opinion with a pro-biotech line and to counter opposing scientists and environmental groups.’” Robin continues, “The Royal Society’s attitude was so unusual
that on May 22, 1999, *The Lancet* decided to speak out. It published an editorial declaring, ‘Governments should never have allowed these products into the food chain without insisting on rigorous testing for effects on health’” (Robin, 2010: 185).

Robin quotes Pusztai’s ally, Dr. Stanley Ewan, a pathologist at the University of Aberdeen, who said that “‘It’s not surprising … the Royal Society supported the development of GMOs from the beginning, and many of its members, like Professor Lachmann, [former vice president of the Royal Society] work as consultants for biotechnology companies’” (Robin, 2010: 186). Professor Lachmann was allegedly accused of threatening to fire the editor of *The Lancet*. The editor said that his job would be at risk if he published research that was critical of the safety of GM food. Lachmann later denied this allegation (Flynn and Gillard, 1999).

Monsanto was substantially successful in its efforts to discredit Pusztai. He remained excluded from the Royal Society and he continued to be cut off from employment at the Rowlett Institute. Pusztai and his colleagues challenged Monsanto by speaking publically at universities in Europe and North America to circulate the findings from the rat experiments and his own personal experiences (Pusztai, Arpad and Suzan Bardocz, Health Effects of GM Food — Any Progress? January 2009, University of Guelph lecture). In so doing, Pusztai and his colleagues joined with the women and their allies amongst men who were going naked, blocking ports, occupying head offices and uprooting crops. The Pusztai Affair raised the profile of the issue in the media. Students, teachers, researchers, campus radio personnel, administrators were potentially exposed to Pusztai’s science. His actions strengthened the struggle for a moratorium on GMOs in the EU. By aligning with workers lower down on the hierarchy of labour power, Puztai exhibited qualities that could characterize him as an organic intellectual.
In the process of attempting to enclose the EU’s food supply, Monsanto and its supporters in the European Commission made an agreement that GMO food products were substantially equivalent to non-GMO food products. Pusztai was hired by the UK government to investigate that claim. Pusztai found that GMOs posed a risk to human health. His findings threatened Monsanto’s GMO project and defended the public from the hazards of GM food. Experts including Pusztai provided a scientific basis for the rejection of GMOs. Pusztai scientifically established the non-equivalence of GMOs. This science supported social movements’ call for a moratorium. The force with which Monsanto and Clinton tried to stop Pusztai’s science from reaching the public, underlines the tremendous power that scientists have to interrupt the corporate value chain.

In sum, food buyers, farmers and scientists were forced into alliance and action by Monsanto’s expansion of global power and world-wide organization. The gendered, ethnicized class alliance in the EU sought to disrupt male deals by directing media attention to demands for a moratorium on GMOs, by physically disrupting Monsanto’s business, and by falsifying and exposing Monsanto’s anti-scientific claim that GMOs are safe for human consumption. Other demands of these parties included labelling GMO products as a step toward the protection of people’s health. Some groups aimed to delegitimize the entire project of capitalism.

I now briefly turn to an example of the systemic analysis taken up by these movements. The social movements connected the struggle against GMOs to the struggle against all capitalists and for a post-capitalist food system. Friends of the Earth argued for food sovereignty to build a commoners’ value chain:
“It is essential that we build global food sovereignty based on diverse, localized agricultural solutions. Traditional knowledge, based on peoples’ common heritage, must be protected from corporate interests. False solutions, such as the push for genetically modified crops and other corporate-led technologies, must be stopped. People should be allowed to determine and control their own food systems. This form of agriculture also helps communities become more resilient to climate change” (Friends of the Earth, 2011).

Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Confederation Paysanne, GenetiX Snowball, the Women’s Environment Network and dozens of autonomous actors in the alliance were committed to asserting a counterforce and preventing Monsanto from further enclosing the food system. The alliance sought to achieve this aim largely through use of the media and direct action. The actions, including occupations, banner-drops, nakedness and the destruction of GM crops, forced EU governments to declare a de-facto moratorium (discussed below).

The social movements’ demand for a moratorium on Monsanto’s GMOs circulated across terrains of struggle. The data above highlight struggle on all four terrains. Farmers, (producers) food buyers, (consumers including those organized in non-governmental organizations) reproducers of labour power, (women and scientists) and nature (all those in defence of human and environmental well being and indeed of life itself) were involved in exerting power to stop Monsanto. Resistance to Monsanto was mounted throughout the social factory. Food, the ‘intimate commodity,’ concerns everyone. Monsanto’s enclosure of aspects of the food system drew together large numbers of the multitudes of exploited people in defence of food.

The gendered, ethnicized class alliances not only sustained and escalated opposition to Monsanto as the corporation expanded, they also provided a foundation for gendered, ethnicized class solidarity in the future. These alliances have the potential to develop, expand and be strengthened in future struggles. This autonomous learning was made evident
subsequently in the EU social movements’ opposition to capitalist ‘false solutions’ at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark in December 2009 (more below).

**SECTION THREE: MONSANTO’S ATTEMPT TO DECOMPONE STRUGGLE**

In this section, I draw particular attention to the ways in which Monsanto attempted to decompose or break up working class unity in the EU. (1) First, Monsanto decomposed struggle by influencing public opinion through advertising campaigns. (2) Second, Monsanto attempted to utilize its functionaries in the US government to break up EU member governments’ support for a moratorium. Monsanto and its functionaries were particularly interested in preventing the circulation of struggle from Europe to Africa.

(1) First I discuss Monsanto’s attempt to decompose social movement’s resistance. Public opposition was a major barrier to Monsanto and other biotechnology companies’ enclosure projects. Monsanto invested its life blood in GMOs. Public opposition meant catastrophe for the company. Monsanto needed to break up and discredit opposition in order to maintain its trajectory of growth. For Monsanto, European food buyers’ acceptance of GMOs was a “gateway to the rest of the world” (Lambrecht, 1998). The EU’s rejection of GMOs would have reverberations globally.

In the summer of 1998 Monsanto launched a multi-million dollar advertising campaign to promote GMOs. Key here was the false claim that GMOs end hunger. The ad campaign adopted the message of Monsanto’s CEO Robert Shapiro: “As we stand on the edge of a new millennium, we dream of a tomorrow without hunger. To achieve that dream, we must welcome the science that promises hope. Biotechnology is one of tomorrow’s tools today.
Slowing its acceptance is a luxury our hungry world cannot afford’” (Shapiro 1998 quoted in Robin, 2010: 198).

Monsanto targeted Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth directly. It did so by insisting that there was an open question on biotechnology. One of Monsanto’s basic slogans was: ‘Food biotechnology is a matter of opinions. Monsanto believes you should hear all of them.’ This statement was followed by the addresses and phone numbers of Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace (Robin, 2010: 198). This slogan with its claim about ‘opinions’ points to the company’s attempt to avoid public discussion of facts and scientific data.

As outlined below in chapter nine, Greenpeace’s frankenfoods campaign posed a major threat to Monsanto. We see here an example of the back and forth, diachronic struggle between capitalists and workers. The capitalists and social movements mutually shape and counter each other’s actions.

(2) Second, I discuss the ways in which Monsanto attempted to break up a front of EU governments that were attempting to ban GMOs. By early 1998 the EU Parliament was under intense pressure from social movements to restrict, and stop all together, the commercial production of genetically modified crops. The popular demand was for a moratorium on GMOs. Activist training camps were springing up across the continent.

But high drama was struck by counter pressure on the EU Parliament to genuflect to Monsanto and its GMOs. The US government and the biotech industry pressured the EU to facilitate the approval of GM seeds and food. The EU governments were caught in the vice of class struggle: pressed by the social movements on the one side and Monsanto and the US government on the other side.
Social movements were successful in stopping the EU approval process. They won a multi-year de-facto moratorium in 1998 (in contrast to a de-jure or legal moratorium). A German green party minister, Jürgen Trittin, explained why the ban was not a moratorium proper: "We don't want any new products released when they could lead to (environmental) problems. It [the decision to reject GMOs] will be a de facto moratorium but legally speaking we can't call it that" (Capital Market Report, 1999). Why did the EU governments avoid setting up a full-blown, proper moratorium? If they had done so, the EU Parliament would be vulnerable to legal attack by the US and the biotech industry though the WTO.

October 1998 was the last time the European Parliament had allowed the experimental or commercial growth of any new gene crops (Reuters News, 2003). Before October 1998 the EU approved 18 GM plant varieties, including maize, rapeseed, and soybeans. In 1998 EU governments drastically restricted GM field trials. Between 1998 and 2002 the total number of GM crop trials conducted by biotech companies dropped by nearly 90 percent (Reuters News, 2003).

As of 1999 governments that were for a GMO moratorium included France, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Belgium, Austria and Luxembourg. These governments called for more stringent rules to “guarantee labeling and the traceability of GMOs and derivatives” (European Report, 1999). These governments declared that, pending new rules on GMOs, the EU decisions should be “in keeping with the precautionary and prevention principles” and that governments “will ensure that further authorizations for growing and marketing are suspended” (European Report, 1999).
Other governments fell into two camps. In one camp were governments not strongly in favour of a moratorium but critical of GMOs. In the second camp were governments that were against a moratorium. Governments against a moratorium included most prominently the United Kingdom and Ireland (European Report, 1999).

The UK government in particular was in favour of hastening pro-GMO, pro-Monsanto legislation through the EU Parliament and lifting the moratorium immediately, if not indefinitely. This was a strong stand in favour of Monsanto. According to David Bowe, Labour Party Member of European Parliament (MEP) for Yorkshire and the Humber, "We are cutting through red-tape because industry cannot wait forever. We must keep Europe in the fast lane of biotechnology. With this vote [on an EU policy to approve or not approve GMOs] consumers can have the confidence that GM products licensed for sale in the EU have met the toughest standards in the world" (Farmers Guardian, 2001).

Since 1998 the European governments had been divided on whether to implement an EU wide moratorium on GMOs. Vidal (2002) pointed out that “The commission is now [as of 2002] coming under mounting pressure from impatient US trade officials. Everyone in the commission wants the US off its back and an end to the whole vexed affair” (Vidal, 2002). The EU governments were under pressure, in particular, from the US government and Monsanto.

Before I turn to a discussion of Monsanto and the US government’s counterattack on the EU de-facto moratorium, I underline Monsanto’s use of military force to get GM seeds into the agri-food system. In March 2003 the US began its military occupation of Iraq. The occupation was undertaken by US officials deploying the ‘shock and awe’ military doctrine based on the use of rapid and overwhelming force.
The force of military violence reinforced economic violence by companies including Haliburton, HSBC Bank, Bechtel and Monsanto. These corporations, with US military aid, sought to ‘open Iraq’ for business. At the helm of the drive for the economic colonization of Iraq was US diplomat L. Paul Bremer. Bremer was the administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority set up by the US government to rule Iraq in the early days of the occupation. He issued a series of directives known as the ‘100 orders’ to ‘rebuild’ Iraq (Iraq Coalition, 2004).

In April 2004 Order 81, officially entitled ‘Amendments to Patent and Plant Variety Law,’ came into force. Order 81 established an intellectual property rights regime for Monsanto and other biotech companies to enclose Iraqi farmer’s seeds (Scola, 2007). Order 81 made it illegal for Iraqi farmers to save and replant seeds (Scola, 2007).

Order 81 explicitly states that its provisions are consistent with Iraq's "transition from a non-transparent centrally planned economy to a free market economy characterised by sustainable economic growth through the establishment of a dynamic private sector, and the need to enact institutional and legal reforms to give it effect" (Iraq Coalition, 2004).

Monsanto had effectively ‘shocked and awe’d’ its way into Iraq. From Agent Orange to GMOs, Monsanto has used the force of the US military for its war on subsistence.

A complete and in-depth treatment of Monsanto’s activity in Iraq is outside the scope of this thesis. Many others (Klein, 2007) have undertaken this important work. I now turn to a discussion of how Monsanto and the United States government deployed the World Trade Organization to break up the European government’s ban on GMOs. I conclude with an illustration of the horror with which the easily-spooked Monsanto capitalists and their state
allies viewed globalization from below. I also show how the EU social resistance reinforced Zambia’s rejection of GMO food aid.

**The WTO and Circulation to Zambia**

In 2003 the US government, acting on behalf of the biotech industry, filed a suit at the WTO. The US wanted the WTO to declare that the EU moratorium was illegal. The corporations wanted to force EU member states to end their individual and collective bans on genetically modified seeds and food predominantly under Monsanto’s control.

Monsanto needed to force the EU market open legally. US farmers planted millions of acres of Monsanto’s crops, soy beans and corn in particular. Monsanto needed the EU market as an outlet for these crops. The EU governments’ move to restrict approval of GMO imports posed a major problem for Monsanto and other biotech companies. The company was met with huge resistance. As I discuss below on page 191 where I highlight the Wikileaks disclosures of 2010, the company went to great lengths to manipulate and undermine the EU regulatory system.

By 2002 some 75 percent of the total soy beans sown in the US were genetically engineered varieties, representing a total of 54 million acres. In 2002 GM corn plantings represented a total of 25.3 million acres or 32 percent of all U.S. corn planted (Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology, Factsheet, Genetically Modified Crops in the United States. August 2004). This showed a rapid and massive expansion of production of GMOs. These proportions present an ‘order of magnitude’ indication of the dominance of GMOs on cropland in Canada and Argentina. Biotech companies urgently required European and world-wide markets to be opened up to GM food and seeds.
So powerful was Monsanto’s lobbying within the US government that the federal trade operative waxed hysterical. In May 2003 Bush's trade representative, Robert Zoellick, called the EU's de-facto moratorium on GMOs ‘immoral’ and "Luddite" (Dow Jones International News, 2003). Zoellick and Bush both claimed that the EU moratorium would and did deny food to hungry Africans. In May 2003 Bush, testifying to his belief in GMOs, stated that "European governments should join — not hinder — the great cause of ending hunger in Africa.” The Europeans, Bush stated "have blocked all new biocrops because of unfounded, unscientific fears" (Dow Jones International News, 2003). As stated above in chapter four, GMOs do not solve hunger. GMOs push farmers into debt due to low productivity and the high costs of the patented technology and the chemicals it requires to grow.

Bush was particularly angry at the 2002 decision of Zambia to refuse GM food aid. The government of Zambia was concerned that spilled GM seeds could contaminate local crops and hurt future exports to the EU.

On 14 May 2003 Robert Zollick, referring to the false claim [and standard Monsanto public relations hype] that GMOs solve hunger in Africa, stated that “This dangerous effect of the EU’s moratorium became painfully evident last fall when some famine-stricken African countries refused US food aid because of fabricated fears stoked by irresponsible rhetoric about food safety” (Friends of the Earth, 2003: 2-3).

At the time that Zollick made his allegiance to Monsanto known, EU social factory workers were asserting their rejection of Monsanto by uprooting GMOs, exposing the company’s rhetoric and physically blocking the movement of GM products across borders. Zollick’s
statement reflects a fear that social movements would expand the already existing connections at different points along the corporate value chain to weaken and break it.

The EU ban represented a major threat to multinational corporations’ global markets. The US government was acting on behalf of Monsanto and other biotech companies to defend their corporate value chains from the emerging, globally coordinated movement of social movements. Below I detail the wise decision by Zambian government to reject GM food aid outright in 2002.

In 2002 Southern Africa was in the midst of a devastating famine. Thirteen million people were suffering from food shortages. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) had been importing GM maize into Zambia from the US since 1995. The World Food Programme imported GM maize without the government’s knowledge despite full disclosure requirements stipulated in the international Cartagena Protocol\(^\text{19}\), to which the Zambian government was a signatory. The Cartagena Protocol stipulated that the recipient country must to be notified whenever GM foods are being imported into the country (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2002).

In August 2002 the Zambian government made the decision to reject GM milled and whole grain as food aid. The World Food Programme offered milled grain as an alternative to the whole grain. The milled grain as flour could, of course, not be replanted on farmers’ fields. The

\(^\text{19}\) The Cartagena Protocol was adopted on 29 January 2000 and entered into force on 11 September 2003. It is implemented as part of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Article 1 on the objective of the Protocol states that: “in accordance with the precautionary approach contained in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the objective of this Protocol is to contribute to ensuring an adequate level of protection in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health, and specifically focusing on transboundary movements” (United Nations Environment Program, 2010).
whole grain food aid, should the government allow its importation into the country, opened Zambia to the hazard of contamination which I have outlined above on page 107–109.

The Zambian government asserted that GMOs were not determined to be safe for human health and the environment. The US government responded by insisting that the GM products were harmless and that, according to the US director of the World Food Programme “[t]here is no way for the World Food Programme to provide the resources to feed the starving people without using food that has biotech content” (Capdevila, 2002). Was the world’s food supply so heavily contaminated in 2002 that it was impossible to supply the Zambian people with non-GM food? Where does food aid come from? Was the WFP in league with Monsanto? Further research along these lines would be valuable and of great interest.

When asked by reporters if there was any chance his country would accept biotech aid Silumelume Mubukwanu, Zambia's High Commissioner to London, responded “The answer is an emphatic 'no' on the grounds that too much is unknown about GM foods yet. The fact that the people are starving doesn't mean that we should allow them to eat what they don't know.” He appealed to the UK, Germany, Japan and the United States governments for funds to buy “the ordinary food that the people in Zambia normally eat” (Clapp, 2002: 9).

Non-governmental organizations in the EU joined the Zambian government and other opponents of GMO food aid in an alliance against the US, Monsanto and GMOs. Friends of the Earth International and the Zambian National Farmers’ Union argued that the United States was taking advantage of the poverty of Southern Africa in order to impose genetically modified products on the world market (Friends of the Earth, 2003: 2–3). The European Commission and
the governments of Norway, Switzerland and Japan supported Zambian governments’ decision to reject GM food aid (Friends of the Earth, 2003: 2–3).

US officials requested that the European Union reassure the Zambian and other African governments that EU trade ties with the region would not be disrupted if the countries accepted donations of biotech grain. The US officials were referring to the EU’s cautious approach to biosafety. Governments of countries that exported food to the EU were concerned that the EU would refuse their products if they accepted GM food aid.

The EU rejected the United States government’s call to deliver reassurance to Zambian and other African country governments. But the EU did not take the next logical step. It did not stand in support of the Zambian government’s refusal. In August 2002 the European Commission spokesman Michael Curtis told a news conference, "We do not intend to get involved in what is a discussion between some of the countries of southern Africa and the U.S. It is our position that they have to sort this out for themselves" (Clapp, 2002: 9). Perhaps the EU, already in deep contention within the WTO dispute settlement mechanism, did not want to further provoke the US government by overtly supporting Zambia’s rejection of GMOs.

In November 2006 the European Union lost the World Trade Organization battle with the United States (Gene Watch, 2006). The EU was forced to bow to Monsanto and approve GMOs. This meant that member governments had to begin lifting their national bans. Yet, as of 2011 individual EU member governments continue to implement national bans on biotech products. Individual member governments refused to lift their bans, citing Article 95 (5) of the Amsterdam Treaty, which permits member governments to apply national provisions under certain circumstances deemed necessary by the member government (European Report, 1999).
In 2007 France banned a variety of Monsanto’s GM maize (MON-810) in light of research showing that it could harm human and environmental health. A 2010 WikiLeaks leaked document revealed that in 2007, former US ambassador to France, Craig Stapleton, suggested that the US government should ‘move to retaliation’ against France. By retaliation US ambassador Stapleton referred to using underhanded pressure to force France, Austria, Italy, and the European Commission to end the ban on Monsanto’s maize. Stapleton stated that

“In our view, Europe is moving backwards not forwards on this issue with France playing a leading role, along with Austria, Italy and even the Commission ... Moving to retaliation will make clear that the current path has real costs to EU interests and could help strengthen European pro-biotech voices” (Stapleton quoted in Ludwig, 2010).

Stapleton’s proposed ‘retaliation plan’ is a testament to the US government’s male deal with Monsanto. The US official made this undemocratic and underhanded statement in 2007 in the midst of the Great Hunger of 2007-2008 and the so-called ‘food riots’ that sought to dismantle the anti-life foundations of the capitalist global food system. According to Ludwig, Stapleton’s retaliation plan was never implemented (Ludwig, 2010).

Monsanto required state sponsorship in order to pursue its agenda to enclose plant life, food and animal feed. At the time of writing, August 2011, Monsanto was continuing in its efforts to win GMO approval from all EU governments. A 25 August 2011 Wikileaks cable confirmed that the US government had aided Monsanto by lobbying European and third world governments to ‘speed up’ approval for GM crops. According to Ludwig (2011)

“The cables further confirm previous Truthout reports on the diplomatic pressure the US has put on Spain and France, two countries with powerful anti-GE crop movements, to speed up their biotech approval process and quell anti-GE sentiment within the European Union (EU). Several cables describe "biotechnology outreach programs" in countries across the globe, including African, Asian and South American countries
where Western biotech agriculture had yet to gain a foothold. In some cables (such as this 2010 cable from Morocco) US diplomats ask the State Department for funds to send US biotech experts and trade industry representatives to target countries for discussions with high-profile politicians and agricultural officials” (Ludwig, 2011).

In sum, this chapter has analyzed the ways in which Monsanto sought to enclose aspects of the EU food system by influencing government regulators and decomposing or breaking up opposition from EU social movements and many EU governments. Women and men food buyers, farmers and scientists in the EU used direct action, media campaigns and scientific research to stop the flow of profits to Monsanto and its allies. In 1998, at the behest of the social movements, the European Commission enforced a de-facto moratorium on Monsanto’s GMOs. Monsanto attempted to break up social movement solidarity through its advertising campaign to discredit the frankenfoods opponents.

The social movements’ actions were globally coordinated, especially with movements in Brazil, India and Zambia. The global pattern of struggle reflected Monsanto’s global value chain. These social movement and government actions in the EU circulated to Zambia. By rejecting GM food aid, the Zambian government challenged the entire Monsanto project in the region and the world. The Zambian government and Zambian social movements asserted food sovereignty by defending their food and seed system from contamination and corporate enclosure.

Women and their allies amongst men in countries across the EU were going naked, occupying head offices of multinational companies and uprooting Monsanto’s crops. The women and men linked up with movements across the globe. These movements were joined by Hungarian-born scientist Arpad Pusztai in an effort to stop Monsanto and GMOs. The EU social
factory-wide movement exemplified a gendered, ethnicized class alliance that successfully undermined Monsanto’s value chain.

Farmers of Confederation Paysanne and their allies asserted family farming, localization and food sovereignty as an alternative to Monsanto’s GMO-and-export-oriented agriculture and food dictatorship. Arpad Pusztai fought to ensure that independent science formed the backbone of government’s regulatory standards and policies. The social forces mentioned in these actions (the farmers, food buyers, and scientists) sought to reinforce a democratic regulatory system and force governments to create policy in the public’s interest. The EU social movements affirmed a commoners’ value chain.

At this point in the study I have demonstrated that, in two separate locations, India and the EU, Monsanto’s expansion and enclosure had impelled an increase in movement of movements’ formation and activity. Social movements in these regions connected and formed a component of the global movement of movements. The EU social movements that won a de-facto moratorium in 1998 had a major negative impact on Monsanto. The impact was so significant that the company retaliated. In 1999 Monsanto launched a multi-million dollar advertising campaign that sought to spread its deceptive rhetoric about feeding the hungry. The campaign was meant to discredit and undermine social movements by framing them as causing famine for opposing GMOs.

In 2003 Monsanto’s functionaries in the US government took punitive action against EU governments through the World Trade Organization. As the Wikileaks cables show, the US government has on several occasions underhandedly tried to stop France’s ban on Monsanto’s GM maize. This study’s analysis of the EU moratorium and Monsanto’s attempt to decompose
the EU social movements’ unity has shown how class struggle moves back-and-forth in a
diachronic rhythm over time (as outlined in chapter two).

I now turn to a chapter eight wherein I provide a close analysis of the escalation of fight
back against Monsanto in Brazil.

In 1997 Monsanto took control over Agroceres, the largest seed company in Brazil. By 1999 Monsanto began testing GM soy in the state of Rio Grande do Sul despite the fact that the trials had not been authorized by the state government. Monsanto was illegally testing GM soy in Brazil at the same time as it was illegally testing GM cotton in India. Was Monsanto’s underhanded entry onto farmers’ fields part of its global profit making program?

According to Annie Shattuck “the fact that Monsanto was forced to use illegal tactics to enter the Brazilian market illustrates the strength of public resistance to their products” (Shattuck, 2009: 90). Below I analyze the resistance from government and social movement forces in Brazil between 1999 and 2001. In section one I investigate the Rio Grande do Sul state government’s struggle in 1999 to ban Monsanto and how Monsanto fought back by encouraging large landholders to smuggle GMO seeds from Argentina and thereby contaminate Brazil’s conventional soy beans (Kenfield, 2008).

In section two I investigate the 2001 action by Brazil’s Landless Workers Movement (MST or Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra) to stop Monsanto from illegally growing GM soy. The landless workers coordinated with dozens of social movements world-wide to disrupt Monsanto’s value chain within Brazil and globally.

I now turn to the Rio Grande do Sul state government’s actions.
SECTION ONE: RIO GRANDE DO SUL ‘AT WAR’ WITH MONSANTO

In March 1999 the Brazilian state government of Rio Grande do Sul banned Monsanto from the state. Rio Grande do Sul is the largest producer of soy in Brazil. Brazil is one of the world's top soy producers, second only to the United States (Osava, 1999). As of 1999 Rio Grande do Sul was responsible for nearly 22 percent of Brazil's 30.92 million tonnes of soy exports to the EU (Reuters, 1999).

In May–June 1998 the Brazilian government banned commercial GM seed planting pending new regulations on biotechnology (Food Ingredient News, 1999). Yet, one year later, in March 1999, Brazil’s Vice-President Jose Alencar instituted a provisional measure to grant Monsanto approval for the planting of its Roundup Ready soy (Bellos, 1999).

Immediately in March 1999 the Rio Grande do Sul state government instituted a ban on Monsanto’s GM soy beans. The state also threatened to burn Monsanto’s illegal crops (Stewart, 1999). Rio Grande do Sul’s Workers’ Party, with its Marxist governor Olivio Dutra, was responsible for the ban. Bellos quotes state governor Dutra saying that “We have a very clear objective and [Monsanto] has a very clear objective so it’s like a war” (Bellos, 1999).

Bellos quotes Jose Hermeto Hoffman, Rio Grande do Sul's agriculture secretary declaring that “We were trying to make our agriculture more sustainable and then [the multinationals] came along with this bomb [GM seeds]” (Bellos, 1999). The Rio Grande do Sul government cited two main reasons for banning Monsanto’s GM soy: (1) to protect farmers’ autonomy and (2) to prevent contamination of conventional crops and thereby protect its soy market in the European Union. I discuss these two reasons below.
GM soy would threaten farmers’ autonomy (Bellos, 1999). As mentioned above on page 105, Monsanto’s patented GM seeds restrict farmers’ access to and control over seeds. GM seeds require expensive fertilizers, herbicides and large tracts of land. GM seeds also undermine family food security by replacing peasant’s saved seeds with varieties that are illegal to save and replant from one season to the next. To the extent that women in Brazil are the seed savers, patented seeds would significantly undermine their autonomy. Monsanto’s GM seeds would contaminate Brazilian farmers’ seed supply.

Monsanto’s GM soy would contaminate the conventional varieties and lead to major commercial losses. Brazil’s largest market for soy was the European Union. By 1998 the European Union had refused to import GMO crops (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2003). Monsanto’s illegal field trials in Brazil represented a major threat to the state government’s revenue earning activities.

As the following evidence suggests, state actors were forceful in their mission to stop Monsanto. According to Bellos, state agriculture secretary Hoffman “will use any means possible to thwart Monsanto because he [Hoffman] believes that Monsanto is already moving quickly into production” (Bellos, 1999).

Monsanto was trying to plant GM soy in Brazil. The federal government’s provisional measure in 1999 lifted the ban of GM soy. Monsanto was about to begin cultivating in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Rio Grande do Sul’s ban on GM soy prevented the biotech giant from taking advantage of the opening provided by the federal government’s provisional measure.
In 2000 Monsanto took the Rio Grande do Sul government to court (Bellos, 1999). The legal battle would have serious implications. It would establish to what extent state governments could act against the federal government’s decisions and exercise power to approve or not approve Monsanto’s GMOs. The state government fought to win jurisdiction over decisions to regulate GM food and crops.

Monsanto lost the legal battle in 2000. The biotech giant lost control over this major soy producing territory. A Brazilian federal court based in the region upheld a ban on the sale of genetically modified soy beans on the grounds that the environmental safety of the crops had not yet been determined. The court officials put Monsanto’s field trials on-hold. The federal court ordered the Brazilian federal government to legislate the approval or non-approval of GM products. The court officials also demanded that Monsanto conduct a one-year environmental impact study (International News on Fats, Oils & Related Materials, 2000: 817).

The federal court’s 2000 decision to uphold the ban on GMOs in Rio Grande do Sul was a step toward a country-wide ban. But the government’s decision to legislate the approval or disapproval of GMOs was still undetermined. Was the Brazilian government concerned that the United States government would take Brazil to the World Trade Organization dispute settlement mechanism?

Monsanto continued to try to reverse Rio Grande do Sul’s position on GMOs. The state government was locked into years of legal battles with the company. What did Monsanto do to try to reverse the anti-GMO state’s position?

According to Terra de Direitos, (Rights to Land) a civil society organization based in Curitiba, Brazil, Monsanto encouraged large landholders to cultivate black market GM crops
(Kenfield, 2008). Since 1999 the large landholders began smuggling GM soy beans across the border from Argentina into Brazil. Argentina has, since 1996, been one of Monsanto’s major GM soy bean producing territories. As of 2001 Monsanto’s patented Roundup Ready GM soy constituted 90 per cent of commercial crop farmed land in Argentina (Kennedy, 2009: 71).

Isabella Kenfield stated that “The idea was to pressure the government to legalize the planting of GM crops [as a result of a] fait accompli, or what [Darcy] Frigo [of Terra de Direitos] refers to as “fato consumado” [fait accompli]. Once Brazilian farmers were planting Roundup Ready soy illegally, Monsanto argued that Brazil had to legalize the cultivation of GM soy so the corporation could collect royalties on its seeds” (Kenfield, 2006).

According to Kenfield, in January 2008 the Brazilian minister of science and technology acknowledged that Monsanto’s GM soy beans and cotton were legalized by the federal government only after they had already been smuggled into and planted in the country by large farmers (Kenfield, 2008).

There are two phases to Monsanto’s profit plan in Brazil.

(1) Phase one includes the contamination of non-GM varieties with GM varieties. Monsanto would then be able to collect royalties from its patented seeds that had contaminated Brazilian farmers’ fields.

(2) Phase two includes forcing the government to approve GMOs as a way of curtailing contamination and establishing biosafety and labelling regulations.

Monsanto pursued this contamination strategy in Paraguay. Large landholders began cultivating Monsanto’s GM soy which threatened to contaminate the country’s conventional soy. As of 2004 in Paraguay no law had authorized the cultivation of GM crops. Yet Monsanto’s
GM soy beans covered nearly half the cultivated land (Robin, 2010: 275). In 2008 Paraguay’s deputy minister of agriculture (as of 2009) Roberto Franco, stated that “to avoid losing our markets—soybeans account for 10 percent of our GDP—we had to legalize the illegal crops” (Franco quoted in Robin, 2010: 276). By 2004 many governments, including in the EU and Zambia, had banned GMOs and strictly required imports of non-GM crops.

Monsanto’s contamination strategy in Brazil was resisted by the Rio Grande do Sul government. The Rio Grande do Sul’s legal battle disrupted the federal government’s agreement with Monsanto to allow it to cultivate soy in the state. The Workers’ Party had formed the government of this state. By banning Monsanto, the Workers’ Party joined the social movement forces in Brazil that had been defending farmers’ autonomy. Brazil’s landless workers’ movement, MST, was one of these forces.

Employing the political opportunities approach (outlined above in chapter one) one might argue that the state government provided social movements with an opening that they could use to strengthen their opposition. Did the Rio Grande do Sul government support social movements’ initiatives by contributing financial and other resources? Did Brazilian social movements use the Rio Grande do Sul governments’ actions as examples of how to push forward anti-GMO legislation in other states within Brazil? These and other important questions framed by the political opportunities approach are worthy of attention in future studies.

In sum, beginning in 1998, Monsanto attempted to enclosed Brazilian farmers’ soy by encouraging large landholders to plant the companies’ banned GM variety. Monsanto wanted to contaminate Brazilian peasant seeds in order to force the federal and state governments’
approval. Monsanto’s agreement with large landholders was a male deal to control fertility, in particular, seeds. The Rio Grande do Sul state government subverted the deal by successfully banning the company from the state. In 2001 the MST escalated the fight back against Monsanto. Below I analyze the MST’s direct action to undermine the company’s global operations and break up the male deal amongst Monsanto and large landholders in Brazil.

I now turn to an analysis of the social movement’s fight back against Monsanto’s contamination.

SECTION TWO: BRAZIL’S LANDLESS WORKERS MOVEMENT AND WORLD SOCIAL FORUM CIRCULATION 2001

In 2001 Brazil’s Landless Workers’ Movement (MST or Movimento dos Trabalhadores Ruralis Sem Terra) took direct action against Monsanto by uprooting its crops at a global, high profile meeting of social movements, non-governmental organizations, independent media, and academics. Before I discuss this action I explain what the MST is and provide a brief history of their organization against agribusiness and for the commons.

MST was founded in 1985 by trade union groups and has grown to become the largest social movement in Latin America. According to University of Guelph sociologist and rural women specialist, Nora Cebotarev, (1991) Indigenous women provoked the creation of the movement that evolved into MST (Cebotarev quoted by Turner, 2011). They did so by directly expropriating land and producing food for families By the late 1990s women’s demands and leadership within the MST continued to expand (Deere, 2003: 274).

According Michael Lowy (2000) the MST is “not just the organized expression of the struggle of the poor for a radical agrarian reform, but also the central reference point for all the
forces in Brazil’s ‘civil society’ (which includes unions, churches, leftist parties, professional associations, and university teachers) that are struggling against neoliberalism” (Lowy, 2000: 17).

MST has undertaken thousands of land occupations. Between 1985 and 2009 the MST has settled more than a million landless peasants and forced the government to redistribute thirty-five million acres of land\(^{20}\) (an area the size of Uruguay) (Holt-Giménez, 2009: 152).

It was the policy of the MST to focus its efforts on developing and enhancing ecological farming in the territories that the movement members had occupied in Brazil. The MST is a founding member of La Via Campesina and has worked with La Via Campesina organizations to enhance the capacity of the settlement families to practice ecological farming. As of 2009 the MST, in partnership with La Via Campesina, had established eleven secondary schools and introduced university courses in agroecology. The courses are designed to train MST youth to provide technical assistance to families on the settled territories (Holt-Giménez, 2009: 153).

According to Holt-Gimenez (2009) “MST schools in and of themselves are a testament to the movements’ capacity to advance agroecological policies at state and federal levels” (Holt-Gimenez, 2009: 153).

The MST states that

“For millions of years, human beings have improved and selected the most interesting varieties of various species. They have used them

\(^{20}\) The MST’s battle for land reform had been met with violence perpetuated by large landholders and government forces. The most notorious instance of violence against MST members occurred on 17 April 1996, called the Eldorado dos Carajás massacre, when 19 MST members were murdered (another 69 wounded) by police while they were blocking a state road in Pará, Northern Brazil. As of 2009, no police officers had been charged and no compensation had been paid to the victims’ families (New Internationalist We Are Millions Issue 428 Dec 2009 available at http://www.newint.org/features/special/2009/12/01/we-are-millions/).
especially for nutritional purposes, as well as cultural and religious, in a perennial search for an abundant food source in nature. Historically, seeds are the basis of human survival and for that reason should not be considered a market product, but rather a heritage of humanity! What future do you prefer: one of family agriculture that provides five jobs per acre, or that of large companies that provides one job for every 185 acres? Do you prefer a country with 2,810 properties of 20 hectares that point all their production to the workers table, or a country in which only one company controls 56.2 thousand hectares and exports 97% of its production” (MST, 2006).

The MST is building a future in which people own their own land, have access to the means of production, have meaningful work, enjoy adequate nutrition, and are free to engage in autonomous religious and cultural expression. The MST rejects capitalist industrial farming, GMOs and monoculture which dominates and controls human labour power and nature. Taking back land, farming ecologically and saving seeds are central practices to the MST’s agenda for action to establish a commoners’ value chain.

As noted above, agroecology centralizes women’s expertise and seed saving practices. The MST’s focus on agroecology contributes to protecting women’s seeds systems. Agroecology is central to seed sovereignty because it allows peasants, especially women amongst them, to maintain control over indigenous seeds and conserve seed as a conduit for the transmission of culture, history and local expertise. The MST also struggles to prevent chemical contamination of nature and human bodies, especially the bodies of pregnant women who are at a greater risk from Monsanto’s Roundup (MST, 2006; Webber and Weitzman, 2009).

In sum, the MST has endorsed an agriculture that gives women power over seeds and protects all of life from agro-industrial poisons. The women and men have united in a gendered class alliance in the MST to stop capitalist exploitation and enclosure and affirm commoning.
The MST’s commoning alternatives to capitalism contribute to stopping the enclosure or ‘housewifization’ of women’s labour and bodies.

I now turn to an examination of the MST’s 2001 direct action against Monsanto. Below we see that, in 2001, the struggle against Monsanto involves social movements in expanding and enhancing simultaneous direct action. This time, cross-border action took place within Brazil and circulated globally through cyber space and the global media.

**The 2001 World Social Forum Action to Stop Monsanto**

In 2001 the MST took direct action to defend the land and family farming against Monsanto’s corporate contamination. Monsanto’s illegal cultivation of GM soy represented a direct attack on MST members and families (as well as on the wider population). In particular, Monsanto’s GMO seeds require large quantities of land and chemicals. As stated above, GMO agriculture fuels the concentration of land by large landholders. Monsanto’s Roundup Ready chemicals contaminate local ecosystems and people’s bodies.

In January 2001 Monsanto’s contamination of GM soy in Brazil stimulated the MST, well rehearsed in land defence tactics, to use their skills against Monsanto.

On 29 January 2001 in the heart of the soy growing region in the town of Nao-Me-Toque, (which translates to ‘don’t touch me’) Rio Grande do Sul, the MST and dozens of their international allies occupied Monsanto’s 988 acre experimental farm and research centre. MST coordinated the action in tandem with the inaugural World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul.
The World Social Forum is tremendously important to the surge of power from below in Brazil and the world. The World Social Forum is a convergence of social movements to coordinate actions against capitalism and affirm a post-capitalist future. See Table 3 for more details on the World Social Forum.

From 25 to 30 January 2001 in the city of Porto Alegre, thousands of social movements from around the world gathered for the inaugural World Social Forum. Many dozens of World Social Forum participants joined the MST’s action against Monsanto.

Marco Sibaja described the World Social Forum action against Monsanto:

“[t]he MST families took over the research center and warehouses, hanging hammocks and setting up mattresses and boxes of food. The protesters scrawled on the walls, "The seed of death!" and "Monsanto is the end of farmers!" Monsanto said on Friday it had requested that local authorities "restore order" at the unit [in Nao-Me-Toque, January 2001]....The some 10,000 activists united in Porto Alegre for the "Anti-Davos" forum are expected to condemn GM food along with a wide range of what they say are neoliberal and capitalist policies that have deepened the divide between the rich and poor. MST families have led protests outside the Monsanto plant but it is the first time they invaded the facility“ (Sibaja, 2001).
Table 5

What is the World Social Forum?

The World Social Forum is an annual meeting of social movements gathered to affirm alternatives that

“stand in opposition to a process of globalization commanded by the large multinational corporations and by the governments and international institutions at the service of those corporations’ interests, with the complicity of national governments. They [alternatives promoted at the World Social Forum] are designed to ensure that globalization in solidarity will prevail as a new stage in world history. This will respect universal human rights, and those of all citizens — men and women — of all nations and the environment and will rest on democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples.”

The World Social Forum provides social movements with a space to organize across borders, to share strategies and coordinate global actions to break up capitalists’ value chains. The meetings are consciously held in January to promote alternatives to and oppose the corporate-led World Economic Forum in held annually in January in Davos, Switzerland.

The forum is held in different geographical locations around the world. Since 2001 the World Social Forum has flourished. Social movements are organizing forums regionally. According of a member of the World Social Forum international coordinating committee, fully 52 regional social forums took place between February 2007 and March 2011. These social forums have probably been influential in sparking and spreading the 2011 Arab Revolution.


The MST harnessed the power of the international meeting in order to disrupt Monsanto’s GM soy contamination in Brazil and undermine the company’s operations globally. The MST and World Social Forum participants’ occupied Monsanto’s Nao-Me-Toque research centre to demand an end to Monsanto and capitalist social relations. The occupation involved families of women, men and children from Brazil and participants from social movements across the world. These global movements represented different waged and unwaged social groups
including women, indigenous peoples, farmers, journalists, and public sector workers. The multitudes of the social factory undertook the occupation and crop destruction to move toward ending the social factory.

The World Social Forum occupation and crop uprooting undermined Monsanto in at least three ways: (1) it circulated the struggle against Monsanto through the global media; (2) it affirmed global commoning and; (3) the uprising trained and strategized for future direct action across borders. I now discuss these three efforts to undermine Monsanto.

(1) The political theatre focused global media attention on the farmers’ opposition to Monsanto. Sibaja quotes an MST leader from Rio Grande do Sul, Solet Campolete, saying that “We’re staying here indefinitely … [w]e want to make a statement … these seeds trick farmers and create dependency on seeds produced by a big multinational” (Sibaja, 2001). An example of the ‘trick’ Campolete referred to is that Monsanto’s advertisements for GM soy in Brazil say that the GM ‘superseeds’ constitute a magic answer to ‘making farmers’ lives easier’ (Bellos, 1999). The reality by 2001 was that farmers who planted GMO seeds across the world were experiencing decreases in yields, pest problems, and increased debt as a result of being victimized by Monsanto’s patented technology (Shiva, 2004a).

Amongst the GM crop destroyers was farmer Jose Bove of France’s Confederation Paysanne. Addressing the crowd at the action Bove stated that “Monsanto says transgenics [GMOs] require less pesticides and chemicals, but that’s a lie. Transgenics increase dependence on those products” (Bove quoted in Sibaja, 2001). Bove and farmers of Confederation Paysanne confront in France the same reality (the loss of autonomy because of agribusiness monopolies and activities) as do farmers in Brazil and other parts of the world.
By 2001 the La Via Campesina contingent of the movement of movements in countries across the world, including in Brazil, India and France, were uprooting Monsanto’s crops in acts of civil disobedience. The global media focused great attention on the farmers’ anti-Monsanto action at the World Social Forum. Journalists, Indymedia, writers, academics, cyber-bloggers, videographers and independent media specialists spread the story across the world. Millions of social factory workers were exposed to accounts of the farmers’ resistance and their rejection of GMOs.

As of 2001 the global media opposition deeply impacted Monsanto. The company was on the verge of total collapse. I provide a more detailed discussion on Monsanto’s collapse in the following chapter.

In sum, the World Social Forum action seized the attention of the global media and contributed to globalizing the struggle against Monsanto and its program to make farmers dependant on chemicals and GM seeds.

(2) The second way in which the World Social Forum political theatre undermined Monsanto was that it provided an opportunity for social movements to affirm commoning alternatives to Monsanto and the social relations of GMO agriculture. Economist and MST organizer Joao Pedro Stedile stated at the rally “Our fight for land is also linked to the agricultural model that goes with it. It's not enough just to get the land. It also has to be healthy and has to last” (Lecumberri, 2001). Stedile was presumably referring to the practice of agroecology that the MST and La Via Campesina practice and promote.
Rafael Alegria, a Honduran organizer with La Via Campesina, affirmed localized food systems and food sovereignty. He stated that “Each country should produce its own food to the extent possible, preventing imports that take away peasants' right to produce” (Osava, 2001).

In their resistance, the MST and the global alliance of social movements that participated in the political theatre affirmed a commoners’ value chain. As Stedile, Bove, and Alegria noted above, food and seed sovereignty, ecological farming practices and localization provide a framework for a new future of commoning and farmers’ autonomy. The 2001 occupation affirmed the reality that, as the World Social Forum slogan suggests, ‘another world is possible.’ In fact, World Social Forum participants are actually, in practice, expanding and promoting the global commoners’ value chain.

(3) The third way in which the January 2001 occupation and uprooting undermined Monsanto is that it provided an opportunity for social movements to train and develop a global strategy to stop Monsanto. The action allowed movements’ participants to practice and learn how to repeat GM crop uprooting in their own communities. The movements spread literature and campaign tools including banners, stickers, T-shirts, music and videos. The movements dramatized and popularized struggle through theatre, song, and dance.

At the action, the MST farmers dug a pit, placed inside it a shroud decorated with the words, “Monsanto rest in peace,” then covered it over with earth (Osava, 2001). This action signals a commitment, on the part of social movement participants in the North and South, to stop Monsanto. It was also a call to militancy in future actions to take back control over fertility.

In sum, social movements expanded and accelerated the fight against Monsanto by (1) spreading information about anti-GMO struggle through the global media; (2) affirming food
and seed sovereignty, agroecology and localization as commoners’ alternatives to Monsanto and; (3) practicing and calling for simultaneous coordinated direct action across borders to break up the capitalist value chain and replace it with a commoners’ life-centred value chain. For the three reasons I have outlined above, the captains of industry in Davos, including Monsanto, brought together this massive people’s alliance of social movements.

The Davos meeting brought together all capitalists and their state functionaries to plan, coordinate and promote the corporations’ value chain. The 2001 inaugural World Social Forum contributed to coalescing the global movement of movements to usher the whole world society into post capitalist future. This multitudinous movement of movements seeks to stop global social factory exploitation.

The MST had been fighting to defend land since the 1980s and was well rehearsed in direct action tactics. In 2001 Monsanto’s enclosure of soy beans, agricultural land and human bodies impelled the MST to organize across borders to stop Monsanto directly.

As stated above, Monsanto’s male deal involving large landholders in Argentina and Brazil sought to contaminate Brazilian farmers’ saved soy beans. Monsanto pursued its contamination strategy globally, including in India and Paraguay. The World Social Forum action aimed to break up Monsanto’s (i) Brazilian in-country and (ii) global male deals. I now consider each in turn.

(i) The World Social Forum action breaking up in-country male deals

At this January 2001 World Social Forum action against Monsanto, women and men farmers and their allies affirmed a commoners’ value chain. This commoners’ value chain sought to replace Monsanto’s toxic chemical inputs with ecological inputs, global corporate sovereignty
with farmers’ sovereignty and corporate globalization with commoners’ localization and global solidarity.

The MST and their international allies aimed to break up the male deal between Monsanto and large landowners in Argentina and Brazil. The deal was struck to illegally distribute and grow GM seeds in Brazil. The seed smuggling would contaminate non-GM varieties and force the government to accept GMO in order to implement national biosafety and labelling regulations.

(ii) The World Social Forum action breaking up global male deals

The social movements aimed to break up Monsanto’s global GMO contamination and enclosure project by uniting with each other across geographical borders. Participants in the World Social Forum from the global North and South joined together in an ethnicized class alliance in an effort to damage the company’s image in the eyes of its investors, its shareholders and within governments of countries where Monsanto was seeking authorization for all of its activities.

The occupation provided a basis for social movements to coordinate direct action against Monsanto in the future, and to practice and rehearse actions. The actions also provided social movements with evidence (testimonies and stories) to take back home and bring forward to farmers and policy makers. The evidence supported the argument that Monsanto and GMOs are a threat to life. The farmers and their allies’ willingness to commit civil disobedience and break the law was a testament to the seriousness of the danger of GMO agriculture and Monsanto.
By expressing opposition to Monsanto, movements aimed to stop Monsanto and to further damage the company’s public image. Their aim was undertaken by joining hands across borders. Nanjunda Swamy of the Karnataka State Farmers Association stated three years earlier in 1998 that

“the kind of actions that will be going on in India have the potential not only to kick those corporate killers out of our country: if we play our cards right at [the] global level and coordinate our work, these actions can also pose a major challenge to the survival of these corporations in the stock markets. Who wants to invest in a mountain of ashes, in offices that are constantly being squatted (and if necessary even destroyed) by activists? For these reasons, we are making an international call for direct action against Monsanto and the rest of the biotech gang. This call for action will hopefully inspire all the people who are already doing a brilliant work against biotech, and many others who so far have not been very active on the issue, to join hands in a quick, effective worldwide effort” (Swamy, 1998).

The 2001 World Social Forum action escalated Swamy’s call to action by implementing it.

_The MST escalates its fight against Monsanto (2003–2008)_

In Brazil, the MST continued to expand its fight back against Monsanto. In 2003, months after taking office, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva pushed forward legalization and regulation of GMOs. Against tremendous opposition, Lula legalized GM soy beans for the 2003–2004 growing season and Monsanto began legally selling its soy (Lee, 2007).

Immediately following Lula’s approval of GMOs, the MST organized another series of occupations of Monsanto’s facilities in Brazil. In 2003 the MST undertook three actions against Monsanto in different locations. In one of these actions, in June 2003, the MST invaded a farm owned by Monsanto in the state of Goias. The MST declared that the occupation was to “‘expel’ Monsanto from the state and convert the land to organic production” (Shiva, et. al., 2004c: 60).
Monsanto’s entry into Brazil was through the back door. Kenfield (2006) points out that in 2004, Monsanto ‘bought out’ a congressman in southern Brazil. The congressman was Abelardo Lupion, a federal official of the right-wing Liberal Front Party (Kenfield, 2006). Lupion pushed through a series of federal amendments legalizing the herbicide Roundup, required in the cultivation of Monsanto’s soy.

According to Kenfield, congressman Lupion had been in league with agri-business corporations since the early 2000s. Kenfield stated that

“Lupion has built his political career in the state of Paraná by promoting the interests of large landowners. Since the early 2000s, he has increasingly worked to promote the interests of U.S. agribusiness, especially those of Monsanto. Via Campesina, the MST, civil society groups and officials from various political parties assert that Lupion’s connections to Monsanto have fuelled his corruption” (Kenfield, 2006).

In 2007 the Brazilian government began an investigation of Lupion for corruption after he purchased a large farm from Monsanto at one third the market price. Monsanto’s sales of Roundup went up 30 percent after the 2007 corrupt land deal involving Monsanto and Congressman Lupion (Lee, 2007).

In 2008 the MST escalated its fight back. On 7 March 2008 in Santa Cruz das Palmeiras in the state of Sao Paulo, the women of MST destroyed a greenhouse and experimentation field owned by Monsanto (Reuters, 2008). Monsanto’s experimentation field housed trials of the MON810 strain of GM corn that had been banned in France.

The action was part of a week-long series of global undertakings by La Via Campesina organizations “to mark international women’s day with a struggle against agribusiness and monoculture” (La Via Campesina spokesperson quoted in Reuters, 2008). According to John Brown, the MST women undertook the action to stop the spread of GMOs which would lead to
the private control of seeds by multinationals and make it impossible to farm organically (Brown, 2008). This was the global gendered class alliance in action to break up the corporations’ value chains, including that of Monsanto.

The MST women told Reuters that “the authorization of these varieties shows once more that [Lula’s] government favours agribusiness and big foreign companies, abandoning land reform and family farming” (Reuters, 2008). The MST women were defending food sovereignty and family farming. They were defending chemical-free communities and food security for families across Brazil and the world.

Crop destruction is a popular tactic exercised by opponents of Monsanto. Many La Via Campesina organizations have undertaken direct action to uproot and burn Monsanto’s crops. For example, Haiti in 2010, farmers burned Monsanto seed donations. Monsanto had sent the seeds to the country as a ‘gift’ following Haiti’s devastating earthquake. Monsanto sent the ‘gift’ in partnership with USAID and backed by the US embassy in Haiti.

Ten thousand people in the capital city of Port au Prince, including many farmers, burnt Monsanto’s seeds. La Via Campesina quotes Chavannes Jean-Baptiste, spokesperson for the National Peasant Movement of the Congress of Papaye (MPNKP) stating that

“If Monsanto’s seed come into Haiti, the seed of the peasants will disappear. Monsanto’s seed will create problems of health and for the environment. Thus it is necessary for us to struggle against this project of death to do away with the peasants” (La Via Campesina, 2010a).

This chapter has analyzed the ways in which the actions undertaken by the MST and World Social Forum participants in 2001 and the Rio Grande do Sul government in 1998–99, were organized by Monsanto’s enclosure of seeds. In 1999 Rio Grande do Sul banned Monsanto from the state in order to (1) defend farmers autonomy and (2) affirm food sovereignty.
Since the 1980s the women and men in the MST had been organizing to defend workers and land from the threats of corporate enclosures and chemical contamination. The women and men of the MST practiced agroecology in order to build commoning. In 2001 the MST was spurred into action by Monsanto. In January 2001 the MST and participants at the inaugural World Social Forum sought to challenge Monsanto by (1) spreading the opposition to GMOs and Monsanto through the global media; (2) affirming the commons as an alternative to agribusiness and; (3) exercising and calling for militant direct action across borders.

The World Social Forum in Porto Allegre provided La Via Campesina farmers and their allies with a global platform from which to denounce capitalism as a whole and connect in struggle. Two years earlier in Seattle, Washington, social movements had converged in a massive demonstration which shut down the World Trade Organization meeting and severely undermined the organization as a whole. The World Social Forum movements continued and accelerated the struggle for life and against capitalism. The 2001 anti-Davos meeting in Porto Allegre was the ‘Battle of Seattle’ in the South.

The MST’s alliance with World Social Forum participants and the Rio Grande do Sul government’s alliance with small farmers sought to break up Monsanto’s global GMO value chain and reaffirm family farming. Monsanto’s global concentration and enclosure of seeds in countries across the world provided the template for these women and men within social movements to link across geographical borders in a global gendered, ethnicized class alliance. The connections formed between these social forces represented an expansion of the movement toward global popular sovereignty and ownership over the means of production.
This chapter has moved the argument forward by exemplifying the ways in which Monsanto expanded its power and profits globally by contaminating organic seeds and making deals with large landholders and government officials. We saw how Monsanto’s global expansion (and the expansion of other corporate oligopolies) provided the design for global social movements to unite across geographical borders.

I have sought to illustrate the expansion and acceleration of the movement of movements against Monsanto since the 1992 seed struggle. The women and men in rural India who were organizing to stop patents on seeds were joined by movements primarily in the EU. Beginning in 1996 agents of struggle in the EU defended the food system and human bodies from Monsanto by winning a de-facto moratorium on GMOs. In 1998 and 1999 farmers in India and the EU were drawn together by Monsanto. The farmers uprooted and burned Monsanto’s crops throughout Asia and Europe.

By 1998 Monsanto’s and social movements’ global reach had significantly expanded. The company built a global network to enclose seeds, other aspects of nature, as well as human labour power, both waged and unwaged. In Brazil Monsanto’s enclosure of soy forced the women and men of the MST to fight back. In 2001 the MST’s strategy was to connect with movements globally. The MST-coordinated action at the inaugural World Social Forum expanded the connection amongst social movements. The World Social Forum embraced social factory workers organized in movements across the world. These movements interfaced and contributed to the formation of the global movement of movements against capitalism and for the commons.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section investigates the ways in which social movement opposition impacted Monsanto.

The second section examines stage two of Monsanto’s concentration (2007–2011) and the concomitant surge in social movement opposition.

The third section analyzes the ways in which capitalist crises impel social movements to coordinate across borders to interrupt and replace capitalist value chains with commoners’ value chain. The third section shows how the movement of movements has grown to become a multifaceted and increasingly multitudinous force to end the working class *in itself* and replace it with global commoning.

I now turn to section one.

SECTION ONE: MONSANTO COLLAPSES UNDER PRESSURE FROM OPPOSITION

1999 was a high point of struggle against Monsanto. In the EU, food buyers were forcing Monsanto’s ‘frankenfoods’ off the supermarket shelves. In India, farmers and their allies were promoting seed saving and non-participation with patent rules through global networks. La Via Campesina farmers and their allies in Brazil, India and the EU were uprooting Monsanto’s crops in a cross-border campaign to stop Monsanto’s takeover of land and food. Legal suits against Monsanto had sprung up all over the world, challenging the company and forcing it to pay up.
Before I turn to a discussion of Monsanto’s breakdown I briefly examine the major increase in opposition to the biotech giant during the 1999 ‘Battle of Seattle.’

On 30 November 1999 when the World Trade Organization (WTO) opened its third round of negotiations in Seattle, Washington, over forty thousand protesters from around the world gathered to stop it. The 1999 ‘Battle of Seattle’ signalled an expansion and acceleration of globally coordinated direct action. For La Via Campesina, the Battle of Seattle represented the first time the farmers’ movement coordinated with movements from other sectors. As La Via Campesina states “Seattle was the first mobilization of La Via Campesina together with social movements from around the world. We united and held a large demonstration and we defeated the WTO in Seattle” (La Via Campesina, 2011d).

The 1999 convergence of social movements was facilitated by Indymedia (The Independent Media Centre). Indymedia is a global, democratic network of journalists who report on social movement news from below. At the Battle of Seattle, Indymedia reached a high point and became the source of information on political struggle. For the first time in history, social factory workers had easy and wide-spread access to social movement’s perspectives, ideas and information through Indymedia and the World Wide Web.

According to Dyer-Witheford, the Battle of Seattle signalled a shift from the socialized worker, the labourer of the social factory, to the globalized worker, the labourer of the global social factory. In the global social factory corporate exploitation is networked internationally. Social movements’ struggles are networked internationally and significantly organized by corporations’ value chains and cyber space. The January 2011 Egyptian uprising in Tahrir Square, Cairo was mobilized into action by a young woman, Asmaa Mahfouz, and her allies
using the capitalists’ global networks of communication to spread the call for action throughout Egypt and the world. In her call to action in the week leading up to the 25 January action, Asmaa Mahfouz stated “If you think yourself a man come with me on 25 January. Whoever says women should not come to protest because they will be beaten, let him have some honour and manhood and come with me on 25 January” (Mahfouz, 2011). Who are these global workers? Are they the young women in Egypt organizing a multi-faceted revolution for the working class to become for itself? Is this the commoner today emerging from the networks and organization of capitalist expansion? I now return to an analysis of social movements’ impact on Monsanto.

By 1999, the globally coordinated movement of social movements that emerged from the Battle of Seattle had significantly impacted Monsanto’s bottom line. Monsanto’s 1996–1998 expansion of power and profits placed the company in a vulnerable position. What was this vulnerable position?

Between December 1998 and October 1999 Monsanto’s stock had lost more than a third of its value. In October 1999 analysts predicted that “the company executives could be forced into radical changes, possibly including breaking Monsanto into pieces” (Gillis and Swardson, 1999).

The first sign of this breakdown appeared in November 1998. Monsanto’s planned 80 billion dollar merger with American Home Products had collapsed. The US based American Home Products is one of the largest multinational pharmaceutical and farm products companies in the world. Monsanto and American Home cited unexpected problems with a promising cardiovascular drug ‘Orbofiban’ (Financial Times, 1998).
The failed merger placed Monsanto under “accelerating financial strain” (Knight-Ridder Tribune Business News: St. Louis Post, 1998). In December 1998, weeks after the failed merger, Monsanto announced that it was going to lay off 1000 employees and sell several businesses to ‘fortify its financial foundation’ (Knight-Ridder Tribune Business News: St. Louis Post, 1998).

CEO Robert Shapiro tried to recover the company’s losses by issuing stock and selling 2.5 billion dollars in debt securities to private investors (Knight-Ridder Tribune Business News: St. Louis Post, 1998). Shapiro’s efforts were met with dissatisfaction from Monsanto executives because of the company’s continued and sustained poor financial performance.

In March 1999 Monsanto was negotiating a merger with Dupont. The merger “could create a biotechnology powerhouse capable of dominating the future of the agriculture and life sciences industries” (Morgan, 1999). “Major anti-trust obstacles” prevented the deal from taking place (Morgan, 1999).

By October 1999 Shapiro resigned. Before he left the company, the ‘guru of Monsanto’ participated in a business conference organized by Greenpeace in London. Shapiro, from his office in the US, promised that "we're now publicly committed to a dialogue with people and groups who have a stake in this issue [of genetic modification]" (Kilman, 1999).

Shapiro renewed Monsanto’s commitments to ending its plan to commercialize the terminator gene. The ‘terminator,’ as stated above, was an experimental technology designed to make seeds sterile after first use. The terminator seed would be a catastrophe for farmers because terminator seeds would make it impossible and useless for farmers to save seeds. The terminator gene would also guarantee Monsanto royalties from the annual sale of new
terminator seeds, remembering that the farmer would have no choice but to plant another GM crop on that land.

Monsanto was deeply impacted by widespread public opposition and resistance. Shapiro’s resignation and his ‘committed to dialogue’ address is further indication of the impact that public opposition had on Monsanto.

Justin Gillis and Anne Swardson (1999) comment that “No company has bet more than Monsanto on genetically modified foodstuffs. No company believed more deeply in their value— and potential profitability. And now no company is suffering more, in terms of finances, stock price and image, from the international debate about the safety of those products” (Gillis and Swardson, 1999).

Monsanto sustained losses into 2002. Hendrik Verfaillie, a 26-year veteran with Monsanto and Shapiro’s replacement, was forced to resign in 2002 because of ‘poor financial performance’ (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2002). Monsanto was not able to keep up. One short year later the CEO was replaced again by Hugh Grant.

By the end of 2002 Monsanto had lost 1.7 billion dollars in revenues. According to the Economics Intelligence Unit “in the first nine months of 2002 Monsanto brought a 1.75 billion dollar loss, compared with profits of 399 million dollars in the same period a year earlier” (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2002).

Erick Schonfeld from CNN Money explains that

“Not so long ago, Frankenfoods, the critics still call them seemed to threaten Monsanto’s very existence. The company was under ferocious attack from critics worried that the genetically engineered crops Monsanto was developing and evangelizing as a source of limitless environmentally friendly food supplies—not to mention bumper profits—
menaced nature itself. The controversy drained morale and hammered Monsanto's stock. Operational missteps compounded the problem, and in 2002 the company lost $1.7 billion. Monsanto, a powerful presence on the American corporate scene since 1901, was in danger of withering away in the heat generated by its gamble on genetically modified, or GM, crops" (Schonfeld, 2005).

Frank Dixon, managing director of Innovest (a US based financial consultancy firm) discussed Monsanto’s prolonged losses "With a $1.7 billion loss in 2002 and a stock price decline of over 50 percent since 2001, further investor losses seem likely if Monsanto does not mitigate its substantial market risk and diversify its strategy [...] Monsanto has received a CCC rating, the lowest score, indicating that it has high risk and less sophisticated management relative to peers, with a potential to under perform in the stock market" (EC Newsdesk, 2009).


Within a few months, Pharmacia formed an agricultural subsidiary called Monsanto. By 2002 Pharmacia separated from the agricultural subsidiary and Monsanto was ‘recovered.’ In exchange for the spin off, Pharmacia acquired Searle, Monsanto’s pharmaceutical division valued at 23 billion US dollars. Pharmacia was later absorbed by Pfizer (Robin, 2010: 200).

Here we observe how ‘one capitalist kills many.’ Harris Gardiner quotes Pharmacia’s CEO Fred Hassan (2000) commenting on the Monsanto-Pharmacia deal saying that "'We are in a consolidation mode in this industry.’ ... ‘When you have that phenomenon, the options theory [which values a company higher because of its ability to merge with a giant] should be taken into account’" (Harris, 2000).
This study has been focused on explaining what happens to social movements as corporations become more global and more consolidated. This study has shown the trend in corporate concentration as it creates the conditions for and gives rise to an ever increasing and accelerating global movement of the working class becoming a class for itself.

In sum, amongst the many reasons for Monsanto’s break up was the efficacy of social movement actions. Monsanto’s collapse during 1998 to 2002 was largely created by the proliferation and success of movements that the company itself, in the process of its expansion and enclosure, networked and organized.

I now turn to section two.


Monsanto profits were restored in 2005 when it bought up Seminis and became the largest seed company in the world. With CEO Hugh Grant at the helm in 2002, Monsanto pursued four main tactics. These tactics significantly contributed to Monsanto’s second stage of concentration (2007-2011). These tactics were

(1) A focus on developing only three crops (corn, soy beans and cotton);

(2) An aim to develop sales in the United States, “where consumers have remained largely unruffled about bioengineered food (perhaps because, surveys show, few have any idea how widespread GM ingredients are)” (Schonfeld, 2005 ).
(3) A focus on lobbying governments in Latin America to accept GM seeds. Monsanto reported that the first fiscal quarter net earnings in 2007 tripled due to strong herbicide and seed sales in Latin America (De Falco, 2008).

(4) An expansion of its operations into agrofuels which included profits derived from the food crisis.

Below I discuss (4) Monsanto’s expansion into agrofuels and the second stage of Monsanto and social movements’ concentration (2007 to 2011).

Beginning in 2007 Monsanto began investing heavily in GM dedicated energy crops for agrofuels. Agrofuels is a term adopted by critics worldwide for industrial-scale biofuels based on agricultural crops — corn, soy, sugar cane — for fuel rather than food. In 2007 agribusiness and its supporters in government had laid the groundwork for the agrofuels boom. The boom is characterized by a bonanza of investment and consolidation in the agriculture industry (Shattuck in Jonasse, 2009: 92). Monsanto and other biotech corporations argued that the yields of GM seeds were superior to the non-GM alternatives.

The United States’ G.W. Bush administration set up a framework for companies to invest in agrofuels from corn ethanol, and for Monsanto to continue expanding. This framework had terrible impacts upon the world food system. Below I discuss this framework and its consequences. In 2007 President Bush signed into legislation the Renewable Fuel Standards (RFS) Act. The Act mandates the use of 36 billion gallons of agrofuels annually by 2022 (Holt-Giminez and Kenfield in Jonasse, 2009: 25).

President Barak Obama’s ‘New Green Deal,’ introduced when he came into office at the beginning of 2009, signalled continued US commitment to the expansion of a market in
agrofuels. The New Green Deal includes ethanol subsidies of up to 13 billion dollars to the industry. (Jonasse in Jonasse, 2009: 4). In 2009 Obama appointed Tom Vilsack as Secretary of Agriculture. This appointee was a corporate hero. In 2001, Vilsack was voted the Biotechnology Industry Organization’s ‘Governor of the Year’ (Jonasse, 2009: 4). Vilsack is a major supporter of soy and corn based agrofuels and Monsanto (Cummins, 2008).

Vilsack was the founder and former chair of the Governors Biotechnology Partnership and has often taken stands against organic farmers and in favour of Monsanto. For example, Vilsack was responsible for the 2011 green light given to the highly controversial commercial planting of Monsanto’s Roundup Ready alfalfa in the US (Centre for Food Safety, 2011). Monsanto’s connection to the US agrofuels boom was crucially established to a great degree though its relationship with Vilsack.

The agrofuels boom significantly boosted Monsanto’s profits and power. Monsanto’s net earnings doubled in the first fiscal quarter of 2008 compared to the first fiscal quarter in 2007 (Lean, 2008). The agrofuels boom was exactly what Monsanto needed in order to recover from the near extinction of 1998–2002.

The agrofuels boom of 2007–2008 fuelled an acute and on-going food crisis. In what Magdoff calls the Great Hunger, 50 million people were relegated to the population of the world’s hungry in 2008 alone (New Internationalist, 2008). The 2007–08 food crisis brought the number of hungry to one billion. According to the International Monetary Fund, between March 2007 and March 2008, global food prices increased an average of 43 percent (United States Agency for International Development, 2009). In the same time period, the price of wheat, soya, rice and corn went up by 130 percent, 87 percent, 74 percent and 31 percent respectively
(Bloomberg quoted in British Broadcasting Corporation, 2008). A total of 37 countries experienced severe food insecurity as a result of the food price spike (Rosengrant, 2008:1).

In 2008 alone what the media and scholars call food riots erupted in at least 31 countries. Turner (2008) calls these uprisings food ‘non-riots’ because they were (and are) coordinated responses to systemic crises by organized groups of people, not disordered outbursts of violence. In many of these food non-riots, Monsanto’s products and the reality that Monsanto creates (large-scale industrial farming and monocultures) was being resisted and overcome.

For example, in 2008 Argentinean farmers led a 196 day strike to demand that the government lower export taxes to protect small farm agriculture. A large share of these export crops were Monsanto’s crops. Farmers were joined by their families and workers at points all along the agri-food value chain, including truckers and meat packers to stop production and capital accumulation.

In 2008 in Haiti thousands of poor and dispossessed farmers, street traders, women and youth mobilized a sustained response to food price increases. They toppled the government. In 2010, these same social forces burned Monsanto’s ‘seed-aid’ donations in affirmation of peasant food and seed sovereignty. Beverly Bell (2010) quotes Jean-Baptiste of La Via Campesina’s National Peasant Movement of the Congress of Papaye (MPNKP) stating that

“Fighting hybrid and GMO seeds is critical to save our diversity and our agriculture. We have the potential to make our lands produce enough to feed the whole population and even to export certain products. The policy we need for this to happen is food sovereignty, where the county has a right to define its own agricultural policies, to grow first for the family and then for local market, to grow healthy food in a way which respects the environment and Mother Earth” (Bell, 2010).
In 2008 in Egypt, women textile workers of the state owned monopoly complex in Mahallah al-Kubra stopped production to demand 30-fold increase in wages. The textile factory workers spun Monsanto grown cotton. This cotton had displaced thousands of hectares of wheat and food crops on precious and scarce irrigated farmland. This action disrupted the male deal between agro-industry and the Egyptian government to grow cash crops for export. In 2011 the women textile workers struck again. The women and their male allies sparked the millions strong Egyptian uprising and the Arab Revolution (Amar, 2011).

In this study I just begin to address how, insofar as Monsanto and other agribusiness corporations contributed to the conditions that gave rise to the food crisis, these capitalists unwittingly but significantly, organized, united and disciplined the movements that responded to the crisis. As the three food non-riots highlighted above indicate, it would appear that Monsanto’s corporate concentration that arose from the 2007–2008 agrofuels boom and the food crisis caused an even larger and more multitudinous response.

This section advanced the study’s argument by pointing to the second surge in resistance that was impelled by Monsanto’s expansion into agrofuels. The biotech giant’s agrofuels enclosure was facilitated by the United States’ government and resulted in the undermining and destruction of peasant food systems. This constitutes a male deal.

I now turn to section three wherein I analyze the global movement against all capitalists and for a post capitalist reality. I move from the struggle of the proxies Monsanto and La Via Campesina to the struggle by all capitalist and all commoners (class struggle).

The increased intensity and acceleration of the movement of movements is apparent when one looks at the series of global actions to oppose the corporate backed agenda of the fifteenth United Nations Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 15 UNFCCC). Below I present a brief analysis of the groundswell of resistance to climate change and the alternatives expressed by the Arab Revolutionaries in 2011.

Why do I analyze climate change struggles and the Arab Revolution? My objective is to illustrate the proliferation and acceleration of the movement of movements over time. The 2007–2011 growth in social movements’ connection prefigures an even larger and more expansive movement of movements in decades to come.

In December 2009 at the COP 15 meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark tens of thousands of people from dozens of social movements gathered at the Klimaforum ‘09 (the people’s meeting that paralleled the official UN meeting) to demand “system change not climate change.” They denounced the false solutions that were being promoted by corporations and governments. These false solutions include agrofuels, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, (REDD which promotes industrial tree plantations) and carbon markets, (which allows corporations to purchase credits on emissions to buy their way out of reducing pollution). These pro-capitalist false solutions provided a basis for unity amongst key government delegates and NGOs inside the meeting and social movements who joined together on the streets in a ‘class-based rejection’ of the UNFCCC process and proposals (Turner, 2010: 61).
When we think of real versus false solutions to climate change we need to be aware of the interests and perspectives of opposed actors. On the one hand, carbon markets and techno-fixes are real solutions for capitalist profit making. On the other hand, capitalist initiatives are false for humanity because they continue the real crisis stemming from the system of constant destructive growth on a finite planet and does not address the real needs of human beings.

In Copenhagen, Monsanto promoted its GM crops as a solution to climate change. Monsanto and the Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS) lobbied governments for carbon credits for GM soy. The corporations argued that GMOs contribute to a decline in greenhouse gases because GM crops can be grown without ploughing the soil (ATTAC Denmark, 2009). Yet Monsanto’s expansion of soy in Latin America is contributing to deforestation, the displacement of indigenous peoples and the poisoning of land and water with massive quantities of toxic chemicals. The UNFCCC process facilitated the implementation of ‘false solutions’ that Monsanto and other biotech companies champion and promote.

The UNFCCC process has allowed such corporate carbon profiteering to persist despite the fact that these practices threaten life on earth. This is why the social movements that gathered at the Klimaforum ’09 voted Monsanto the worst corporate climate lobbyist in Copenhagen (ATTAC Denmark, 2009). The real solutions put forward by movements gathered at the Klimaforum ’09 are reflected in the popular statement that came out of Copenhagen “system change, not climate change.” System change would involve the working class uniting to break down the hierarchy of labour power and the male deals that enforce it. What system change actually involves was outlined in Cochabamba, Bolivia at the World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth from 20–22 April 2010. Below I discuss the
Cochabamba World People’s Conference. I draw significantly on Turner’s (2010) account of the movement of movements’ formation and actions in 2010 in Cochabamba.

Four months after the COP15 in December 2009 many of the same social movements that gathered in Copenhagen came together in Cochabamba, Bolivia to put forward an alternative to the ineffectual and endless negotiations of the UNFCCC. The World People’s Conference was organized by the Bolivian indigenous movements and their supporters. The gathering involved over 35,000 thousand people from 140 countries (Turner, 2010: 56). Movements at the Cochabamba gathering included members of Indigenous Environmental Network, Friends of the Earth International, Jubilee South, La Via Campesina, Oil Watch, and many dozens of other social movements from around the world.

The movements, organized into 18 working groups, took steps toward establishing a global manifesto on the rights of nature (the People’s Agreement on the Rights of Mother Earth) and an Internationale (the Global People’s Movement for the Rights of Mother Earth) (Turner, 2010: 56–57). The People’s Agreement put forward fundamental, real solutions to climate change. The people who passed the People’s Agreement tried to use it as a basis for negotiations amongst social movements and governments at the COP 16 meeting in Cancun, Mexico scheduled in December 2010 (Turner, 2010: 58).

Only the Bolivian government took up this revolutionary program for action on climate change. The Cochabamba conference brought together the reports from the 18 working groups to create a Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth. As of 2011, Bolivian ambassador to the United Nations, Pablo Solon was working to get the governments of the United Nations to accept the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth.
The contents of the movement’s manifesto — Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth — were shaped in important ways by La Via Campesina.

La Via Campesina reported that more than 80 of its members organized panels and participated in the shaping of this global movement (Via Campesina, 2010b). La Via Campesina’s perspectives were central to the contents of the working group 17 report on agriculture and food sovereignty. The food sovereignty working group report consisted of 27 points which denounced GMOs and agrofuels and affirmed food sovereignty as the solution to cooling the planet. Point 19 of the statement centralized seed sovereignty. Point 19 declares the need to

“promote broad based, deep, genuine agrarian reform and reconstitution of indigenous, and afro descendent territories, building participatory policies with a gender focus, so that farmers and indigenous peoples, their cultures and lifestyles regain a central and fundamental role, vital in world agriculture to achieve food sovereignty and restore harmony to achieve global climate balance. Agrarian reform of this kind must include respect for local and ancestral knowledge and ensure the necessary arrangements to ensure production at all stages of the chain (cultivation, processing, marketing). We demand the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and the recognition and respect of their territories” (Working Group 17, 2010).

The weakness of the gendered class analysis is apparent in this quotation. Gendered class analysis could have been much more prominent in social movements’ analysis in all 18 Working Groups at the Cochabamba conference.

Central to the development of real solutions and ways forward was the report of Working Group 18 on “Collective rights and rights of the Mother Earth.” Working Group 18 opposed corporate sovereignty and proposed direct action to reclaim the commons. Working Group 18 stated that
“We demand the recuperation of the natural goods that have been devastated and exhausted. We propose the suspension of all extractive activity, work or projects that are responsible [for] and a cause of climate change, the displacement of peoples from their territories, and the environmental social effects in territories of nations and peoples in the world. ... Because of the lack of the will from governments of the world, we demand the power, as social organizations and farmers/peasants, to define a new management model and direct control of natural patrimony, with direct control by the workers from the farm and the city to establish policies of managing biodiversity in relation to necessity and not [in relation to] the dependence of our countries” (Working Group 18 quoted in Turner, 2010: 64–65).

Working Group 18 was largely comprised of Bolivian social movements and the National Council of Qullasuyu Ayllus and Markas CONAMAQ\(^{21}\) (an Indigenous peoples’ organization from Bolivia) (Rising Tide, 2010). In the week leading up to the Mother Earth conference, Working Group 18 members and their allies shut down Bolivia’s largest mine, San Cristobal. San Cristobal is located in the central Potosí City region on the border with Chile about 310 miles (500 kilometres) Southwest of the capital, La Paz (Turner, 2010: 67).

The mine is owned by Japanese transnational Sumitomo. Sumitomo has contaminated nearby communities and rendered the water undrinkable. Bolivia’s 1997 mining law permitted the corporation to consume unlimited amounts of water (Turner, 2010: 67).

The Bolivian social movements’ shutdown of San Cristobal mine was coordinated internationally. International participants of Working Group 18 organized a ‘solidarity stunt’ in London. According to Turner, “This rapid-response solidarity expresses the kind of

\(^{21}\) According to Turner, the Mother Earth conference organizers refused to let Working Group 18 participate in the conference. The organizers argued that Working Group 18 dealt with national issues and the conference was about international issues. The Working Group 18 organizers insisted on proceeding “because the Earth is our mother [and she has the right], for example, not to be contaminated.” (Agi and Ben quoted in Turner, 2010: 69).
organization that is a prerequisite for the exertion of enough power to broker a transition from capitalist control to popular commoning” (Turner, 2010: 69).

Turner argues that “WG18’s struggle reveals three dimensions of the power dynamics prefiguring a global transition to a cooler and post-capitalist world: (1) a class analysis of climate change, (2) successful direct action against its corporate perpetrators, and (3) burgeoning global organization from below” (Turner, 2010: 64).

According to Turner (2010) the “People’s Agreement and Movement are open-ended, democratic, and morally inspired. They include progressive governments, indigenous peoples, workers and farmers, youth, women, and all sectors of the dispossessed. They are the best chance we have for preserving human life on Mother Earth” (Turner, 2010: 74). Cochabamba provided a platform for social movements “to meet, share stories, strategies and continue the process of building a linked-up global movement to fight for climate justice” and system change (Stefanoni and Blanco quoted in Turner, 2010: 74).

The result of this circulation and interfacing of social movements across borders, the People’s Agreement, provided “a draft global program of action to move out of capitalism to a new just way of organizing society and ‘living well’” (Turner, 2010: 74). Turner (2011) argues that, in the context of rising financial and climate crises, the globally coordinated actions of Working Group 18 foreshadowed the coming Arab Revolution (Turner, 2011b).

As of 2011 this new way of organizing is highly evident amongst hundreds of movements in Egypt, Spain and dozens of countries across the Middle East and North Africa. As noted above on page 2, the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt have spread to countries across the Middle East, North Africa, Spain, Greece, Israel, the United Kingdom and further afield. The protesters are
demonstrating a *theatre of the possible* by organizing in a democratic and decentralized movement that centralizes the interests and demands of women and youth for an end to capitalist exploitation and enclosure.

In May 2011 the Arab Revolution spread across the Mediterranean to Spain. On 15 May in Madrid, tens of thousands of women and men youth, students, and unemployed workers gathered in Madrid’s central plaza in an initiative that is being called ‘Toma la Plaza’ or ‘take the square.’ The protests spread to over a dozen cities across Spain. According to Democracy Now “protesters are sustaining their decentralized movement though donations of food, fuel and even computers. Daily assemblies democratically vote on all decisions, and local committees are assigned different tasks, from clean up operations to legal affairs” (Martinoz quoted in Democracy Now, 26 May, 2011).

In a Democracy Now interview, Ivan Martinoz comments on the circulation of movements from Egypt to Spain:

“It’s not the same situation in Spain as in the Arab counties. I have to say, we have freedom, or a certain amount of freedom here. But what has affected us is the spontaneity of the people over there, that it’s probably the same that has happened over here in Spain. People feel outraged by the political class. That’s something I’d like to say, because we believe, in our movement, this is not against the Zapatero government or the PSOE [Partido Socialista Obrero Español or the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party]. This is against the whole political class. We’ve come to a point in which we don’t feel represented by them, which is what we pay them for. And we have seen that its’ not a matter of asking them to represent us or to tell them to please do what they should do, but we have to force them, because they, on their own, are not going to do what they have to do” (Martinoz, Ivan quoted from Democracy Now, 2011).

WikiLeaks Julian Assange (2011) describes the ways in which WikiLeaks contributed to the formation of the Arab Revolution. In a July 2011 interview with Amy Goodman of Democracy Now, Assange said that capitalists and governments shifted their focus from working together
to exploit and enclose nature and human labour power, to working separately to decompose working class unity. Social movements seized on the opening to advance class struggle. Wikileaks exposed to all the weaknesses of the ruling class. For example, according to Assange, the Wikileaks cables on government corruption in Tunisia made is so that “everyone could see and no one could deny that the Ben Ali regime was fundamentally corrupt.” Once again, the surge in working class unity and opposition weakened the unity amongst capitalists (Assange quoted in Democracy Now, 2011).

The social movement activity that has taken place during the Arab Revolution is highly organized. Yet, the people involved in the uprisings are not organized by a party or charismatic leader. The revolutionaries’ actions are so-called ‘spontaneous’ and their processes are organized horizontally and democratically. Where does this organization come from?

Contingents within the global movement of movements emerging from North Africa and the Middle East are drawn together by global social factory exploitation and the organization of capitalist firms. These firms have become more concentrated and centralized over the past century. Concentration and crises in the capitalist system (including financial, climate and food crises) have impelled and accelerated the connections amongst movements. The roots of the spontaneity and rejection of leadership and hierarchy is the organizing, uniting and disciplining experience of the world’s exploited and dispossessed that has taken shape over many decades. Capitalist expansion and global organization frames and provides a template for the movement of movements’ expansion and globally coordinated direct actions.

As indicated in chapter two, the actions of women textile workers in Egypt ignited the Egyptian uprising and the Arab Revolution more broadly. In 2011 the young women in
particular were prominent in the organizing of actions in Tahrir Square (Campbell, 2011). A popular media image of the Arab Revolution is the young Egyptian woman with a megaphone leading a procession of protesters on the streets of Cairo. The women are connected in cyberspace, within their families and workplaces and within social movements. From 1996-1998 women and their allies amongst men in the India, the EU and Brazil have been uprooting Monsanto’s crops and organizing in social movements to stop Monsanto’s socially and environmentally hazardous GMOs. This study has shown that this movement of movements is an expression of popular power by an alliance of gendered, ethnicized agents of revolution.

Pat Mooney (2010) points to the history of class war undertaken by women to end their own exploitation. Women have sought to breaking up capitalist male deals in defence of the earth and all of humanity. Mooney’s historical materialist analysis highlights the global necessity of revolutionary gendered, ethnicized alliances amongst the dispossessed class to take power and continue life on earth. Money states that

“If we are to continue as a camp of followers to a corrupt agenda, we need a clear message and a specific program. First, let’s get the history right. 10 years before Stockholm, [United Nations Conference on the Human Environment] in 1962, Rachel Carson published Silent Spring — perhaps the English language’s first popular environmental manifesto. Directly and indirectly, it did much to inspire the social pressures that led to the Stockholm conference of 1972. In May, 2012, we should be marking — not celebrating — Carson’s half-century anniversary: Silent Spring — 50. No pretences: governments have failed us for 50 years. 2012 is also a time to pack away Macho Papa. A woman wrote Silent Spring. As Rachel Carson published her book, Betty Friedan was putting the finishing touches on The Feminine Mystique and Fannie Lou Hamer tried unsuccessfully to vote in the southern United States; got her plantation stolen; shot at 17 times; given an unwanted hysterectomy; and became a feminist and a civil rights activist. 2012 is time for Pachamama‖ (Mooney, 2011: 80).

This powerful statement by Mooney shows that the fight to end capitalist exploitation has historically been undertaken by women and especially women of the global south. Mooney’s
statement itself reflects an effort to exercise power by aligning with women to end exploitation
and defend Mother Earth.

In sum, this chapter provided a brief analysis of how Monsanto’s expansion into agrofuels
(2007–2011) fuelled a food crisis and a surge in social movement formation and actions.
Immediately in 2007–08, groups of dispossessed people in cities and countrysides across the
world responded to the food crisis by organizing direct actions to oppose capitalist agriculture
and build alternatives.

In December 2009 at the COP 15 meeting in Copenhagen many people inside the meeting
were united on common ground with social movements to assert that system change is essential
for the continuation of life on earth. In April 2010 the First Peoples’ World Conference on
Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba expressed ideas about the
direct action to end capitalism and expand the commons. These ideas were continued right
through to December 2010. In December 2010 in Cancun social movements re-asserted, yet
again, a clear departure from the governments’ and corporations’ false solutions.
Simultaneously in December 2010 we have the movement of movements’ uprisings in the Arab
Revolution. Hot on the heels of a commoners’ declaration of a world transformed came action
to put it into practice.

We have seen how capitalist crises accelerate and enhance social movement concentration.
As capitalist firms alter the structure of power in the system, according to Bell and Cleaver,
these firms provide openings for agents of revolution to seize on the global organization of the
capitalists and organize for themselves. This is how Wikileaks spread the Arab Revolution. The
2011 movement of movements for itself is, as indicated by Pat Mooney in the quotation above
and the evidence presented in this study, being formed and elaborated by women from the global South.

Monsanto’s second stage in concentration was achieved largely by the company, with the help of its corporate and government sponsors, investing in agrofuels. The ‘bonanza of investments’ in agrofuels led to a major food crisis. The food crisis sparked many millions of people into action to defend fertility. The food non-riots were an unprecedented surge in social movement actions and formation that was globally connected by corporations’ markets and value chains. Although this study has not gone into detail about the second stage of Monsanto’s concentration, it offers insight into the ways in which the growth in corporate power and control spurs the movement of movements’ expansion over time.

I now turn to the conclusion of this thesis wherein I analyze the findings from the three case studies (Monsanto and La Via Campesina struggles India, the EU and Brazil) in the context of this study’s theoretical-methodological framework.
CONCLUSION: HOW CORPORATE CONCENTRATION AND ORGANIZATION GIVES RISE TO THE MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS (1990 TO 2011)

This conclusion is divided into two main sections. The first section revisits the hypothesis that corporate concentration gives rise to the movement of movements. The second section summarizes the nine chapters in this study and offers concluding remarks.

SECTION ONE: CORPORATE CONCENTRATION AND THE MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS

In Capital volume one, chapter 32, Marx (1867) concludes that corporate concentration and global organization gives rise to an ever more numerous global working class that is organized, united and disciplined in its own interests. The working class becomes, through this process, not merely a class in itself and for capitalists but a class for itself. So, according to Marx, “one capitalist kills many. … Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united and organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself” (Marx, 1867 in McLellan, 2000: 525) emphasis added).

This study investigated the process by which workers attempt to become a class for themselves by uniting across geographical borders to undermine the hierarchy of labour power imposed by the capitalists. The above chapters have investigated Marx’s central discovery by examining the struggle for life between Monsanto (standing in for all capitalists) and La Via

This study’s hypothesis is that, as ever fewer corporations expand and globalize, more and more people are drawn into corporate networks and are thereby open to participating in a process of self-activity whereby they become ever-more organized, united and disciplined in collective forces or movements against capitalists and for themselves. As these movements develop they connect with each other and form the movement of movements.

Below I provide a summary of the findings in each chapter that comprised Part I and Part II of this study.

SECTION TWO: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS IN CHAPTERS ONE THROUGH NINE

Part I: Theoretical-methodological framework for understanding the corporate-movement dynamic

Part I of this study provided a theoretical-methodological framework for understanding the movement of movements. Part I contained chapters one, two and three.

In chapter one I defined key features of the movement of movements and analyzed Marx’s central discovery. The movement of movements is (i) largely democratic and decentralized; (ii) global; (iii) attempting to break up the hierarchy of labour power to become a class in itself and; (iv) embracing the multitudes of the social factory. Chapter one outlined the ways in which corporate concentration transforms the power relations of global capitalism. In Marx’s ‘one capitalist kills many’ quotation he identified eight consequences concomitant with corporate concentration. In the process of struggling to establish global commoning, the working class
seeks to, in Cleaver’s words, “transform and threaten the very existence of capital” (Cleaver, 1977: 32). Table 6 below provides a summary of how La Via Campesina transforms these eight consequences into elements of the global commoners’ value chain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6</th>
<th>Food Sovereignty and Marx’s Eight Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of corporate concentration</td>
<td>La Via Campesina’s commoners’ value chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) centralization of the means of production</td>
<td>Ensures that the rights to use and manage our lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of food producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) cooperative form of the labour process</td>
<td>Promotes egalitarian social relations, cooperative forms of production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) conscious technical application of science (economies of scale, agroindustry)</td>
<td>Prioritizes indigenous knowledge and inter-generational transfer of knowledge. Promotes selected elements of capitalist science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) the methodical cultivation of the soil</td>
<td>Promotes and practices small-scale, agroecology and seed saving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common (together with other people on a global scale eg. internet)</td>
<td>Promotes and practices local and global networks of seed exchange and breeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) the economizing of all means of production by their use as means of production of combined socialized labour</td>
<td>Promotes and practices slow food (food production for biodiversity, natural taste, quality and nutrition over standardization and monoculture, chemically enhanced and modified, quantity, and anti-nutrition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market</td>
<td>Offers a global strategy of coordinated action to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Offers alternative trade regimes that drastically reduce the flow of goods across geographical borders and stop redundant and unnecessary trade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) the international character of the capitalistic regime (WTO)</td>
<td>Promotes localized food systems and global commoning in the North and South.</td>
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Chapter two formed the bulk of the content of this study’s theoretical-methodological framework. In chapter two I provided a four part theoretical-methodological framework. These four parts included (i) the capital relation; (ii) gendered ethnicized class analysis and the fight for fertility; (iii) the circulation of struggle and; (iv) capitalist concentration and crisis. I now explain the significance of each part to this study’s investigation of the movement of movements.

(i) The capital relation is defined as a back and forth struggle amongst workers who assert their power to control the means of production and capitalists who assert their power to break up workers’ unity and enforce a system of profit-taking and coercion. This back and forth or diachronic struggle amongst capitalists and workers grows ever larger, expanding in a spiral-like formation over time.

In the process of trying to maintain control, capitalists decompose working class unity. Workers compose or recompose in an effort to build class unity and undermine capitalists’ power. Class composition-decomposition-recomposition constitutes a historical cycles of class struggle of which, to date, there are four (1848–1914, 1914–1973, 1973–1999 and 1999–20??). As corporations become larger and fewer in number, (as ‘one capitalist kills many’) the working class’ fight back initiatives expand and become more global. This framing (known as class composition) sets up the argument in this thesis that the capital relation is a springboard for the movement of movements.

(ii) Section two on gendered, ethnicized class analysis and the fight for fertility exposed the anatomy of the global social factory struggle and the hierarchy of labour power that underpins capitalist profits and control. This section two is the most substantial section underlying the
study’s theoretical-methodological framework. It explained the ways in which the capital relation is gendered and ethnicized.

Capitalists create a global social factory by embracing workers throughout all of society globally on four terrains of struggle: production, consumption, reproduction and nature. The social factory framing allowed me to examine the extent to which corporate concentration and the ‘process of the mechanism of production’ organizes, unites and disciplines the multitudes of the exploited and dispossessed working class throughout all of society. Schools, public research facilities, agricultural fields, grocery stores and our own homes are simultaneously sites of exploitation and resistance. If capitalist exploitation is society wide as the argument goes, resistance to it takes place on many fronts and workers’ are provided with opportunities to act strategically as a untied force to stop capitalist enclosure.

Gendered, ethnicized class analysis exposes the ways in which capitalists undertake and uphold social factory exploitation by dividing workers along gendered and ethnicized divides. Rogers, (1980) Mies (1986) and others have shown that capitalist accumulation requires *housewifization* and *colonization* (defined, in short, as the separation of women and people in the third world from their means of production by a small group of white men). Capitalists create a hierarchy of labour power in order to extract super profits from women in the global North and South and the majority of people in the global South. Unwaged women in the global South form the base of the hierarchy of labour power. As stated above in chapter four, La Via Campesina takes the position that the analysis and demands of women in the global South are central to the struggle against exploitation and for a post-capitalist future.
Gendered, ethnicized class analysis takes the ‘view from below.’ It gives power and prominence to struggles and commoning alternatives undertaken by unwaged groups of workers. In contrast many governments adopt the ‘view from above.’ As discussed on page 227, at the fifteenth Conference to the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, governments promoted capitalist false solutions including GMO agriculture rather than the real solutions that address climate change and hunger. These real solutions are already being practiced by small-scale farmers (including agroecology and localized food systems).

Many governments thereby devalue and undermine the alternatives presented by groups of unwaged workers (including small-scale farmers in the third world). In contrast, this study sheds light on the actions and alternatives practiced by dispossessed groups of workers and the degree to which these alternatives successfully guarantee all people access to the prerequisites of life or the commons.

Perhaps the most significant element of this study’s theoretical-methodological framework is the fight for fertility. The fight for fertility was developed by Turner (1992) to expose the fundamental organization of capitalist and commoning social struggles. The fight for fertility framework directs attention to “the primary importance in the power struggles that are the capital relation of the drive of all participants to control the prerequisites of life and its reproduction” (Turner, 2011).

There are two elements to the fight for fertility which shed empirical light on the gendered, ethnicized class relation. (1) The fight for fertility framework allows the social scientist to identify and examine the ways in which capitalists seek to enforce the hierarchy of labour power in order to break up working class unity and set up a system of profit-taking and control.
The billionaires and multi-millionaires above the class line set up value chains to extract wealth from the commons and coerce labour. They do so by forming *male deals* with (mostly male) members of the dispossessed class. Enclosures and commodification facilitated by male dealers result in a loss of power over the commons by women, especially women in the global South, many of whom are largely rooted within the commoning political economy. This is because housewifization separates women from their means of livelihoods. Left without alternatives, women are forced to enter into relations of exploitation for no or little payment (for example in households, factories and the sex trade).

There are many subgroups below the class line (in my terms, workers, exploited, dispossessed) the members of which serve as male dealers to make capitalist value chains function. I mention only two here. (1) Largely white high waged men including union bureaucrats, military elites, and chief executive officers (CEOs) of industrial and financial corporations, put with capitalists above class line. Members of this subgroup also include those involved in criminal networks embracing drugs, body parts, guns, sex, endangered species, and ‘blood diamonds.’ (2) What Marx (1852) called the ‘lumpenproletariat’ including pimps, prostitutes, local drug dealers and people who are pushed into the reserve army of the unemployed. It is from the lumpenproletariat that the capitalists and their political allies draw thugs, gangsters, assassins and other informal, extrajudicial militia. This element is necessary for the enforcement of order when the police and military refuse to shoot down fellow citizens (Marx, 1852 in Padover, 1999). Right wing violence has repeatedly been unleashed by capitalists to interrupt tendencies towards unity in the working class.

This thesis has shown that, with respect to theorizing the state, an analysis of the operation of democracy is essential. For instance, in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul popular
forces dominated and were able to push back against Monsanto. Similarly, the governments of six countries within the European Union stood up to Monsanto and attempted to stop the authorization of GMOs. On the other hand, as mentioned in the case study of the EU in chapter seven, the WikiLeaks cables released in 2010 and 2011 exposed the US government’s use of strong arm and back door coercion in support of Monsanto’s global value chain.

(2) The fight for fertility framework is an important tool for identifying and examining how social movements fight back by uniting across gendered and ethnicized divisions to break up the male deal. Gendered and ethnicized agents of revolution seek to replace corporations’ for-profit value chains with commoners’ for-life value chains by establishing gendered, ethnicized class alliances. The gendered, ethnicized class alliance expresses the general class interest by uniting with those at the bottom of the hierarchy to break up or disrupt the channels (the male deals) through which capitalists extract profits from women in the global South, nature and all human beings.

We see in this study that the struggle against Monsanto’s agri-food enclosures was launched onto the world stage by women in rural India. In 1999 allies amongst men in India and women and men in the global North joined the Indian women in the Transcontinental Caravan ’99 to stop Monsanto’s global frankenfoods enclosures. We see that the social movements against Monsanto analyzed in this study have sought to create revolutionary gendered, ethnicized class alliances to break up capitalist arrangements and begin to become a class for themselves (as opposed to for the capitalists). I provide a more detailed summary of the fights for fertility in this study below.
In sum, the gendered, ethnicized class analysis and the fight for fertility framings provide a window into the revolutionary significance of social movements that organize across gendered and ethnicized divisions to stop exploitation and enclosure. This study pursued a revolutionary thread. Marx’s argument is that from corporate concentration arise social movements that have the capacity to unite on the basis of ending the working class in itself by creating a working class for itself. Pat Mooney reminds us that revolution comes from the initiatives and actions of women who defend life. As quoted above, Mooney states that “2012 is also a time to pack away Macho Papa. A woman wrote Silent Spring. As Rachel Carson published her book, Betty Friedan was putting the finishing touches on The Feminine Mystique and Fannie Lou Hamer tried unsuccessfully to vote in the southern United States; got her plantation stolen from her; shot at 17 times; given an unwanted hysterectomy; and became a feminist and a civil rights activist. 2012 is time for Pachamama” (Mooney in Council of Canadians, 2011: 80).

(iii) In chapter two section three I described how struggles can circulate, connect or interface to refuse social factory exploitation and begin to replace capitalism with commoning. This framework for investigating the circulation of struggle allowed me to identify and examine the ways in which social movements connect to form the movement of movements. I identified three characteristics of circulation which are the circulation (1) across different terrains of struggle (production, consumption, reproduction and nature); (2) across different geographical locations; and (3) across different industries (eg. agricultural, banking, extractive industries).

(1) The circulation across terrains of struggle shows that as more and more workers are brought into the capital relation through the terrains of the social factory, the possibility that these workers will join social movements and form the movement of movements is enhanced.
The movement of movements grows larger, becomes more social factory-wide (multitudinous) and more powerful.

(2) The circulation across geographical borders is central to this study for two main reasons. First, cross border, simultaneous direct actions have the power to strategically undermine capitalists’ ability to exploit and enclose nature and human labour. Direct action across borders can be coordinated at different points along the value chain (as we have seen in the 1998 global crop destruction involving farmers from India and food buyers and farmers in the EU). As social factory exploitation becomes global so does the movement against it. Second, social movements that align across the North and South divides contribute to breaking up the hierarchy of labour power and move the working class toward becoming for themselves.

(3) The circulation across capitalist industries is the linking up of workers organized in different industrial sectors. This third characteristic of circulation highlights the ways in which workers are connected by the integration of capitalist firms across different points along the value chain. For example, I explained that at the 1999 Battle of Seattle La Via Campesina joined in action with a wide range of social movements on the streets to shut down and undermine the World Trade Organization meeting, capitalists and their organization as a whole. In sum, the circulation of struggle framework provides a window into viewing the spread of social factory resistance within and across geographical borders. These connections are made possible by the global organization and power relations of capitalist concentration (the global social factory).

(iv) The fourth and final section of chapter two explains that corporate concentration and crisis impacts upon the broader structure of power in the capitalist system. Corporate concentration “transforms the very social conditions and power institutions on which it is
based” (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002: 58). Capitalist crises (defined as a major loss of value on the stock market) accelerate this process of transformation by intensifying class struggle and deepening capitalist concentration by way of the ‘one capitalist kills many’ process.

In sum, I have employed this theoretical-methodological framework, which comprises Part I of this study, to investigate the ways in which Monsanto’s two stages of corporate concentration (1996–1998 and 2007–2011) and its global organization have propelled the formation and actions of the movement of movements.

In Part II of this study we saw that Monsanto’s concentration transformed the social relations of the global agri-food system. Before Monsanto, GMO seeds and private property claims to plant life had never existed let alone been institutionalized through the World Trade Organization and national policy of many dozens of governments around the world. I showed that Monsanto and its allies’ global enclosure of seeds accelerated during the company’s waves of mergers and acquisitions in 1996–1998 and the ‘bonanza of investment’ in agrofuels in 2007–2011. These two stages of concentration were concomitant with two leaps forward in the actions and formation of the movement of movements.

I detail the ways in which, during the first stage of concentration, (1996–1998) Monsanto and its supporters laid out a global value chain. The links on this value chain embraced global and domestic government regulation, public and private research including field trials, advertising and networks of GMO food consumption and distribution. Together, these global processes had organized, united and disciplined La Via Campesina and their allies to fight enclosures and affirm the commoners’ value chain. I present a more detailed summary of this analysis in Part II below.
Chapter three outlined this study’s method of analysis. The two steps I used to test the accuracy of my hypothesis (that corporate concentration impels the movement of movements) were (i) the fight for fertility analysis and (ii) the circulation analysis. (i) I found that the fight for fertility analysis was useful in terms of being able to identify and examining the actors involved in the fight and their interests in controlling fertility. Is the capital relation the stimulus for the formation and actions of the coalescing of movements on a global scale?

(ii) I found that the circulation analysis was useful for identifying and examining the many different ways in which social movements link up. The circulation analysis allowed me to identify the degree of connection amongst the social factory workers. Did social movements embrace the multitudes of the social factory? Did social movements join in action across borders to disrupt the corporations’ value chain? Instances of simultaneous, cross border direct actions showed the power of elements within the global class to act in the interests of all by breaking up or challenging the global male deals and affirming commoning. The degree to which I was successful in demonstrating my hypothesis will be seen below.

I now turn to a summary of the analysis in Part II of this study.

Part II: Monsanto and La Via Campesina (1950s to 2011)
Part II begins with chapter four. In chapter four I found that Monsanto’s concentration and organization created the conditions that gave rise to La Via Campesina’s formation and actions. Monsanto globalized and enforced its value chain by calling on its partner capitalists and governments of the North and South (parties to the World Trade Organization) to enclose peasants’ seeds and create and enforce intellectual property rights (through the TRIPS
agreement) in member countries’ national legislation. This was a male deal that set up corporate sovereignty that threatened to eliminate food and seed sovereignty.

La Via Campesina was formed in 1993-94 by peasant organizations in the North and South to fight the World Trade Organization and Monsanto. La Via Campesina members themselves point to capitalist organization as a source of and basis for peasant unity. Joao Pedro Stedile states that “It’s the same handful of companies — seven groups, in total, worldwide — that monopolize agricultural trade, and control research and biotechnology, and are tightening their ownership of the planet’s seeds. The new phase of capitalism has itself created the conditions for farmers to unite against the neoliberal model” (Setdile 2002 quoted in Desmarais, 2007: 74–75).

Chapter four also presented an analysis of Monsanto’s corporate value chain and La Via Campesina’s commoners’ value chain. Monsanto’s patented and GMO seeds lead to food insecurity and suicide amongst peasants in India, (Shiva, 2004: 716 and Shiva, 2009a) have not been conclusively shown to be safe for human health (Artemis and Arvanitoyannis, 2009: 172) and have not been shown to increase yields (Gurian-Sherman, 2009). These findings nullify Monsanto’s claims that genetic engineering can feed the world and benefit humanity.

In contrast, La Via Campesina’s food and seed sovereignty, agroecology, seed saving, seed exchange and localization alternatives lead to more autonomy for women and men farmers, (La Via Campesina, 2008: 5) increased food security, yields and the nutritional value of food, (Shiva, 2009, Rosset, 1999: 5 and Shiva, 2004: 731) and the conservation of nature’s wealth and biodiversity (Kloppenberg, 2008: 3). These findings confirm that commoning practices enhance life requirements and fertility in the interests of all of humanity and the earth.
Chapter five outlined the two stages of Monsanto’s concentration and the concomitant expansion of the movement of movements’ formation and actions (1996–1998 and 2007–2011). Beginning in 1996, Monsanto globalized its value chain by undergoing a series of mergers and acquisitions. Between 1996 and 2011 Monsanto became the world’s top biotech firm with fully 20 percent of the global proprietary seed market and 90 percent of the patents on genetically engineered seeds under its command. Between 1996 and 1998 Monsanto merged with or acquired 15 of the top seed companies in the world. Ten of these companies were in countries other than the United States. Using data from Factiva (a database of global media, business, and scholarly publications) I showed that, during the two stages of Monsanto’s expansion, there was a dramatic and unprecedented surge in reportage on global opposition to the biotech giant. This conclusion revisits the analysis from this study of how La Via Campesina organizations were significantly organized, united and disciplined to connect globally and across gendered and ethnicized divides.

In chapter six, seven, and eight I presented the case studies of India, the EU and Brazil which brought forth the substantive supporting evidence for this study’s hypothesis. I now turn to a summary of the analysis of the study’s findings. I divide the summary in two parts that look first at the in-country dynamics of social movement formation and actions and then at the global dynamics of these movements as they coalesce on a global scale:

1. The first part provides a fight for fertility analysis of the three case studies within India, the European Union and Brazil and

2. The second part provides a circulation analysis of the ways in which the in-country movements connected across geographical borders.
(1) The Fight for Fertility Analysis

There are two dimensions to the fight for fertility analysis. The first dimension analyzes the relationship amongst capitalists and mostly male members of the dispossessed class. Corporate concentration accelerates and intensifies enclosures and exploitation organized through male deals. The second dimension analyzes the relationship amongst dispossessed women and men and people of different ethnicities in order to identify whether there is an increase in gendered, ethnicized class alliances to stop enclosure and exploitation. The second dimension also analyzes the ways in which workers transcend capitalists’ relations by expanding commoning alternatives.

Below I highlight the findings from this study of the back and forth struggle (the capital relation) amongst Monsanto (as a proxy for capitalist exploiters) and La Via Campesina and their allies (as proxy for the commoners in resistance) in (i) India, (ii) the European Union and (iii) Brazil. I now turn to a summary of the analysis of the movement of movements’ formation and actions within India.

(i) India

In the early 1990s the Indian government signed onto the TRIPS agreement of the World Trade Organization which allowed Monsanto to set up its Bt cotton value chain. In 1992 Vandana Shiva and the women of Navdanya organized a non-violence resistance movement (seed satyagraha). The satyagraha was joined by men in a gendered class alliance to stop housewifization and reinforce women’s seed systems. Hundreds of social movements participated in the satyagraha including the millions strong Karantaka State Farmers Association.
In 1998 Monsanto began cultivating its Bt cotton on test-sites across India even though it was in violation of Indian law. The Indian government did not stop Monsanto’s trials. In 2001 Monsanto lobbied the courts and countered legal sanctions by usurping the legal system. By 2002 India’s Genetic Engineering Approval Committee legalized the cultivation of Bt cotton.

Immediately in 1998 the same forces involved in the seed struggle of the early 1990s recomposed on a much more global basis to target Monsanto’s value chain directly. The women and men of Navdanya and the Karnataka farmers and their allies came together in the ‘Monsanto Quit India’ campaign. The campaign sought to break Monsanto’s value chain and stop the separation of women from their means of livelihoods (housewifization). This study investigated four sets of actions undertaken by Navdanya, the Karnataka farmers and their allies to stop Monsanto.

In the first set of actions during 1998–1999 Navdanya waged a legal battle to stop Monsanto from illegally and surreptitiously distributing GM cotton seeds amongst farmers in India. The legal challenge supported and reinforced farmers’ direct action tactics.

The second set of actions undertaken by Indian social movements investigated in this study was Navdanya’s seed tribunals of 2000. The seed tribunals brought together farmers from across the world to spread awareness about the negative impacts of Monsanto’s GMOs. The tribunals also asserted the rights of farmers to freely save and exchange seeds.

The third set of actions this study investigated took place in 1998 when Karnataka farmers immediately responded to Monsanto’s illegal and surreptitious distribution of Bt cotton by uprooting and burning Monsanto’s crops. Women farmers, already organizing to stop seed enclosures, were joined by men farmers in a gendered class alliance. The alliance and direct
action were provoked by Monsanto’s enclosures. The women and men coordinated the militant and state-wide ‘Operation Cremate Monsanto’ campaign. The cotton growers, their families and neighbours worked concertedly to identify and then destroy Monsanto’s GM seeds.

The fourth set of actions investigated in this study’s analysis of India’s struggle was undertaken by the Karnataka farmers’ alliance. The Karnataka farmers and EU social movements globalized the struggle against Monsanto and undermined the hierarchy of labour power. The Inter-continental Caravan ‘99 included direct action with farmers in France to spread opposition to GMOs. The farmers and EU social movements organized in other actions meant to build global solidarity (more above on page 157).

Monsanto’s field trials and underhanded contamination of India’s cotton provoked an intense and globally connected response by women and men farmers in the North and South. Monsanto’s field trials provided a target for the social movements to legally challenge and physically disrupt Monsanto’s value chain. Monsanto’s organization provided an opening for the social movements to fight back and affirm seed sovereignty.

I now turn to a summary of the analysis of the movement of movements’ formation and actions within the EU.

(ii) European Union

In the fall of 1996 the European Commission approved the imports of GM soy outside of any legal framework governing the testing and labelling of GMOs. In January 1997 the European Commission adopted the Novel Foods Regulation to govern the safety and labelling of GMOs. The Regulation’s testing procedures for establishing the safety of GM food was based on Monsanto’s principle of substantial equivalence.
The principle was authored by former Monsanto employees and was established based solely on Monsanto’s science. EU Commissioners responsible for drafting the Regulation had established ties to the biotech industry. The Novel Foods Regulation relaxed requirements for testing and labelling of GMOs despite the fact that the long term human health consequences of GM food had not been determined. This male deal between Monsanto and the European Commission undermined the EU regulatory system and continues (as of 2011) to endanger human health.

Beginning in 1996 women and men food buyers, farmers and scientists organized a sustained, regional and global response to the European Commission’s 1996 approval of GM food imports into the EU. The men and women from Greenpeace, Women’s Environment Network, GenetiX Snowball, and Confederation Paysanne put pressure on the EU and national governments to stop the approval of GM food and ban Monsanto’s crops. The movements against Monsanto in the EU were connected with movements in other countries within the EU and globally, including in India, Zambia and Brazil (more below). These actions were undertaken in over six countries within the EU. The movements embraced a multi-ethnic, multi-gendered and a multitudinous group of social factory workers.

In 1997 men and women food buyers and farmers were joined by scientist Arpad Pusztai and his supporters. Pusztai’s findings challenged Monsanto on two accounts. First Pusztai’s research proved false the principle of substantial equivalence. His findings indicated that GM food was indeed chemically different from non-GM food. Second Pusztai’s science had a global impact. His public warning caused a firestorm of controversy. Pusztai’s science was picked up by social movements, professionals and media personnel and used to fight Monsanto’s science.
Pusztai himself globalized his findings by publicizing his work through professional scientific networks and universities across geographical borders in the EU and then globally.

In 1998 the European Commission established an EU-wide de-facto moratorium on the new approvals of GMOs. As of 2011 several governments, including France, Greece, Italy, Luxemburg, Denmark and Austria continue to restrict Monsanto’s operations due largely to popular opposition. The gendered, ethnicized class alliance of food buyers, farmers and scientists successfully disrupted Monsanto’s male deals with the European Commission. The alliance affirmed commoning by promoting localized, family farming and food sovereignty.

I now turn to a summary of the analysis of the movement of movements’ formation and actions within Brazil.

(iii) Brazil

In 1998 at the same time as Monsanto was contaminating India’s cotton seed supply, the company began contaminating Brazil’s soy beans. In 1998 Monsanto began conducting field trials of GM soy in the state of Rio Grande do Sul once again without authorization from the state government and in direct contravention of existing Brazilian law. By 2001 Monsanto had still not been granted approval but GM soy was being cultivated across the state. Monsanto sought approval by enlisting presumably mostly male large landholders to grow GM soy seeds smuggled across the border from Argentina. This constituted a male deal. Monsanto tried to contaminate Brazil’s seeds so that the government would be forced to legalize them. In 2003 the Lula government amidst widespread claims of lobbying and corruption, sided with Monsanto and authorized the cultivation of GM soy.
Monsanto’s seeds threatened small farmers’ autonomy and agro-ecology, especially for Brazil’s millions of landless peasants and small-scale farmers. In 1999 the Rio Grande do Sul state government banned Monsanto’s GM soy from the state. The state government chose to defend the interests of farmers against Monsanto. The state government joined the women and men of Brazil’s Landless Workers Movement (MST) who had been defending land and family farming since the 1980s. This constituted a gendered class alliance.

In January 2001 Monsanto’s enclosure of soy forced the men and women of the MST to fight back. The MST led participants of the inaugural World Social Forum in an occupation of Monsanto’s test-field site and research facility in Nao-Me-Toque (Don’t Touch Me), Rio Grande do Sul. The January 2001 World Social Forum action against Monsanto was one in a series of expertly coordinated and well rehearsed MST actions in defence of the commons.

The MST and allied social movements linked up in the World Social Forum at the same time as, and in opposition to, the capitalists’ and governments’ World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. The chiefs of commerce in Davos, including Monsanto, brought together this massive movement of movements to oppose the corporate dis-organization of life and encourage its replacement with responsible, safe and ecologically defensible commoning alternatives.

The MST’s World Social Forum action sought to interrupt Monsanto’s in-country and global soy value chain in three ways: (i) by directing media attention to farmers’ struggle against Monsanto, (ii) by affirming commoning and, (iii) by exercising and calling for effective and direct militant action across borders. The MST and their international allies affirmed
agroecology and seed saving systems that increase women’s autonomy and control over the means of production.

The World Social Forum action involved many workers from social movements in the global North and South. For example, France’s Jose Bove from Confederation Paysanne joined the MST farmers in uprooting Monsanto’s soy. Social Forum participants from the North, in uniting with the MST, crossed ethnicized divisions imposed by the capitalists to express demands in the interest of all dispossessed peoples. These demands included food sovereignty, production in harmony with the earth’s ecosphere, global solidarity and drastically reduced global trade in favour of national and local food supply priorities. The alliance affirmed the reality that commoning in the North requires commoning in the South and vice versa.

I now turn to a summary of the circulation analysis to reflect on the detailed investigation of the ways in which the above gendered, ethnicized class alliances were stimulated by Monsanto’s global concentration and organization to connect across geographical borders.

(2) Circulation Analysis

The circulation analysis highlights how those who are brought into movements exert a counterforce to break up the corporate value chain by coordinating across geographical borders.

Below I highlight three cross-border direct actions:

i. La Via Campesina farmers in the EU, India and Brazil uprooting GM crops to break up Monsanto’s value chain;

ii. Greenpeace’s global frankenfoods campaign involving men and women to disrupt Monsanto’s value chain and decrease shareholders’ value and;
iii. Karnataka State Farmers’ Association and EU social movement’s caravan to counter corporate globalization and build people’s globalization.

(i) La Via Campesina Uproots Monsanto’s Crops 1998–2001

In the EU, India and Brazil, La Via Campesina organizations initiated direct action that involved sabotage of Monsanto’s crops. In September 1998 in France, the women and men of Confederation Paysanne and their allies destroyed Monsanto’s maize and soya crops at a GM-crop testing site in Monbequi in the Tarn et Garonne province. The farmers and their allies grabbed the media’s attention and asserted their call for a ban on Monsanto’s GMOs. They established themselves as worthy adversaries to Monsanto’s big money and considerable and persuasive political manipulation.

Two months after the French action, in November 1998, the women and men of India’s Karnataka farmers launched coordinated crop burnings across the state of Karnataka. Monsanto’s seed contamination scam was an affront to campaigners for people’s food sovereignty. The Karnataka farmers were militant in their response to Monsanto’s attack. The farmers, their families and neighbours worked concertedly to identify and then destroy Monsanto’s GM seeds. In 1999 Indian farmers and farmers in France joined in an action to uproot GM crops at a public research station in the French village Gaudies. They proved that they could counter Monsanto with direct action and serve their interests even after the company had managed to circumvent the law.

In January 2001 in Rio Grande do Sul, MST organized a global counterattack against Monsanto’s GM soy. Many dozens of workers from across the world joined MST farmers at the World Social Forum action to uproot and burn Monsanto’s GM soy. The World Social Forum
crop sabotage crossed geographical borders through the international mainstream and independent media and put pressure on the Brazilian government to stop Monsanto’s GMO corruption.

Farmers’ crop burnings and sabotage are more than symbolic. Most GM seeds reproduce naturally and the only way for farmers to stop their spread, and avoid having to pay continuous royalties or be subjected to legal force, is by destroying them. The farmers sought to cut off Monsanto’s access to future profits by refusing to allow the spread and contamination by GM seeds.

La Via Campesina farmers and their allies united to stop the imposition of capitalist agriculture which undermines women’s autonomy and life reproducing powers. La Via Campesina organizations had an ecofeminist agenda which involved affirming seed sovereignty and women’s sovereignty to reproduce food and human health. These alternatives included, laws to protect farmers’ rights to save seeds, agroecology, seed saving and conservation practices and localization practices. La Via Campesina farmers’ action to stop Monsanto expressed the general class interest in that it promoted an agri-food system that is in the interests of all.

Monsanto set up test field sites across the world and repeated its tactic of winning approval by contamination. Farmers and their allies in India, the EU and Brazil were connected by Monsanto’s concentration and enclosure of seeds. Monsanto’s field trials were organized globally. Farmers’ global crop burnings have mirrored and countered Monsanto’s global patterns of enclosure. Where Monsanto sows its GMO seeds, farmers and their allies uproot
them and replace them with farmer saved seeds. Where Monsanto privatizes seeds, farmers set up seed sharing networks.

This study has shown that Monsanto’s global value chain globalizes commoners’ value chains. This sparked the formation of a global movement of movements against Monsanto, originating from the organization, unity and disciplining force of the biotech giant’s concentration and organization.

I now turn to a summary of the analysis of Greenpeace’s global frankenfoods campaign.

(ii) Greenpeace’s Global Fight Against Frankenfoods

Another cross-border action highlighted in this study is Greenpeace’s ‘frankenfoods’ campaign. Beginning in 1996 Greenpeace coordinated a global campaign against Monsanto’s GMOs. The ‘frankenfoods campaign’ underlined the fact that genetic modification poses risks to human health. As of 2011 public scientists have still not established that GM food is safe for people to eat. And considering the impact that such science would have on the biotech industry it is reasonable to assume that Monsanto had done everything in its power to achieve this safety standard. The fact that it had failed to do so is additional confirmation of the dangers.

The frankenfoods campaign re-branded Monsanto’s product. The campaign slogan drew on negative images from Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein (first published in 1818) to publicize the risky nature of the food and the reckless and barbaric interests driving the experiment.

Greenpeace ‘frankenfoods’ campaigners organized direct actions at head offices, ports and processing facilities owned by Monsanto and other multinationals. The campaign started in the EU in the fall of 1996. In 1997 Greenpeace organizers from Belgium, Italy, Germany, Austria, Finland, France, Spain, the Czech Republic and Switzerland blockaded head offices’ entrances
of food processing multinationals Unilever and Nestle. The blockades were meant to direct media attention to food buyers’ refusal of GMOs and force the government to stop Monsanto.

In Brazil in 1998 Greenpeace launched the frankenfoods campaign to pressure the government to stop Monsanto’s illegal cultivation of Roundup Ready soy. In October 1998 at the port of Sao Francisco do Sul women and men from Greenpeace blockaded the shipment of GM soy beans from the United States. The blockades and occupations not only disrupted business for Monsanto. They also interrupted business for other capitalists across the agri-food value chain including food processors and distributors. The blockades were meant to block the flow of profits and increase risk of investing in the company with the very negative frankenfood reputation.

The frankenfoods campaigners also intended to direct public attention to Monsanto’s dangerous and anti-social value chain. Social movements and media personnel in countries globally used the frankenfoods campaign slogan to expose and condemn Monsanto and GMOs. As indicated above in chapter nine, corporate analysts described the crash of Monsanto as a result of public opposition to ‘frankenfoods.’

Greenpeace’s resources and campaign message supported the efforts of Monsanto’s opponents in the North and South to fight Monsanto in dozens of locations around the world. Greenpeace Europe’s connection with movements in the global South (and vice versa) to undermine Monsanto, expressed the general class interest — the interests of people to eat safe food, to be protected from chemicals and GM seed contamination and to halt the extraction of profits from women, their children and the nature on which these women rely for life.
I now turn to a summary of the analysis of the 1999 caravan of Indian and EU social movements.

(iii) North-South Caravan against Corporate Globalization

The EU-India caravan was organized in May 1999 by the Karnataka farmers and EU NGOs including the grassroots non-governmental organization People’s Global Action against ‘Free’ Trade and the WTO. The caravan connected the alliance of women and men farmers in India with the alliance of women and men farmers and social movements against all capitalists and for a post-capitalist future. This represented a global ethnicized (as well as gendered) class alliance.

The People’s Global Action and the Karnataka farmers were able to share strategies on how to take action against corporations including Monsanto. The caravan was organized only six months before the 1999 WTO ministerial meeting in Seattle, Washington. The connection between the two groups prefigured the coalescing of social movements (and the rise of the very powerful indy media phenomenon at the Battle of Seattle. The caravan also brought La Via Campesina farmers together to exercise direct action in an anti-GM crop action and affirm food sovereignty.

The caravan also spread information throughout media and public networks about GMOs and the extreme life-threatening exploitation of farmers that get hooked on GMOs. Farmers (producers) uprooted Monsanto’s crops. Food buyers (consumers) asserted their solidarity with farmers to fight GMOs. This campaign amounted to a social factory-wide ethnicized class alliance across terrains of exploitation. Monsanto’s value chain provided the basis for coordinated action by farmers and food buyers to undermine the company.
In sum, chapters six, seven and eight have shown that in 1992–2001 in India, the European Union and Brazil Monsanto’s concentration (1996–1998) and attempts to enclose seeds and aspects of the global food system propelled a surge in the actions and formation of a movement of movements against these and related corporate actions.

In **chapter nine** I outline Monsanto’s second stage of concentration (2007–2011) from agrofuels investments and the global movement that rose up in response to the food crisis (2007–2008). Chapter nine showed that with capitalist crisis and successive waves of corporate concentration there develops more expansive social movements. This global movement of movements significantly led to Monsanto’s collapse from 1998–2002. In this study I have shown that the public opposition and ‘heat’ that the business intelligence analysts point to as the source of Monsanto’s downfall, was social factory-wide and organized by women and men in a global gendered, ethnicized class alliance.

I started this thesis with an example of the movement of movements in Egypt circulating though the Middle East, North Africa, and the world from December 2010 to August 2011. As I wrote this thesis, it was apparent that the movement of movements was expanding in front of my eyes. The actions of leaderless and democratic movements in Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, Jordan, Yemen, Morocco, Sudan, Algeria, Cameroon, Mauritania, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Greece, Israel, the United States and the United Kingdom have been emboldened by the recent financial, climate and food crises and the expansion of corporate concentration.

The finding in this study that corporate expansion accelerates and enhances the formation of the movement of movements implies that this process is inevitable. Movements will somehow ‘naturally’ respond to corporate organization to overthrow their adversary. Yet the close
analysis of the case studies struggles within India, the European Union and Brazil exposed the reality of self-conscious and creative action and the importance of human agency. Workers’ formation of a movement of movements and capitalists’ formation of corporate monopolies are historically and socially determined rather than the result of natural laws.

There are and have been gains and losses on the part of both workers and capitalists. This struggle is, in Christie’s words, the ‘power-plant of history’ (Christie in Nore and Turner, 1980: 13). In contrast to many political economy analyses of social struggle, which, in Cleaver’s words, view capitalists as the ‘self-activating monsters’ that always finish ‘on-top,’ (Cleaver, 1977: Introduction, 20) this study has centralized the power of the dispossessed in making their own history. Monsanto’s collapse in 1998–2002 showed that social movements challenge, check and often overcome capitalists’ power.

This study has exposed the ways in which the globalized worker (1999–20??) organized in the movement of social movements that emerged from the transformations of power that have arisen from the global wave of amalgamation (1980s to 20??). The origins of the movement of movements is the two-fold process of ‘one capitalist killing many’ and organization, unity and discipline that arises from ‘the process of the mechanism of production itself.’

Monsanto expanded by buying up other seed and biotech companies. The company also expanded by forming male deals with male members of the dispossessed class in order to enclose and control nature and women’s time, knowledge, children and bodies. The male deals allowed Monsanto to create a global value chain that undermined human and environmental health. La Via Campesina women and men in India, the EU and Brazil and their counterparts in other countries fought back to defend life. La Via Campesina and their allies uprooted GM
crops, challenged Monsanto’s activities through courts, media, scientific studies, nakedness and government regulation. Monsanto’s value chain significantly created the conditions for these movements to resist and link up across borders.

La Via Campesina and their allies also affirmed food and seed sovereignty, agroecology and localized food systems. The women and men within movements against Monsanto affirmed global commoning in the interests of the whole class becoming for itself and thereby establishing conditions necessary for the elimination of classes. In history, as Pat Mooney points out, we have always had these kinds of alliances. The findings in this study confirm that these alliances are the harvest from the seeds of capitalist exploitation. The size and quality of the harvest follows directly from the intensity of such exploitation.

This close study of social movement alliances and the breaking of male deals in action reveals prefigurations of the continuation and expansion of the movement of movements in North Africa, the Middle East and throughout the world. The protests that have erupted in 2011 are current, ongoing evidence of the acceleration of the mobilization of the movement of movements and a reason for optimism.
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