

Discussion Question for Virtual Roundtable Participants
(please prepare a 10-minute response)

*In your opinion, what is the strongest redistributive policy tool for dismantling the corporate food regime and rebuilding a resilient and just food system along the principle of (assigned one of the following): **Decolonization; Decarbonization; Diversification; Democratization; Decommodification**? How would it work? Which actors and social groups would need to be involved? What effects would it have on the corporate food regime? What effects would it have for resilient and just food systems?*

**Dismantling and Rebuilding the Food System after COVID-19:
Ten Principles for Redistribution and Regeneration**

Draft Concept Note

Working Group on 'Redistributive Policies for Food Systems Transformation'

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Introduction

COVID-19, which has claimed over 460,000 human lives and is estimated to cause anywhere from three to 82 trillion (USD) in GDP losses over the next five years (University of Cambridge Judge Business School [2020](#)), has spurred an unprecedented response from governments. Trillions in fiscal emergency measures are set to drive up national deficits in the name of economic recovery (see IMF [2020](#)). As one example, the Canadian federal government has allocated CAD \$169 billion in emergency funds since March (PBO [2020](#)), equivalent to more than 40% of federal revenues in 2018-9 (Government of Canada [2019](#)). For the most part, these emergency responses fail to address underlying structural features of what is often referred to as the “corporate food regime” (McMichael [2005](#)) -- features that increase the risk of, and stand to exacerbate, the impact of future pandemics (Wallace [2020](#)). These features include multinational corporate actors with concentrated market power; land consolidation; industrialized crop and livestock production; the tight coupling of the fossil energy and agrifood sectors; and liberalized global trade (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck [2011](#)). COVID-19 has illustrated how a food regime characterized by increasing consolidation, concentration, and specialization is not resilient and is therefore vulnerable to shocks (Hendrickson [2020](#)).

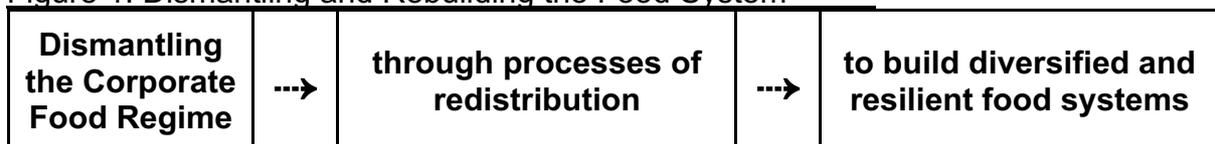
The globalization and corporatization of food systems has been characterized as an “international public health disaster” (UN News [2012](#)). In Canada and other high-income countries, risks of food insecurity and diet-related disease are elevated among those with low income (Phipps et al. [2006](#); McIntyre et al. [2014](#)) and among Indigenous, Black, and other racialized populations (Domingo et al. [2020](#); Damman et al. [2008](#); Batal et al. [2018](#); Tarasuk & Mitchell [2020](#); McIntyre et al. [2014](#)) who face geographic, social, cultural, and economic barriers to accessing healthy food. The loss of jobs and income as a result of COVID-19 is expected to increase food insecurity in Canada (Holland [2020](#)) and globally (World Food Programme [2020](#)), while early analyses of COVID-19 mortality indicate that those who suffer from diet-related diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases and type 2 diabetes, are at higher risk of morbidity and mortality to COVID-19 (Bansal [2020](#); Jordan et al. [2020](#); Cariou et al. [2020](#); Hussain et al. [2020](#); Stefan et al. [2020](#)). These findings suggest that those whose health has already been harmed by the existing food system and those whose livelihoods are characterized by precarity are being made further vulnerable. Current national state responses to this crisis appear compensatory, with the intention of stabilizing -- not restructuring -- the economy, and therefore risk entrenching these vulnerabilities. As with previous economic recessions and crises, (re)investment in the status quo is the dominant expectation across political and economic institutions.

Yet times of crisis provide an opportunity for transformation (Wright [2016](#)). In this concept note, we consider how states can respond to the global pandemic and what effect these responses may have on building the food systems of the future. We see potential responses as falling into two categories. The first is the aforementioned (re)investment in the corporate food regime, thereby reproducing its vulnerabilities, inequities, and associated high costs to the environment, the economy, human health, and well-being (IPES-Food [2017](#)). A second, alternative pathway would be to aggressively shift to a more resilient and equitable food system by interrupting and redirecting the processes driving the accumulation of capital in the corporate food

regime: industrialization, concentration, specialization, and financialization. We argue that strategic *dismantling* of the corporate food regime is necessary to create spaces for *rebuilding* food system(s) in ways that respect peoples and ecologies. Such a change requires economic and political restructuring through a suite of redistributive policies and actions across scales, oriented by principles drawn from the food sovereignty movement. We refer to these principles as the “5Ds of Redistribution”: Decolonization, decarbonization, diversification, democratization and decommodification.

While there is much debate about the role of the state in food sovereignty construction (Desmarais et al. [2017](#); Trauger [2014](#)), we argue that states must take on the role of dismantling the corporate food regime -- in accordance with the calls of the grassroots food sovereignty movement -- because “only the state has the authority to mobilise state resources,” expropriate and redistribute assets from large companies or landowners, and compel compliance (Borras et al. [2015](#), p. 612). However, the (neo)liberal state alone as currently structured is inadequate for reorganizing and rebuilding the new participatory democratic decision-making and governance systems central to food sovereignty (Trauger [2014](#)). Similarly, the IMF and state-imposed structural adjustment programs are prime examples of how mis-allocated power and control over food systems effectively undermine food insecurity and poverty (McMichael [2014](#)). Thus, we argue that it is insufficient to focus only on how state power can be used to dismantle the corporate food regime, as doing so does not preclude a return to the corporate-controlled structure of the current food regime. In other words, while the state plays a necessary role in dismantling the corporate food regime and redistributing power and resources, the rebuilding phase to follow requires transdisciplinary policy development to meet both food security and sustainability goals (MacRae & Toronto Food Policy Council [1999](#)).

Figure 1: Dismantling and Rebuilding the Food System



This paper is organized as follows; In Part 1, we identify 5 principles (Decolonization, Decarbonization, Diversification, Democratization and Decommodification) that can inform redistributive policies. We provide a justification for the principles (the 5Ds of Redistribution) and provide some examples of illustrative policy directions for redistribution drawn from the Canadian context. In Part 2, we suggest a second, complementary set of principles, drawn from the Indigenous food sovereignty literature, to inform the rebuilding and governance of resilient food systems. We refer to these principles (Relationality, respect, reciprocity, responsibilities, and rights) as the “5Rs of Regeneration”.

Part 1 - Dismantling Processes of Accumulation: The 5Ds of Redistribution

The decades leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic have witnessed growing power among transnational agrifood corporations, over which individuals, communities, and states have diminishing control and influence (Clapp & Fuchs [2009](#)). The corporate food regime -- consisting of agribusiness, oil and gas, and other extractive industries

including forestry, commercial fisheries, and the associated technology and finance sectors -- concentrates ownership and control of land, resources and assets in the food system (McMichael [2005](#); Clapp [2018](#); Holt Gimenez & Shattuck [2011](#)). At the same time, the corporate food regime has become increasingly entangled with multiple health and ecological crises, including epidemics and pandemics (Wallace [2016](#)), as well as biodiversity loss and climate change (Campbell et al. [2017](#)). Yet multi-national and corporate actors shaping the food system are often difficult to hold accountable for social and ecological harms as a result of years of industrialization (Kneen [1995](#); Redclift & Goodman [1992](#); Goodman & Watts [1997](#)) and financialization (Clapp [2014](#)). This is partly due to the obscuring effects of globalization, industrialization and financialization which have introduced mental and geographic “distance” between food production and consumption (Clapp [2015](#)).

The disproportionate power held by transnational agrifood corporations and the high social and ecological costs of the corporate food regime spurred the emergence of the global food sovereignty movement. The food sovereignty movement demands a radical shift from the corporate food regime toward more ecologically sustainable, resilient, and equitable food systems that provide culturally appropriate and healthy food and dignified livelihoods for food providers (Nyéléni [2007](#)). Speaking in response to the COVID-19 crisis, one of the main international actors in the food sovereignty movement, La Vía Campesina (LVC), has called for “solidarity across movements and borders” and “to build our collective response to this crisis...and demand that our governments channel resources to those that need them most” (LVC [2020](#)).

The profound societal transformation advocated by the food sovereignty movement will require the mass mobilization of resources. In the current liberalized and globalized economy -- where profit motivations and global influence of transnational corporations makes them hard to regulate in isolation -- such a transformation will require international coordination and cooperation among states. As Borras et al. ([2015](#) p. 612) suggest, “all states and international organisations must respect and protect existing land-based social relationships in other countries and effectively regulate [transnational corporations (TNCs)] and business enterprises, the international financial system and the trade and investment regime accordingly.”

How should such a large-scale, food-sovereignty-inspired transformation be funded? One model would be to follow the organizing principle of the corporate food regime: “privatizing profits and socializing losses,” which would translate to the public shouldering the cost. However, an inverse model would finance the transition through **reparations** funded by the main beneficiaries of the corporate food regime, in accordance with the centuries of externalized costs that have *already* been shouldered by people and ecosystems. In other words, a transformation guided by the food sovereignty paradigm would entail large-scale, state-mediated redistribution based on the following principles consistent with food sovereignty: Decolonization, decarbonization, diversification, democratization, and decommodification. We describe these principles and their application to the Canadian context below.

1) *Decolonization*¹

Agriculture has historically been used to dispossess Indigenous peoples, and its legacy persists today (Carter [1990](#); Daschuk [2013](#)). Infectious diseases and their particular effects on Indigenous Peoples have been a defining feature of colonial history in Canada and other global contexts (see, for example, the work of Carlson ([1997](#)) on the smallpox epidemic or Boggild et al. ([2011](#)) on the disproportionate effect that H1N1 had on Indigenous people in 2009). With respect to COVID-19 in particular, Indigenous people are once again poised to be especially hard-hit, given the social determinants of health, rooted in ongoing colonialism, that place them at disproportionate risk (i.e. food and water insecurity, crowded housing, chronic disease) (Domingo et al. [2020](#); Levi & Robin [2020](#); Rice et al. [2016](#)).

To move toward decolonizing the food system, policies must be implemented to redistribute land and wealth to Indigenous Peoples (Table 1). Decolonization is context-dependent, and accordingly will take different forms in different places. Just as colonization is both ontological and material -- perpetuated by ongoing land dispossession and the extractivism on which settler states depend -- decolonization is also ontological and material. Following Indigenous scholars (Smith [2012](#); Tuck & Yang [2012](#)), we view decolonization as involving not only the cultivation of a critical consciousness, but also material redistribution. In settler colonial contexts such as Canada, where land has been violently and unjustly coerced or stolen from Indigenous Peoples (and where these patterns continue to be reproduced through state and capitalist expansion of the extractive economy and state exertions of sovereignty), decolonization necessitates Indigenous self-governance and “must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted” (Tuck & Yang [2012](#) p. 7). Indeed, while there is enormous diversity within and across Indigenous Nations, many Indigenous food sovereignty scholars and advocates describe land as kin and food as sacred, informed by a relational worldview that recognises the interdependence of human and non-human nature (Coté [2016](#); Morrison & Wittman [2017](#)).

Table 1: Redistributive policies supporting decolonization

Decolonization			
Redirect / Redistribute	What	From	To
Processes of redistribution and redirection	Land	The state and property-owners	Indigenous communities
	Wealth		

¹ We emphasize that settler colonialism is not a thing of the past, but rather an ongoing process and structure (Wolfe 2006). As such, our approach to decolonization is also explicitly anti-racist and anti-colonial.

<p>Illustrative policy recommendations in the Canadian context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease regulatory barriers for traditional food harvesting and processing (Morrison 2008; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2017). • Guarantee right to clean water (David Suzuki Foundation 2018) and the right to food (De Schutter 2012). • Deliver on treaty obligations (Manuel 2017; Starblanket & Hunt 2020). • Expedite resolution of existing and future land claims (Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs 2018). • Return land and jurisdiction to Indigenous Peoples (Yellowhead Institute 2019), beginning with Crown land. • Negotiate and provide reparations in accordance with each Nation’s specific needs (Manuel & Derrickson 2015). • Negotiate settler rights based on pre-doctrine of discovery (Assembly of First Nations 2018).
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2) Decarbonization²

The industrial food system which has caused health impacts, and which COVID-19 has made worse, also has significant impacts on ecosystems and planetary health. There is scientific consensus that the world must cut emissions dramatically to avoid catastrophic climate disruption. Globally, the agriculture and food sector is among the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC [2019](#); Campbell et al. [2017](#)). This is also true in Canada, where the agriculture sector contributes almost 10% of Canadian emissions ([2020](#)). Canada ranks 11th globally in terms of greenhouse gas emissions (Government of Canada, [2020](#)) and is one of the highest per-capita greenhouse gas emitters (Stoddart et al. [2012](#)). Despite committing in the Paris Agreement to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 30% below 2005 levels by 2030, even in the most optimistic scenario Canada is projected to miss its reduction targets by 19% (Environment and Climate Change Canada [2020](#)).

Decarbonizing the food system requires states to enact policy that redirects capital flows away from fossil energy-intensive food sector enterprises to low fossil energy-intensive enterprises, in the pursuit of net zero emissions (Table 2). Farming organizations in the food sovereignty movement have already identified strategies and policy options to reduce agricultural emissions in Canada while simultaneously improving farmer livelihoods, and consumer health (Qualman & NFU [2019](#)). One option, for example, is for the state to heavily tax resource-intensive, high-emission companies, and to redistribute the funds by subsidizing low-emission agroecological systems and research for communities most affected by climate change, both domestically and in the Global South.

Table 2: Redistribution for Decarbonization of the Food System

Decarbonization			
Redirect / Redistribute	What	From	To

² We use the term decarbonization here in a broad sense, to refer to the need to cut all greenhouse gases and toxic emissions, while noting that carbon-based extraction in particular is driving major climate disruption (with significant effects on the food system).

Processes of redistribution and redirection	Profits and subsidies	Energy-intensive firms	Low energy firms
	Wealth (intra and inter state)	The biggest GHG emitting states	States most affected by climate change
Illustrative policy recommendation examples from the Canadian context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redirect subsidies from fossil fuel corporations to clean energy and low emissions technology (IISD 2019). • Provide a green jobs guarantee and worker retraining programs in line with a just transition (Cooling, Lee, Daub & Singe 2015). • Provide reparations to low- and middle-income countries in line with Canada's climate debt and open borders to climate refugees (Dickson, Webber & Takaro 2014). 		

3) Diversification

COVID has demonstrated vulnerabilities in the food system related to a lack of diversity and redundancy in supply chains. Canada is an agricultural powerhouse and is highly export-oriented (AAFC [2017](#)); globally, it is the fifth-largest exporter of agri-food products (Stats Canada [2016](#)). More than half of the value of Canada agricultural production is sold for consumption abroad (Stats Canada [2016](#)). Meanwhile, Canada is also one of the world's largest agri-food importers; it is particularly dependent on the US, with 60% of the value of Canada's agrifood imports attributed to the US in 2016 (AAFC [2017](#)). In addition, certain agrifood sectors in Canada are highly concentrated. The export-oriented meat sector is a case in point: Only three plants (two owned by Cargill and one by JBS) are responsible for anywhere from 80-95% Canadian beef processing (NFU [2020](#)). This extreme level of concentration creates bottlenecks prone to disruption and underscores the need for a more diversified food system.

Redistributive policies in line with the diversification principle aim to redress specialization and homogenization in the food system (Nyström et al. [2019](#)) -- in terms of what is grown and eaten, and in terms of how food is processed and distributed (Table 3). Redistribution can therefore increase diversity in at least two ways, including by: 1) Increasing (agro)biodiversity at multiple scales (IPBES [2019](#); IPES-Food [2016](#)) and 2) Creating new, diverse, and territorially-embedded food supply chains (MacRae [2011](#)). For example, Canada could take steps to strengthen and enforce competition laws at home to lessen the power that highly concentrated food sector corporations have over determining product availability on supermarket shelves. However, these competition laws should be layered with fair trade considerations to ensure not only accountability and transparency for growers and eaters in Canada, but also provisions to farmer and worker welfare abroad, especially in low-income countries (De Schutter [2010](#)).

Table 3: Redistribution for Diversification of the Food System

Diversification			
Redirect / Redistribute	What	From	To

Processes of redistribution and redirection	Subsidies	Large-scale monoculture farmers	Small-to-medium scale agroecological food providers
	Profits and corporate equity	Large centralized processors, distributors and retailers	Small regional processors, distributors and retailers
Illustrative policy recommendation examples from the Canadian context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish small- and medium-scale abattoirs and processors and reduce the regulatory barriers for those selling to local markets (NFU 2020). • Subsidize diversified and low-input farming (Qualman & NFU 2019). • Create a land trust for new and small-scale food providers, with priority to historically marginalized populations (Hamilton 2005). • Enforce and strengthen “human rights-sensitive” competition law (De Schutter 2010). 		

4) Democratization

In the most basic sense, democratization refers to creating more equitable access to and distribution of decision-making power through transparent, accountable, integrated, and systems-oriented governance structures. This process applies both to (re)distributing control over state institutions through transdisciplinary engagement (MacRae & Toronto Food Policy Council [1999](#)), as well as expanding democratic oversight of the agrifood corporations and companies whose operations currently incur significant costs to the public in the form of health, social, and environmental externalities (Hassanein, [2003](#)) (Table 4).

This is particularly true for those who have been historically marginalized and excluded from democratic processes (Konefal & Hatanaka [2010](#); Butt & Taylor [2018](#); Moragues-Faus & Marsden [2017](#)). This includes those who live in Canada but are not formally recognized as Canadian citizens, including temporary and seasonal agricultural and food system workers, migrants, students, and refugees who are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity (Lane, Nisbet, & Vatanparast [2019](#); Weiler et al. [2017](#)) and the effects of COVID-19 (Haley et al. [2020](#)). As one example of transdisciplinary and democratized participation in policy-making, around 3500 people participated in a collaborative consultation process over three years to create “A People’s Food Policy for Canada” (FSC [2015](#)).

As thousands of scholars recently argued (Fraser et al. [2020](#)), the nature of work and workplaces must also be democratized. For example, the Canadian government could require agrifood businesses to transition towards worker-owned models in order to receive COVID-related support. This would provide food workers -- including migrant workers -- increased control over their own health, labour, and futures. The democratization of work prioritizes progressive labour law reforms to encourage and enhance unionization in contrast to the regressive labour laws that have accompanied the rise and concentration in corporate power under neoliberalism (Ferdosi [2020](#); Riddell [2004](#)).

Table 4: Redistribution for Democratization of the Food System

Democratization			
Redirect / Redistribute	What	From	To
Processes of redistribution and redirection	Control over government	Corporate lobbies and political and economic elites	Citizens
	Control over corporate entities	Owners and executives	Workers
Illustrative policy recommendation examples from the Canadian context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make government funding support contingent upon firms transitioning to worker cooperatives (Fraser et al. 2020). • Fund participatory and agroecological research and public extension services (Isaac et al. 2018). • Reduce policies that limit, and enact policies that encourage, unionization in the private sector (Schenk 2014). • Open work permits, provide migrant workers resident status on arrival, and provide pathways to citizenship (Migrant Rights Network 2020). 		

5) Decommodification

The right to food has been established through a number of international agreements and covenants, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Despite its “commitment to the progressive realisation of the right to food”, the Canadian government has yet to guarantee this right in practice (Rideout et al. [2007](#), p. 566). While not a new problem in the Canadian context, COVID-19 has exacerbated food insecurity, particularly for marginalized populations, reinvigorating discussions on the commodification of food versus rights-based approaches to addressing food insecurity.

Redistributive policies should directly address the inequitable effects of enclosure, which generally refers to the disruption of common management regimes through the creation of property amenable to private ownership. Commodity markets have allowed some actors to accumulate a disproportionate share of property and profit, leading to a concentration of land and other resources (and thus, wealth and power) (Hendrickson, Howard & Constance [2017](#); Borras et al. [2015](#)). Policies aimed at decommodification interrupt capital accumulation by redesignating key components in the food system -- land, food, and labour in particular -- as basic rights (with associated responsibilities), rather than property that can be exploited for profit.

To properly account for the cost of production by internalizing social and ecological costs, some food prices may need to increase. This requires that members of the public also see their purchasing power increase. A reparations-oriented redistributive perspective on the trend towards corporate concentration in the food system points to the need to explore policies that would redistribute value to the economically

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marginalized, farmers, eaters, and workers (Table 5). This redistribution of income, property, wealth, land, and corporate profits and equity, could be accomplished through taxation and regulations. For example, the state could implement a universal basic income program as an interim step in the progressive realization of the right to food, while establishing progressive corporate tax regimes and a progressive wealth tax to subsidize social welfare programs and strengthen social safety nets.

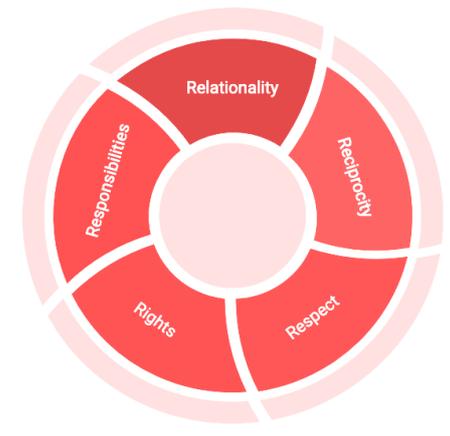
Table 5: Redistribution for Decommodification of the Food System

Decommodification			
Redirect / Redistribute	What	From	To
Processes of redistribution and redirection	Income, property and wealth	Economic elites	Economically marginalized
	Land	States and corporate land holders	The public (through common ownership), protected from development
	Profits and corporate equity	Corporations	Workers
Illustrative policy recommendation examples from the Canadian context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redistribute economic resources through tax reform (Young 2017). • Provide a universal basic income (Basic Income Canada Network n.d.). • Legally enshrine the right to food and other rights-based social protections necessary for building food sovereignty (FSC 2017) 		

Part 2 - Rebuilding from the Bottom Up: The 5Rs of Regenerative Governance

What could new food systems look like post-redistribution? And once the corporate food regime has been dismantled and its parts redistributed, what would need to occur to prevent a new iteration of the corporate food regime from re-emerging? Post-redistribution, we pose five other guiding principles to rebuild resilient and vibrant land and food systems: Relationality, respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and rights. We refer to these jointly as the “5Rs of Regeneration.” Many of these principles are rooted in Indigenous food sovereignty, Indigenous research methodologies (Hart [2009](#); Kovach [2009](#); Wilson [2008](#)), and Indigenous approaches to education (Kirkness [1991](#)) in Canada. Given that the 5Rs represent many traditional Indigenous values, this section is presented through an Indigenous epistemology of interconnectedness, with the understanding that these principles are cyclical.

Figure 2: 5Rs of Regeneration



1) *Relationality*

Relationality is both an ontological and epistemological concept (Wilson [2008](#)). Because Indigenous Peoples understand the world through processes of relating to all living and non-living things, ways of knowing are contextual and based in place-based observations and experiences across time (Deloria [2003](#)). Relationality captures the dynamic and interconnected nature of place-based realities.

In practice, relationality includes gratitude. Acts of gratitude in a just food system require taking responsibility to protect the land by advocating for clean water, air, soil, etc. (Martens [2018](#)). The Indigenous principle of 'seven generations' sheds light on the significance of relationality. This is a concept in many Indigenous cultures that considers ancestral, present, and future generations in our actions toward the land. Applying the seven generations framework (see for example Borrows [2008](#)) makes it clear that acts of care and stewardship are necessary to ensure that land will be healthy and treated with respect. Relational food governance must take a whole-systems approach in order to dismantle the silos that exist within food systems to realize planetary health (Whitmee et al. [2015](#)). Examples of whole-systems approaches can already be found in Indigenous communities where social services incorporate land and food-based programming as preventative and holistic endeavours to bring people together in healing (see for example the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation ([NCN](#)) Family and Community Wellness Centre).

2) *Respect*

In many prairie-based Indigenous cultures in Canada, respect is taught through the seven sacred teachings (Borrows [2008](#)). For example, the bison -- considered a sacred and keystone species, whose loss is still felt in communities today -- carries the teaching of respect through its life-giving abilities (Robin, Dennis & Hart [2020](#)). Historically, all parts of the bison were used; to waste life is to disrespect the gifts provided through creation. To enact respect for the living world entails honouring the gifts of life and the relationships that exist between and amongst all living and nonliving things (Wall Kimmerer [2013](#)).

A respectful food system is anti-colonial and anti-oppressive. It requires people and institutions to consider the impacts and interconnections of colonialism, capitalism, racism, and oppression in the food system and importantly, to seek action through both land and social reform and protection. Respect cautions us to move with deliberate, careful consideration and positions calls for a reconsideration of consumption habits in relation to the land in line with principles of equity and justice. A respectful food system precludes, for example, the possibility of worker and animal exploitation and abuse -- problems that have been made ever more visible as a result of COVID-19 (Haley et al. [2020](#); *Globe & Mail* [2020](#)). A food system based on respect for people and nature is reciprocal; give-and-take practices are in constant operation. Perhaps one of the most pertinent examples that has arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic is that of the need for food banks. While providing critical services, the reputation of food banks as “dumping grounds” for less desirable food is deeply concerning (Robin, Dennis & Hart [2020](#)). In contrast, respectful food governance requires positioning a regenerative and dignified way to distribute food; indeed, on-the-ground examples can already be found in places where communities take on the work of feeding each other. In Indigenous communities in Canada, this is visible through the maintenance of country foods programs in which hunters, fishers, and gatherers are compensated for stocking a community freezer; fresh traditional food is then distributed to community members (NMFCCC [n.d.](#)). Scholars have also noted the holistic approach to food security used by some food hubs who explicitly move beyond emergency food assistance and towards more democratic projects of community self-determination (Levkoe [2017](#); Figueroa [2015](#)).

3) Reciprocity

Through Indigenous ways of knowing, being, seeing and doing, reciprocity is critical to maintaining and supporting respectful relationships. Reciprocity requires an understanding of the sacredness of the gifts of life, including food.

The principle of reciprocity could help guide the creation of a new form of social and economic governance based in equitable and caring exchanges. A just and sustainable food system requires active participation by those in relation with the land to adhere to processes of giving back. For example, to consume fish means to be in relation to the water. Reciprocity in this relationship must also include gratitude expressed by caring for water through research, policy, and/or advocacy work, and by guaranteeing access to clean water for all communities, including Indigenous communities, in perpetuity (Martens [2018](#)). To ensure that water is not misused (i.e. through continued privatization, contamination, and depletion), the Canadian state must at all levels work to develop a coherent and holistic water strategy, embedded in broader hydrosocial relations that recognize both the human right and responsibility to water (Barlow [2016](#); Barlow [2019](#); Wilson et al. [2019](#)).

4) Responsibility

Indigenous people come to understand their roles and responsibilities through the teachings of their Nations. For example, naming and clan systems (in which a family system is built out in honour of the animal beings) are a mechanism by which

responsibilities are ascribed to Indigenous people in their relationship with creation. To live responsibly means to carry out the roles that have been gifted.

The principle of responsibility provides accountability to those relationships that are important: with one another, and to the life-giving ecosystems on which we depend. In practice, responsibility towards the land and its inhabitants requires direct action through relationship. Taking responsibility seriously requires policy makers, activists, protectors, protestors, and advocates to consider how responsibility is enacted through relationship to the land (Wilson [2008](#)). We have also suggested that it compels those who have benefited most from the corporate food regime to take responsibility for past harms and to provide reparations accordingly.

5) Rights

Responsibilities go hand-in-hand with rights. Human rights, Indigenous and collective rights, and food providers' rights are established in treaties, covenants, declarations signed by states at the international level (including The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP)). The implementation of these rights are then enacted by states, local communities and municipal or regional governments through legislation; for example, the province of British Columbia, Canada in late 2019 passed the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act in order to implement UNDRIP provincially (BC Government [n.d.](#)).

While rights instruments play an important role in addressing historical and ongoing state, corporate, and individual harm, we recognize that they also may reinforce problematic notions of state sovereignty. In the Canadian context, for example, the state is the authorizer and enforcer of human and Aboriginal rights, which it fails to guarantee in practice. In a context where the state has attempted to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into colonial ways of being, a balance is needed between the *rights of individuals* and the *collective rights* of Peoples (NIIMMIWG 2019).

The pursuit of -- and responsibility for -- upholding individual, Indigenous, collective, and increasingly, nature's rights is at once universal and context-specific. As noted by the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019), distinguishing between forms of rights (such as human, Indigenous, collective) is a means to re-evaluate which rights should be protected by the state and which rights must be "upheld through new relationships and by confronting racism, discrimination, and stereotypes..." (p.182). This expanded notion of rights departs from traditionally Westphalian notions of citizenship. The "Rights of Nature" is an example of this broadening of rights from an anthropocentric focus (see for example, the Rights of Nature in the Ho-Chunk Nation [constitution](#) or the White Earth band of Ojibwe's Rights of [Manoomin](#)).

These emerging notions of rights and citizenship still derive from states and their capacity to enact legislation that defines legal persons worthy of recognition and protection. However, as with broader conceptions of rights, such as those proposed by the food sovereignty movement (Wittman, [2009](#)), collectivities are (re)asserting rights ascribed to food providers, lands and waters. Regenerative food systems will

expand not only which rights apply and to what/whom, but also the entities which have the capacity to grant them.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 crisis presents a renewed urgency to place food systems transformation front and centre of post-pandemic recovery plans: It has reminded the world of the essential nature of food while shining a light onto some of the major environmental and social problems present in food systems. Importantly, it has also demonstrated the capacity for states to mobilize and shift resources on a massive scale in times of crisis.

The current pandemic is a wake-up call for states to find new ways to facilitate food system resilience and address the risks embedded within the current, highly specialized and concentrated, food system. We have suggested that this entails a process of both dismantling and rebuilding, facilitated through the state-mediated redistribution of land, capital, and profits accrued by key actors in the corporate food regime -- large agrifood corporations, financial institutions, and states -- in line with the principles of decolonization, decarbonization, diversification, democratization and decommodification. We have also argued that a different set of principles are needed to guide the rebuilding of a new food future and counter the values embedded in neoliberal capitalism (privatization, competition, rationalization, etc.). Here, we have looked to teachings rooted in Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies to inform the 5Rs of Regeneration: Relationality, respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and rights. While not exhaustive, these proposed 10 principles offer a guiding framework to start to dismantle and rebuild a food system in line with the demands of the food sovereignty and Indigenous food sovereignty movements.

While we have largely focused here on redistribution within the confines of national borders, the globalized nature of food systems (in particular, the importance of international trade, the influence of transnational corporations, and rise of global wicked problems like climate change) mean that national policies would need to be set within internationally-coordinated and harmonized global policy frameworks.

We hope that in taking stock of the current moment, policy makers, social movement organizers, and advocates can align policy responses in pursuit of a transformative food systems agenda. Redistribution is a necessary step to provide redress for the harms caused by the corporate food regime and to finance a just transition to more resilient, sustainable, and equitable food systems. The main actors in the corporate food regime have benefited for too long from the externalization of social, health, and environmental costs and risks, which have been absorbed by the public (and disproportionately borne by marginalized social groups). It is time for reparations.