

# **TRANSNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC EXPLOITATION ANALYSIS: CORPORATE PILLAGE OF THE GLOBAL VILLAGE**

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# Preface

With the emergence of colossal transnational corporations and the undeniable influence they assert on governments across the globe today, there must be further academic analyses of the effects this relationship has on democracy. Businesses have grown to gargantuan proportions, in many cases superseding economic power of entire nations, becoming the single most dominant institution of the modern era. The question that arises is not only the effect one asserts, but also the after-effect of business on government, and what that may imply for global citizens.

This writing seeks to examine how big business is infiltrating governments around the world through a series of democratic exploitations; media manipulation, campaign contributions, revolving door politics, and monetary control. It also questions what has been and can be done to change the current situation. I employ a timely example of Monsanto Corporation, which is incredibly relevant today, as a theory-building case study to demonstrate how big businesses have effectively usurped the primary role of policy-makers in government through various tactics. This political control for the benefit of business, rather than national good, requires an academic examination to reveal the possible havoc and chaos it can and will cause within a democracy. Furthermore, I aim to propose a possible solution, which involves social movements and contentious politics as an awareness-raising tool to reverse this exponentially growing problem.

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I would also like to acknowledge the one and only Professor Bela Greskovits for his immense amounts of knowledge bestowed upon me in TNC class, his interactive teaching style, and most importantly his sincere charismatic personality. Your understanding and compromise in my time of need did not go unnoticed, nagyon szépen köszönöm Professzor.

Allow me to take this opportunity to now thank my father, Ted, and my brother, Richard, for both their financial and emotional support during my troublesome time here in the land of the Magyars. Despite constantly reminding me of my own personal regret for having not pursued a career in engineering, I still always hope to make you two proud.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to dedicate this writing to my wonderfully supportive mother, the gorgeous and electric Magdoleen ‘Maggie’ Ibrahim. Mom, you are the best, you have always been the best, and you always will be the best. Thank you for always believing in me, even without warrant at times. Although I may not always show it, I appreciate everything you have done and continue to do in life. Thanks for always believing in and being there for me, from when I was a child to tomorrow. Me loves you so so much Mama.

## Introduction: Corporations and Exploitative Democracy

*“Democracy in the United States, and perhaps the world, has reached an important juncture. While much of the world struggles for democracy in state political processes, meaningful public democracy is gradually disappearing in the great state democracies. In its place has arisen the most effective system of control in human history. On most counts, the corporate organization has become the most central institution in modern society. Everything from personal identity and use of natural resources to definitions of value and distribution of goods and services has increasingly come under corporate control. The extent of the modern corporate encroachment into non-work and noneconomic sectors of life and its domination of other institutions might properly be called a new colonizing activity—a colonization of public decision making and of the everyday life world. Commercial organizations make decisions for the public, but rarely are these decisions grounded in democratic processes.”*

*—Stanley A. Deetz*

*“We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we cannot have both.”*

*—Louise D. Brandei, US Supreme Court, 1916-1939*

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Less than one century ago the multinational corporation was not only irrelevant, it was quite literally nonexistent. Today, it has managed to become the single-most omnipotent and omnipresent exploitative establishment of significance in our time. Much like the Soviet Union and other oppressive communist regimes or monarchies of the past, the transnational corporation is now the most powerful, influential, pervasive, and dominating international institution. Even in 1986 Theodore Morgan realized that problems “arise when strong authoritarian powers like the multinationals are allowed to exist in democratic states. For they are in a position to make complete nonsense out of the democratic process, obliging governments to be more responsive to corporate interests than to those of the people who elected them.”<sup>1</sup> The unrelenting growth of corporate power and influence has led to a paradoxical situation of pros and cons, or productive and destructive aspects. With progressive technological contributions and considerable economic

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<sup>1</sup> (Morgan 1997, 304).

development, the witnessed benefits of various corporations are undeniable—but at what cost? Much like the safeguard and equal distribution of communism, there are of course positive aspects to every system or establishment. However, much like the ruthless and oppressive nature of communism, there too are drawbacks. At what cost are economic booms and capitalist innovations worthwhile? What are humans and democratic societies willing to give up for these enabling technologies? In this increasingly globalized era of neoliberal agendas and international deregulation, the freedom with which corporations have been allowed to flourish and govern themselves has proven to have many exploitative and destructive consequences on democracy, the environment, and humanity as a whole.

Corporations are artificial business creations that, much like any company, are in a continual and perpetual search for profit maximization. Karl Marx and subsequent contemporary philosophers, economists, and academics warned previously that if left unchecked, capitalism would create a race to bottom for ordinary citizens as this hunt for corporate revenue supersedes any notion of humanity. That revenue has now grown to capacities beyond imagination of any capitalist and economic thinker of the past. Profiteering has virtually replaced all forms of decision-making. This insatiable desire for growth can lead to unconscionable disasters in, human rights, human health, environment, and worst of all democratic-institutions.<sup>2</sup>

Society is a puzzle that is intricately pieced together, with no piece any less important than another for completion; but when one massive and relentlessly emergent piece is consuming all the others, the puzzle itself ceases to exist. Corporations have extended their reach leaving almost no one untouched, or at least affected in some way. Regardless of what creed, color,

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<sup>2</sup> (Clements 2012), (D'Amato 2006), (Deetz 1992), (Eagleton 2011), (Kimbrell 2007), (Moran 1978), (Wallerstein 1980).

religion, gender, continent or political affiliation, all of us have likely come into contact with corporate commodities, foods, products, merchandise and especially influence, in one way or another, whether we accept it or not.<sup>3</sup> This influence has translated into materially rich, but purely exploitative transformations in ways that most people do not realize. “Capitalist work relations hold independently of political ideologies.”<sup>4</sup> In a world where monetary control is equivalent to power, the multinational corporation is invincible—and just as the old axiom would suggest, with absolute power, surely absolute corruption soon follows.

By nature, the corporation’s loyalty is to that which keeps it alive; its shareholders and their profits. In order to constantly maximize and ensure sustained surplus, corporations must find ways to not only cut costs at every corner, but cement their place in politics so as to avoid any form of legislation that may result in any slight negative regression. Perpetual growth makes no room for shrinkage. Today we have literally witnessed the dominant role of business associations shifting from simply providing a product or service, to actually becoming more relevant to policy-making than most governments, as a result of exploits such as manipulative and erroneous marketing, monetary contributions, and political ties.<sup>5</sup> This means that instead of working within the confines of social and political borders, corporations aspire to infiltrate governments and become creators of policy for profit maximization rather than public good.

These facts are outlined in countless empirical studies and official reports, but academic literature fails to emphasize the comprehensive democratic disconnect between corporate growth and the maintenance of democratic values, usually preferring to focus on a single dimension such as: revolving door politics, campaign contributions, or regulatory capture. Many transnational

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<sup>3</sup> Reiterated in: (Luke 1989, 108), (Deetz 1992, 27).

<sup>4</sup> (Deetz 1992, 202).

<sup>5</sup> Outlined much further in detail in the documentary: “The Corporation” (Achbar and Abbott 2003).

corporations have more economic influence and raw purchasing power than entire countries, which in turn results in command being placed in the hands of few, rather than heeding to the needs of many. The corporation was initially supposed to be an institution subordinate to government, but subsidies and corporate lawyers have successfully managed to remove any constraints, allowing these bludgeoning businesses to grow to flabbergasting sizes disproportionate to any form of reason or rationality. This imbalance of power has afforded multinationals the opportunity to manipulate and adjust law-making, as they see fit—obviously to their own benefit—through political linkages and monetary influence, which will be demonstrated throughout the paper. Worst of all, every single living system in the biosphere is in perilous danger as a result of colonial-styled environmental pillage of the earth and its resources by global businesses. Despite a scientifically unanimous declaration of decline, this plunder is allowed, unchecked by elected officials, because of kickbacks, contributions and personal gain.<sup>6</sup>

While corporations will exhibit facades of ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ (CSR), or some fraction of expenditure into publicly doing ‘good,’ the real motivations behind these actions are at the very least questionable. Big businesses quite literally reconfigure public policy and directly exert influence over governments secretly, yet subscribe to CSR publicly. This is where a gap in academia, public knowledge, and global media exists. Although companies often undertake efforts to display CSR, they aspire more to be identified with dependability and conscientiousness, in order to profit, which does little to counterbalance their negative effects. It is a voluntary marketing tactic and reaction to the overwhelming desires of the public. So while people physically witness the good, the bad goes mostly unnoticed, until now.

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<sup>6</sup> (Achbar and Abbott 2003).



## Chapter 1 : Methodological Approach and Research Design

Multinational and transnational corporations, far more than any other international actors, have managed to undermine the democratic process through various subversive means within Western nations, and now more than ever, across the entire globalized world. It is difficult to deny that corporations have become the most dominant form of international institutions, and have also managed to cause political, economic, and as a result of these, even environmental distortions. How have corporations become so influential, what are some examples, and what can be done? I seek to explore how this transgression has caused a loss of democratic quality through exploitation, and question what can be done. When certain statistics and global policy changes are interpreted, it would appear that there is some sort of tie between corporate control, and an apparent dissolution of democratic quality and citizen rights. Many laws passed today often benefit business practices rather than protect the citizens who vote on these changes. It could partly be attributed to the fact that laws are disguised in pedantic, esoteric political jargon, or hidden in larger laws unrelated the matter at hand.<sup>7</sup> It could also be that corporations have infiltrated governments to such an extent that politicians are basing decisions on benefits for business partners, which undermines the values of democracy. Verdicts favoring corporations have been made regardless of any opposition voiced by the public, especially when entrusting the task to their elected officials.<sup>8</sup>

The outcome of this project will seek to demonstrate how the quality of democracy and well-being of populations are eroded by a variety of transnational corporate influences. These influences will be independent variables such as government linkages, campaign contributions, policy deregulations, corruption, kickbacks, and revolving political ties. For this, the effect will

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<sup>7</sup> ('Monsanto Protection Act' Slips Silently Through Congress 2013).

<sup>8</sup> (ATTAC n.d.), ((NGO) 2013), (Frank 2013).

be erosion of democracy, where corporations played a vital role in its cause. Although almost any corporation could be chosen, I focus on Monsanto as a recent case study emulating perfectly corporate influence on government through a variety of aforementioned mechanisms. This can be considered a heuristic single-case study that allows the mapping of variables through which corporations exploit politics, which enable greater theory building and development.

When it comes to this procedural time-lapse, I need to make use of a variety of different methods in order to demonstrate how transnational corporations have eroded democratic quality and overall human well-being across the globe. Primary case studies and examples will obviously be crucial to pointing out the evidence behind the assertion, but also an examination of other experts' writings. I will employ a positivist approach that pays particular attention to examples of corporate connections to government, as well as corporate financial influence by analyzing revenue and political contributions. Conversely, the implications will have to be somewhat interpretive, relying on assumptions. I of course seek to make my results more reliable by providing details of how and what research methods were used, so it is important in selecting a process that will help strengthen any claims asserted, such as the fact that these claims are negatively associated or suggested to be so. I will elect to use a more hybrid qualitative/quantitative content analysis approach to research, which is in many ways unique. The numbers, although important, do not quite reveal the most pertinent aspects of my query, despite being relevant with regard to corporate earnings and political campaign contributions. It is after examination and evaluation of how the multiple means of influence take place, and what they imply, that the assertion of an exploitative phenomena will be made.

More appropriately related are the changing patterns in general state and interstate politics, the realization of these changes, as well as policy measures adopted that seem to reveal a

preponderance of ulterior motives and questionable methods in which human health is ignored for corporate benefit. It can and will be argued that the reason in question is profit motives, and political lobbying. Very simply, these measures can be found in public databases and political sites as a result of the Freedom of Information Act. There are also books and news articles about corporate ties to government. Discourse analysis observes a clear change in perception of corporate influence as being good, and to what extent perusal of profit is acceptable. Surely there is a balance that assumes profit-seeking and business contribution is understood as good, but only up to a certain point. Furthermore, an analysis of how and why these specific changes came about is where a theoretical lens of ‘exploitation’ can be applied.

Gathering information and data is clearly one primary task involved in the research process, especially with regard to hypothesis validity. Information on the extent of revolving door politics can be found by cross-referencing corporate management connections with government agency leaders or appointees. There is an abundance of literature indicating business’ clear ties to government, but the assumption of collusion must be demonstrated in order to assume democratic erosion and exploitation.<sup>9</sup> In other words, these persons of power hold dual positions that are clear conflicts of interest for the democratic process to be upheld. The integrity of one position must be compromised for the other, especially when the motives are opposing. This is where Monsanto is important as a case study and example, because it is a clear and recent illustration of such interconnectedness between corporation and government, with a realizable outcome. There are books, news articles and journals indicating these ties, despite them not being given much attention by the media and public. This is where an academic gap is noticeable.

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<sup>9</sup> (Kimbrell 2007).

Many articles were written on the initial developments of corporations, the rise in corporate power- influence, and the consequent effects of that strength. I seek to emulsify a new conceptualization of that power as influence over governments and therefore populations. The question is why do corporations have this power, what are the different layers, and how is it shown that they have the effect I seek to exemplify? What has allowed this to come into being? How is it exploitative in nature? What are the examples?

It is at this point I would seek to engage with theories about transnational corporations, power, and the relationship to capital. I will analyze what theories engage exploitation, democracy, and assert that there is a connection between the two. Relating with the literature available allows me to settle upon some form of definition, as well as establish a concrete relationship. The aim would be to develop a clear description of exploitation as a whole, and illustrate that the corporate usurpation of democracy is an example of exploitation. Next, describing the overall history of corporations and where they stand today relative to that influence. Of course various points will lead me to intertwining the path of corporate growth, the reality of power attainment, and the effect it has on democracy. Once that connection has been made, I will focus on how corporations and governments are becoming intertwined, with examples of corporate ties to governments via kickbacks and gift-giving. Most importantly, this association will be drawn to make the argument that transnational corporations are becoming increasingly influential in virtually every aspect of the global political sphere because these linkages translate into public policy. This pressure has grown to the point that corporations erode democratic quality by persuading and manipulating governments making decisions that are good for businesses, but not necessarily good for a nation, its citizens, or the environment.

Theories engaged will be a compilation of Marx's concepts on division of classes, exploitation by the wealthy, as well as stability between labor and capital. I will engage how he was correct in thinking that the division of classes between owners and workers is the primary issue of concern, but question where to continue from the point of today. According to Marx, a revolution is imminent, but why have we not seen that yet? Or have we seen it through recent social movements? Has some form of counter-movement evolved since corporate influence has risen to this extent? The writings of Donatella Dela Porta and Felix Kolb allow insight to contentious politics and what can be done. What makes a social movement successful and what are some suggestions? Do people even perceive the threat mentioned?<sup>10</sup>

This outlook will require a positivist approach, because I, of course, do not want to seem biased and distracted by my own epistemological attainment of knowledge. Interpretive approaches would relegate me to making apparent influenced conjectures, while I seek to explain things the way they *are*, not the way I perceive them to be. My conjecture will intrinsically be interpretive, but my aim is impartial. Using empirical examples, a concrete case study and statistics, I reveal corporate effects on states, state effects on citizens, and the obvious implied connection of corporate effects on citizens through state influence. It is this negative relationship I seek to make clear; the rise in transnational corporate power juxtaposed by a decline in overall democratic process, which is an exploit of individual citizen's influence and well-being. This can then be applied to various corporations, like Monsanto, what they have managed to subversively get passed into law, as well the observance of whether these policies adopted were accepted as beneficial or helpful.<sup>11</sup> Looking at actual government ties to Monsanto as absolute, undeniable

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<sup>10</sup> Discussed further in detail later on with respect to recent social movements in (Porta 2005), (Kolb 2005).

<sup>11</sup> (Kimbrell 2007).

facts, and then comparing the policy measures that were adopted as a result of those ties, and what populations actually thought of them through statistical polls.

I would like to later describe how a counter-movement can and should take place electronically, via alternative media sources. Peter Evans also has a relevant theoretical concept called ‘embedded autonomy’ that can be considered with regard to how involved the government should be in economic and social planning. But what can one do when the government is embedded by a corporation, rather than into a society? How is a revolution even possible? This government-business relationship in its present state has been more aptly named ‘Corporatocracy,’ and should be of interest to scholars, academics, and professionals researching theoretical applications within business and politics.<sup>12</sup> This allows for a unique opportunity to integrate various theories across a wide range of disciplines from business, to politics, to environment putting together the elusive pieces of an intricate puzzle.

### ***1.1 Hindrances to Research and Conclusions***

More importantly are the limitations, and engaging with a few authors who may disagree with what I seek to prove. Certainly there are ‘*non-dependistas*’ who find corporations to be a naturally occurring fuel to liberal economies as a result of globalization.<sup>13</sup> I need to analyze what writers in the field argue, then dissect and find what is missing, or is neglected. Many of the accepted writers in TNC literature are a bit outdated, or focus too specifically on one country, region, or type of market.<sup>14</sup> It will be important to define what theories of theirs cannot explain. This is what will lead me to use a theory-building case study of my own. Testing my hypothesis

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<sup>12</sup> (Bhandari 2012), (Clements 2012), (Davis 2012), (Levine 2013), (Perkins n.d.).

<sup>13</sup> This is an aspect of dependency theory which questions whether or not transnational corporate involvement liberates nations, or conversely results in dependence on the multinational company (Moran 1978).

<sup>14</sup> Writers’ works are discussed further in detail later in the paper (Shafer 1983), (Lee and Cason 1994).

will prove to be a difficult task as well, because the topic is a bit more theoretical and sporadic with regard to actual case studies and evidence.

The scope may also be a bit wide, which could open the paper up to critique. Furthermore it can be insisted as a matter of opinion, so remaining unbiased and impartial will be important, but difficult. Sources should not be much of an issue; however ensuring they are credible, consistent, and of an academic nature could pose a problem if I am not careful in selection. These are all limitations I am aware of, but they allow me to prepare and avoid any unnecessary oversight. For future study, it could be beneficial to include the efficacy of policy measures in regions where corporations like Monsanto did *not* have such embedded ties. Perhaps a comparison of the EU could create an even more valid proposition. A more concrete definition of democracy could be painted, and justifications of multinationals could give works a bit more balance. This is where further research is needed, but is a limitation of mine due to length and time constraints.

## Chapter 2 : Exploitation & Transnational Theories

“The works of Marx on the historical development of industrialization and capitalism still provide the most complete treatment of power and control in organizations and the relation of work to human identity.”<sup>15</sup> I seek to make my argument according to basic mathematical transitive property, applied to social science. If  $A=B$  and  $B=C$ , therefore  $A=C$ . If Marx’ idea of capitalism is exploitative, and corporations are a direct result of capitalist logic, then corporations are intrinsically exploitative in nature. Big business is not supplanting democracy, but rather misusing democracy, in order to exploit populations further. What are some of the theoretical approaches to transnational corporations, benefits and consequences considered, within the available literature? It turns out that this subject is of much contention, with opinions on both sides of the spectrum. I would like to consider briefly what authors write regarding the benefits of multinational involvement, then maintain my contention of how it still involves exploitation by limiting their arguments to extreme cases, outdated information, and very specific scenarios. But first, a non-belabored explanation of what Marx and subsequent academics make of exploitation, its causes, and its effects as a result.

### *2.1 Conceptualizing Exploitation*

But what is ‘exploitation’ and how can its multi-faceted conceptualization be directly related to modern international relations theoretical application, with regard to transnational corporations being the manifestation of unregulated capitalism? Exploitation is defined in the modern English dictionary as “use or utilization, especially for profit.” The last segment—especially for profit—is particularly significant when considering how the work of philosopher and political-economist Karl Marx would observe the nature of the relationship between

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<sup>15</sup> (Deetz 1992, 200).



transnational corporations and governments, because he had a slightly wider and more systematic definition of exploitation: “the forced appropriation of the unpaid labor of workers.”<sup>16</sup>

It is reasonable to draw a connection between what is happening today, and what Karl Marx predicted would occur if capitalism was left to run its course without regulation. Our current global economic system clearly does place tremendous value on maximization of profit through utilization. In fact, it applies in today’s world more than ever before with increased economic inequality, corporate influence, and sheer unequal wealth distribution, both inside and outside of nations.<sup>17</sup> As an undertaking, this chapter will attempt to focus on the various theoretical forms of exploitation that corporations employ, and situate this writing accordingly. “Marx argued that the ultimate source of profit, the driving force behind capitalist production, is the unpaid labor of workers. So for Marx, exploitation forms the foundation of the capitalist system.”<sup>18</sup> Exploitation can be inferred today because corporations are an embodiment of unchecked capitalism, where the corporation uses techniques, even outside its realm to take advantage of workers and nations.

It is obvious that virtually everything exchanged, actualized, sold, or even created in an interconnected capitalist world is most importantly for profit. When bearing the definition of exploitation in mind, perhaps one can rightfully and confidently contend that it definitely occurs in relations between nations, but even more so for ‘selfish utilization’, which is another aspect of exploitation, between capitalist governments and their citizens. The concept has to be refined and applied with a more liberal academic lubricant because “the Marxian definition of exploitation is to view it not as a way of ‘giving the meaning’ of exploitation, or of giving a fully general

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<sup>16</sup> (Lapon 2011).

<sup>17</sup> (OECD 2013).

<sup>18</sup> IBID

reference-fixing definition, but as a way of fixing the reference within a model.”<sup>19</sup> So it can be applied to differing circumstances and scenarios, like Multinational corporations and governments.

Exploitation is in many cases even associated with personal, national, and governmental development when you look at how and why it is continuously rewarded and allowed to persist. What does this suggest about humanity as a whole if we find it impossible to not only separate personal prosperity and the exploitation of others, but also recognize them as mutually exclusive? Considering the extent to which global commerce has risen, exploitation seems unavoidable. In order to progress and develop, some form of exploitation must take place. The world and all its resources are finite, and for one to have, another must have not. Interestingly enough, it is true that the more one has, the easier it is to make those who have-not, perform in his/her favor.

Governments that are completely defined by corporate interests with the inability to separate exploitation from existence due to campaign contributions are just an example. This form of exploitation occurs on multiple levels in the modern world because it is “human needs that determine consciousness.”<sup>20</sup> Apparently, it is only natural for a person to act with his/her own primary interests in mind. “Over time, the practical reasons for [a] choice are forgotten, and in place of choice the routine takes on a life of its own, both precluding options in thoughtlessness and building a set of secondary justifications for why it is done this way.”<sup>21</sup> Marxism, in effect, is a challenge to this exploitative notion as a naturally occurring human

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<sup>19</sup> (Wolff, Marx and Exploitation 1999, 109).

<sup>20</sup> (Fine and Saad Filho 2010, 3).

<sup>21</sup> (Deetz 1992, 126).

characteristic, but rather inherently socialized behavior as a result of transnational corporate capitalism.

*“Marxism is a critique of capitalism –the most searching, rigorous, comprehensive critique of its kind ever to be launched. ...it follows, then, that as long as capitalism is still in business, Marxism must be as well. Only by superannuating its opponent can it superannuate itself. And on the last sighting, Capitalism appeared to be feisty as ever.”*<sup>22</sup>

What is Marxism loosely associated with as a movement then, with respect to exploitation as a basic “reification”? For a general framework, Marxism expresses the importance of material possessions and economic pursuit as defining factors of classism, but focuses on the origins and political formation. Classism, it can be argued, is actually the main issue at hand, which can also be directly connected with exploitation of one over another. Some form of ruling elite group in a process of subjugation is usually referred to when in the realm of Marxist thinking, and this is certainly evident with corporations’ “unusually high share of income gains” in an economic recovery period. “Corporate earnings have risen at an annualized rate of 20.1 percent since the end of 2008, he said, but disposable income inched ahead by 1.4 percent annually over the same period, after adjusting for inflation.”<sup>23</sup> Why are *they* enjoying record profits while everyone else settles for unemployment, inflation, foreclosure, and decline? Is this not simply a form of unmasked exploitation?

Capitalism as an economic and political system, according to Marx, solidifies this notion. It allows the rich to control the poor in various ways, regardless of what is just, but especially through differing means of exploitation. Some of these methods include, but are certainly not limited to: dependency, economic determinism, imperialism, alienation, colonialism, subjugation, taxation, dehumanization, and other forms of control for singular gain

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<sup>22</sup> (Eagleton 2011).

<sup>23</sup> (Schwartz 2013).

in one way or another.<sup>24</sup> “God is humanity’s own creation. Under feudalism, human relationships with God conceal and justify the actual relationships to fellow beings, an absurd bond of exploitation as it appears to the bourgeois (capitalist) mind. Capitalism, however, has its own God and bible.”<sup>25</sup> Investment in and ownership of the production cycle by private individuals (and corporations), as opposed to state-owned, is inherently connected to exploitation for personal gain, not the mutual benefit of the collective. This is again, by definition, a form of exploitation and is exactly what occurs today.

Ultimately the goal from a Marxist perspective is for a proletariat “revolt” to “transform the economic order” and end subjugation after the “growing gap between living conditions of the capitalists and workers” is realized.<sup>26</sup> I think the reason we have yet to witness this revolution, is because corporate domination has reached such an extreme point. Marx was however “the first to identify the historical object known as capitalism—to show how it arose, by what laws it worked, and how it might be brought to an end.”<sup>27</sup> The diversification and dispersal of wealth will break down class structure stratification between poor, middle and rich, which will in turn eliminate almost all occurring forms of conflict. Essentially, the root of conflict resides not in racial, national, or religious difference, but in classism. Classism too, in and of itself, is another belittling and subjugating form of exploitation in which one gains at another’s expense, and is exemplified by corporate expense accounts and profits.

It is still in blatant effect all over the world. Perhaps slowly but surely a ‘More-Marxist Movement’ will have an auspicious impression on the future, which will be discussed later.

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<sup>24</sup> (Marx and Aveling., *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* 1906).

<sup>25</sup> (Fine and Saad Filho 2010, 25).

<sup>26</sup> (Deetz 1992, 202).

<sup>27</sup> (Eagleton 2011, xi).

There needs to be discussion on how to realistically make a more democratic and equal economic system function, with fair wealth-distribution and closure of corporate loopholes. Although a critique of what is wrong can still be beneficial in terms of creating awareness of exploitation in reality, it does not provide any feasible solution. Considering the “worker always bargained and worked under duress” and “was placed at a great disadvantage by his or her historical situation”, corporate earnings in relation to the middle class are even more exploitative in nature.<sup>28</sup> This disadvantageous position must be adjusted in modern times.

Today “exploitation and coercion characterize the work process”<sup>29</sup> more than ever as we witness an elimination of an international middle class. “In our own time, as Marx predicted, inequalities of wealth have dramatically deepened. The income of a single Mexican billionaire today is equivalent to the earnings of the poorest seventeen million of his compatriots. Capitalism has created more prosperity than history has ever witnessed, but the cost—not least in the near-destitution of billions—has been astronomical.”<sup>30</sup> In 2001, according to the World Bank data on poverty, 2.74 billion people lived on less than two dollars a day, and it appears to be getting worse.<sup>31</sup> It seems you are either rich or poor in today’s world, no matter how the two states-of-wealth are defined.

“You can tell that the capitalist system is in trouble when people start talking about capitalism. It indicates that the system has ceased to be as natural as the air we breathe, and can be seen instead as the historically rather recent phenomenon that it is. Moreover, whatever was born, can always die...”<sup>32</sup> The problem with this exploitation is as previously mentioned, the

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<sup>28</sup> (Marx and Aveling., *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* 1906, 80).

<sup>29</sup> (Deetz 1992, 201).

<sup>30</sup> (Eagleton 2011, 19).

<sup>31</sup> (World Bank 2007).

<sup>32</sup> (Eagleton 2011, xi).

more it takes place, the further cemented and irrevocable it becomes. The system in which we are under jurisdiction is itself controlled by the capitalist ruling elite, who would sooner die than relinquish, even slightly, any grip on power. This is only natural. Capital control is undeniably a vestige of power which allows those who obtain it to dominate and exploit across the world at free will, through whatever methods possible.

Marxism, with its notions of exploitation, is diametrically opposed to a world-capitalist system that allows uncontrollable growth of private associations, because of this inevitable ‘polarization of the classes.’ Marx even directly points the finger at capitalism as the primary reason, or incentive-driven basis for global exploitation. Capitalism in and of itself is impossible to separate from all sorts of exploitation because “... [it] has not furnished a progressive alternative even on its own narrow terms.”<sup>33</sup> Capitalism simply rejects what would seem to be universally respected notions of moderation and sustainability, with preference for the exact opposite, less humanistic, societal forms of gluttony and greed. Businesses are modern-day manifestations of what capitalism was predicted to create. Marx’ objections to the capitalist economic and political frame of thought as naturally segregating and unfulfilling forms of exploit, lay directly therein.

Even the environment must endure certain exploitation in Marxist writing. With its never-ending pursuit of wealth accumulation and preference to waste as a driving factor for consumption, a profit-driven mindset allows the owners and producers to maintain their effectual control of the remaining populations locally, nationally, and internationally, depending on the scale of the exploit. This commodity exchange “does not reveal the circumstances by which they have come to the market, or the exploitation of the direct producers, the wage workers, by the

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<sup>33</sup> (Fine and Saad Filho 2010, XIV).

capitalist class.”<sup>34</sup> Other concepts put forth by Marx and later explored by a multitude of thinkers always either directly or indirectly relate to the concept of exploitation. Many contemporary theorists further conclude from Marxian insight and analysis because he is, at the very least, an undeniably influential philosopher and economic theorist.

The assertion by Paul D’Amato that “life would be far better for the majority if we crudely and inefficiently planned how to allocate goods and resources on the basis of human need, rather than efficiently organizing them to intensify exploitation, wipe out competitors, or annihilate nations” is an example of more-relevant thinking, given the world’s exploited state of affairs.<sup>35</sup> As the spearhead, this statement launches a beleaguering attack on exploitation as a result of corporate capitalism. Our capital-driven system conditions us to be material consumers, regardless of what is actually needed for sustainable survival and subsistence. Rather, corporations convince us into consuming for the sole purpose of pure psychological desire, by shaping public opinion. We are programmed to consume mindless and worthless goods at the expense of the environment, humanity, and the world as a whole. D’Amato suggests that the world economic system is “about a tiny number of capitalists making a large amount of money”, and this is apparent with the corporate earnings suggested earlier.<sup>36</sup> There are countless statistics that can lay the foundation for a brilliant case on how this has been proven increasingly apparent in recent times with so few benefiting at the expense of so many, both nationally and internationally.<sup>37</sup> This exploit occurs on multifaceted levels every day. Corporations exploit the flaws in a capitalistic democratic system, in order to exploit poorer nations and peoples even further.

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<sup>34</sup> (Fine and Saad Filho 2010, 26).

<sup>35</sup> (D’Amato 2006, 191).

<sup>36</sup> IBID

<sup>37</sup> (Battison, Glattfelder and Vitali 2013).

Another variety of a Marxian exploitation concept, which is also described in Feminist, Libertarian Socialist, and Anarchist writings, is the concept of ‘alienation.’ Although “his idea of alienation was derived mostly from Hegel” and not Marx himself, it is more often than not associated typically with Marxism, especially as a metamorphosis of exploitation, which is what I seek to explore.<sup>38</sup> Can a newer more appropriate term for this concept be designated? As Dwight Dean explains, “[t]he concept of alienation is considered here as having three major components: Powerlessness, Normlessness, and Social Isolation” which are all formulas for exploitation.<sup>39</sup> Ensuring your subjugated class is powerless allows the ruling elite to further exploit at will by perpetuating the separation itself. Removing any sense of ‘norm’ associated with equality or justice and concretely reifying exploitative control as acceptable, further increases relative power through the manipulation of thought processes. Finally, this results in exacerbated social isolation which deepens these sentiments by creating a distance between the two classes. Corporations control so much, that it has just become accepted. One has power and the other does not, it is mutually accepted norm.

“The concept of alienation [...]” appears to be, with the help of my subtle deductions, a vicious exploitation cycle “[...] rooted deeply in the sociological tradition [and] has recently enjoyed a new popularity.”<sup>40</sup> The working class is forced into a role of self-perpetuating subjugation by selling labor to a capitalist class uninterested by definition in their well being for survival. The working class is unimportant and easily replaced; while the ruling elite would have you believe that it is their funding as the driving factor of production and innovation, even if it results in further exploitation and repression.

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<sup>38</sup> (Eagleton 2011, 42).

<sup>39</sup> (Dean 1961, 753).

<sup>40</sup> (Dean 1961, 753).



## ***2.2 Transnational Corporate Reliance***

It cannot be so one-sided as to assume that all international businesses and corporations are inherently evil, despite their fundamental need for profit. This driving monetary factor, when harnessed and used appropriately, can sometimes be a motivation for facilitation, refinement, and efficiency—especially when a nation’s government has a certain degree of inexperience or ineptitude.<sup>41</sup> When exactly is the gap between political inefficiency and corporate reliance bridged? If a wider scope is examined, or a specific industry is taken into consideration, it can be purported that multi-national corporations do provide, sometimes indirectly, positive contributions to host nations—but for how long? When bearing in mind that the alternative to incorporation or privatization is nationalization, it is certainly important to look at case studies that employ these varying methods of business structure, and analyze comparative outcomes of various countries in differing sectors within the academic literature. A nation should ultimately seek to ask itself, what are the advantages of this corporate reliance, and for how long must this relationship continue before we are able to perform the process ourselves? If it leads to an indefinite subservient role, then considerable skepticism should be present, because exploitation is imminent.

### ***2.2.1 African Attempts***

Michael Shafer “examines the shift in bargaining strength from foreign investor to host authorities that has proceeded further in natural resources than in other industry sectors, with many substantial gains for the host” in one of his “[...]new wave of increasingly sophisticated case studies of the relationship between multinational corporations and host countries[...].”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> (Luke 1989, 98).

<sup>42</sup> (Shafer 1983, 25).

Generally, nationalization as opposed to privatization is thought to be for social welfare, whereas the latter, most notably when a foreign actor is involved, can often be associated with a type of exploitation. This is true in a sense, but only if the country is able to actually manage the burdens that come along with this kind of modernization and global integration. Economic diversification, rents, and stabilization take a well-adjusted and experienced governing body, not just expressed control over national product. Does TNC involvement help or hinder a nation's ability to fend for itself and develop its own global business without the corporate siphon? Is it exploitation or liberation?

Shafer explains that Zaire and Zambia were perfect examples of how nationalization could be expected to push forward a local economy and generate greater employment, but in fact accomplished just the opposite. Foreign mining operations were the most important sector, thus economic successes and failures can be measured in totality through the story of copper within those two countries. They were both among the global leaders in all aspects of the copper-producing process before nationalization, but then experienced immediate and durational decline thereafter, much to their national detriment.<sup>43</sup> With losses in overall production and even more reliance on the industry, the goals of nationalization brought forth the antithesis. "Nationalization had unanticipated costs that either nullified its benefits or actually turned it against the interests of the nationalizers."<sup>44</sup> In this specific kind of economy, a transnational corporation can indeed bring much to the bargaining table—but at what long-term cost?

Michael Shafer coins an unabashed term that reveals the vulnerability of unqualified nations when foreign investments are nationalized and made the responsibility of the

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<sup>43</sup> Percentages and detailed numbers comparing world production are available within the reading (Shafer 1983, 27).

<sup>44</sup> IBID

government; he calls it '*insulation*.' This said insulation acts as a cushion, or safety-net that protects governments from being exposed to the business risks of dramatic market shifts, along with a variety of other international pressures. "The notion of '*insulation*' summarizes a wide range of unperceived risk management and custodial functions that the multinational mining corporations fulfilled, which in effect protected these two governments, their copper industries, and their citizens."<sup>45</sup> More importantly, companies provided the secured investment and proper market integration that guaranteed access, Shafer suggests, along with a kind of insurance policy that "may appear unnecessary or even onerous in boom times" but "those who cancel then, however, regret having done so when the bad times strike—and in as volatile a market as that for copper the bad times are never far away."<sup>46</sup>

Shafer argues that it is corporations who are taking the economic risks, which should warrant the great rewards. "Nationalization makes a cartelization extremely difficult, while nationalization without cartelization provides no compensation for lost insulation. It thus leaves the nationalizer in a weaker position vis-à-vis the international market than before."<sup>47</sup> This is why his '*insulation*' concept can be analogized into an insurance policy that, for a robust fee of course, provides capital investment, technical understanding, and managerial experience to nations that otherwise would not have such abilities or opportunities. It is because "national producers deprive themselves of the best available means for managing risk, and put themselves at a marked disadvantage to vertically integrated multinational producers."<sup>48</sup> This again raises further questions, in my opinion, of dependency and reliance, which are of course notions related to exploitation. Having an '*insurance policy*' of sorts, may cause a kind of lackadaisical

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<sup>45</sup> (Shafer 1983, 28).

<sup>46</sup> (Shafer 1983, 29).

<sup>47</sup> (Shafer 1983, 35).

<sup>48</sup> (Shafer 1983, 34).

aloofness in government that inhibits further development and progression, which exploits underdeveloped nations and forces them into submissive roles of durational subjugation.

### ***2.2.2 African Misunderstanding and Misappropriation***

Not enough emphasis is placed on other defining factors that played a role in the copper mining industry's decline in general. Financial disturbances caused by nationalization, as well as political corruption and ethnic fractionalization led to more important government-labor deficiencies. Monopoly-style partnerships forced corporations to seek mining alternatives elsewhere in the world, even if more expensive. Project financing issues such as foreign investment deterrence and private equity elimination became rampant. These investments existed and were made possible to begin with simply because the corporation was in the country, involved in the project. Eliminating the corporation meant eliminating a form of stability through secure investment and their credit ratings. There is however something terribly contradictory in Shafer's arguments, as he himself admits that "arguing the negative consequences of insulation loss does not suggest that without nationalization Zaire and Zambia would have flourished..."<sup>49</sup> and also "while no means the sole cause of the copper oligopoly's demise, nationalization was certainly a contributing factor."<sup>50</sup> While he does detail these limitations, I feel there is a bit more emphasis that needs to be put on alternative factors that lead to his ultimate conclusion, especially considering the time period, region of choice, and the very specific natural resource sector focused on.

This is not an uncommon practice within academia: making an assertion or allegation, then very carefully selecting case studies that manage to effectively validate that claim. Not to

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<sup>49</sup> (Shafer 1983, 47).

<sup>50</sup> (Shafer 1983, 33).

mention how fast research becomes outdated. Shafer manages to draw logical conclusions from a very specific region, but then admits that there were a myriad of mitigating factors. His notion of insulation is understandable, but only if applied to cases within this region, at that time, and among nations of similar political and economic standing. This is duplicitously limiting, and also antiquated because of the dramatic changes in transnational investment over the last two decades. Academics seek to analyze cases to develop theories that can be generally applied anywhere in similar circumstances. He ultimately means to conclude that nationalization results in a loss of insulation for those industry-specific commodity markets, but then briefly mentions contradictory Brazilian and Venezuelan success stories.

More emphasis must be placed on international market pattern shifts/variances, premature integration, African political greed/corruption, regional instability, and the lack of a trained/competent workforce. These are in my opinion not an explanation for the failure, or the need for multinational influence, but examples of variables that must be controlled before a market is nationalized, which multinational businesses constantly seek to exploit for profit. It does *not* demonstrate, suggest, or even imply that having a corporation involved in these efforts will help a country ameliorate those issues; which is in my opinion, an absolutely crucial feature in what I like to call ‘corporate-country relations.’ Transnational corporate influence, it can then be suggested, offers a certain level of stability, but through abuse maintains through exploitation “a demeaning relationship of subservience...”<sup>51</sup> between country and corporation.

### **2.3 A Korean Kontradiktion**

In Naeyoung Lee and Jeffrey Cason’s writing on the ability of semi-periphery nations to emerge in the automobile industry, they focus on lower-income nations that usually lack the

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<sup>51</sup> (Shafer 1983, 49).

ability to enter a capital and technology-intensive sector, while looking at differing levels of multinational corporate influence. Using Mexico, Brazil, and South Korea as case studies, the authors highlight “countries that have been particularly successful in their penetration of international markets in the auto industry” which offers a much more comparative angle.<sup>52</sup> Figures, charts and graphs within the text reveal a consistent rise in overall production and exports in each of these countries per decade, despite inconsistent developmental patterns. What is most interesting however is not the remarkable penetration into the global market, but rather the variance in actual models of advancement within each country.

“The Latin American cases exhibit nearly complete transnational corporation (TNC) domination of the industry, while the South Korean auto industry is under the control of local capital.”<sup>53</sup> Regional destination, finished product, marketing networks and parts exportation are other dissimilarities that the author describes as strikingly different. Noteworthy I feel, is that in both Shafer and Lee/Cason, one very important factor when it comes to the topic of corporations and national relations is always emphasized—and that is state policy. If state policy is not sound, then the use of corporations can lead do destruction through exploitation.

The authors assert that “world-systems literature, while offering substantial insights into the structure of the world-economy, is sometimes less enlightening about the development trajectories of particular countries within the system. The concern of much of this literature is on structural position rather than individual differences, and this emphasis often downplays the significance of individual differences.”<sup>54</sup> This also is quite typical among theories related to the topic of transnational corporations. Scholars and economists will look at the benefits of one

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<sup>52</sup> (Lee and Cason 1994, 223).

<sup>53</sup> (Lee and Cason 1994, 225).

<sup>54</sup> (Lee and Cason 1994, 226).

specific case when corporate investment or control of an industry managed to lend a general boost to something like a country's overall GDP. The problem with averages and indexes is that if I have two apples, and you have none, then the average GDP index will indicate that we both have one apple. It also does not reflect actual cases of overall well-being, but rather enumerates cases of the wealthy getting wealthier masked as a benefit for everyone. On the other hand, the authors mention that while every country has its own uniqueness, emboldening the differences may not be the best method of providing answers either, insinuating learning can be achieved through each and every case, which is important to keep in mind.

Most importantly, the auto industry in Mexico was holistically dominated by foreign investment, in Korea it was kept at a much more internal and local level, while Brazil employed some cooperating role in between in which local firms were heavily involved but with substantial foreign influence as well. Even though Korea transitioned to the exporting stage almost a decade later than Brazil and Mexico, local rather than transnational dominance forced state and business to collude and aggressively pursue the development and export of finished vehicles. This is an example of my earlier supposition that remaining under the confines of TNC control leads only to a certain subservient position, whereas relinquishing oneself from the corporate lure encourages national and local innovation through necessity. "Different ownership structure has an important impact on the business strategies of firms."<sup>55</sup> As cliché as it might be, it is analogous to the 'give a man a fish or teach a man to fish' proverb, or better yet, 'necessity is the mother of invention.'

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<sup>55</sup> (Lee and Cason 1994, 231).

## 2.4 Afrikan and Korean Konnection

It was interesting to discover that Koreans were paid more in hourly wages compared to the Mexicans and Brazilians, *and* had better overall productivity of units per minute. This realization supports my insinuation that TNCs intend to exploit whatever they can demonstrating disinterest in long-term national gains, and a desire for immediate profit maximization. If that profit is not actualized, they will turn elsewhere in search of national reliance and cheap exploits, as they did in Zaire and Zambia. Even breaking through “the most difficult barrier” of entering into the “oligopolistic auto industry”, Koreans created their own marketing networks which involve tremendous advertising and operating expenses.<sup>56</sup> This was a difficult but *necessary* process that causes a national evolution. Both Mexico and Brazil had a transnational corporate ‘advantage’ in this aspect, and even a time-line head-start; yet, Korea still managed to compete with –and even surpass–both nations, revealing an interesting conclusion about TNC involvement in national industries.

Today, most people cannot name a single Brazilian or Mexican car company, while international Korean companies such as Kia, Hyundai and Daewoo are ubiquitous. Without a doubt, there are differing advantages and disadvantages of relying heavily on transnational corporate involvement for the development of an industry, or for the boost of climbing the ranks of any specific commodity chain, but only to a certain point. Pros and cons undeniably undergo considerable shifts depending on time-frame, region, and political standing; but it seems clear that if government is vulnerable, a corporation will exploit that government’s labor-force and autonomy until it is no longer a viable option. In both theories examined here, TNCs can offer a safety net for vulnerable countries and susceptible industries, but on the other hand it can also be

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<sup>56</sup> (Lee and Cason 1994, 235-236).



concluded that after further national growth and development, the very same ‘net’ can be moved from below a country, to above a country, acting more as a barrier than an insurance policy. When a country is already developed in its democratic institutions, a powerful corporation can come in and take advantage of the situation, which will be analyzed in my case study of Monsanto.

I do firmly accept the fact that initial TNC involvement can be a benefit to the developmental process, but only if a country is allowed to eventually seize control of its assets and function independently. Indefinite corporate control will only inhibit further growth because of reliance on the aspects a multinational company brings, such as research and development, credit ratings, investment, and trained management. Policy makers must realize these factors, rather than act as corrupt profiteers earning immense payoffs at the expense of their people, because “state policy can certainly affect a nation’s development trajectory[...]<sup>57</sup> When the Africans broke off much too early, they crippled themselves.

However, the Koreans are an example of being forced to learn and evolve independently as a result of sound state policy. These were also essentially different industries, regions, and governmental actors, but the idea remains the same. Much like a predatory animal in the wild, TNCs must incubate, raise, and teach the young nations to hunt for themselves, rather than continue to nurse. If a nation relies on the mother corporation too long, it will never learn. Yet by the same token, if it is released into the wild global market too early, it will surely fall victim to other predatory bodies. What happens when a developed nation is suckling off the multinational teat for too long, allowing absolute dependence and subservience to the corporate mother? A

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<sup>57</sup> (Lee and Cason 1994, 240).

nation ends up controlled through its own political indifference because of corporate intermeshing.

### Chapter 3 : A Leading Example of Corporate Threats to Sustainable Democracy

As one of the largest and most influential corporations in the world today, Monsanto is proving itself to be far more than just a ground breaking, scientifically progressive and innovative biotechnology company, but rather a leading example of how big money can manipulate government policy-making in even the most developed nations around the world, ultimately affecting food, health, and environmental protection. Through a series of campaign contributions, government linkages and support, and proposition or bill funding (or lack thereof), many corporations have undeniably become among the most powerful institutions domineering world politics today, even to the point of corporate dependence.

I found my general topic and overall concept of writing shifting as the research intensified, simply because of what was discovered. I initially sought to provide an unbiased interpretation of the amount of influence corporations have and how they possibly undermine democracy through campaign contributions, only to be completely shocked by the obviously egregious exploitations that take place with regard to human health, our food, and even the global environment. Most reporters and researchers that attempt to contact the companies of interest for simple statements are denied any form of access. When they do find someone to disclose information, employees are scared to speak truthfully or silenced by fear of company repercussions.<sup>58</sup> When you really take a close look and read about Monsanto, its motives, and its practices, you will “gradually realize that ... [it’s not just] about food, [but rather] unchecked corporate power.”<sup>59</sup> Corporations today have become far more dominating and invasive than most people realize, and it is only

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<sup>58</sup> (Weber 2009).

<sup>59</sup> (Weber 2009, 28).

after countless lawsuits and release of declassified information that the truth about their practices, involvements, and cover-ups are made apparent.<sup>60</sup>

This is of course a wildly general claim, and would take multiple avenues of research to validate with empirical examples and evidence to demonstrate how exactly corporations have managed to directly, rather than indirectly, lead to actual alterations in governmental and democratic processes, as well as contributed to environmental squalor without repercussion. The assumption is that corporations have become so prevailing that they have more of an effect on political decision-making than elected officials or voting citizens, accomplished by subversively hidden tactics. It is for this reason that a more specifically-analytical and connective lens is crucial in making it visible, most effectively through a detailed portrait of one corporation, and step-by-step description of how its widespread reach has verified these assertions of profits, power, bribery, corruption, and degradation as a form of democratic erosion and exploitation.<sup>61</sup>

This section will seek to discuss not only the facts about Monsanto and its influence on government and democracy, but more importantly the issues surrounding the general notion of massive corporations and their spillover effect on politics and international livelihood. Why precisely are corporations, including Monsanto, such a pervasive threat, and what exactly is it that they are threatening? It should also answer how the dissolution of such sanctified notions as democratic value and quality, environmental preservation, and even how general health and well-being have been placed at the bottom of the decision-making list, in place of corporate agenda.

It can be suggested that corporate motives are, especially in recent times, given higher priority than public opinion. This is exemplified by continued political support of corporations at

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<sup>60</sup> (Monique-Robin 2008).

<sup>61</sup> (Clements 2012) (Deetz 1992) (Gaddy 2003) (Kimbrell 2007) (Monique-Robin 2008) (Rappoport 2012) (Smith 2007).

the expense of the populace. Is this, therefore, no a theoretical example of democratic erosion and dismantling as a result of business influence on government? According to the literature, and as a result my own conjecture, that is exactly the case; “I began to see the far-reaching consequences ... of just a tiny handful of companies’ dominating, and as a result, wielding disproportionate power. Some of them, like Monsanto, now literally own and control life forms...”<sup>62</sup> First, a brief explanation of who the giant biotechnology company is will be given, and almost immediately a portrait is painted.

### ***3.1 What is Monsanto?***

Monsanto is the world’s largest and most enveloping chemical-production-turned-biotech company. What is disturbing is the fact that a single multi-billion dollar chemical company is increasingly, and in some ways almost entirely, in full control of the world food supply. This should raise concern, even at the initial thought. They are the creators and disseminators of chemicals in the past such as DDT and Agent Orange, which had tremendously negative impacts on both humans and the environment, despite Monsanto assuring safety and efficacy.<sup>63</sup> There were countless cases of birth defects and lawsuits that followed, but of course the corporation still managed to not only avoid being shut down, but continued to profit and thrive thereafter, more so than ever. The giant biotech company is responsible for Recombinant Growth Bovine Hormone or rGBH, Bt Corn, RoundUp ready Soy, and other GMOs, which have been proven to have multiple health risks when outside tests are conducted.<sup>64</sup> Monsanto has even been sued countless times, and found it more profitable to pay-off lawsuit losses rather than discontinue their dangerous products. There are many more documented cases of lies and cover-ups

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<sup>62</sup> (Weber 2009, 36), (Monique-Robin 2008).

<sup>63</sup> This is discussed in detail throughout (Smith 2007).

<sup>64</sup> (Monique-Robin 2008).

regarding the safety of their products in the past.<sup>65</sup> This in turn makes it difficult to believe a corporation's insistence on product-safety and social responsibility.

### ***3.2 GMC: Genetically Modified Controversy***

90% of the globe's genetically engineered crops harbor Monsanto's seed traits, which are basically 4 crops engineered to either be resistant to insects, or tolerant of herbicides.<sup>66</sup> These are the newest source of controversy in relation to Monsanto because of the fact that these plants/animals/organisms do not occur naturally, and have not undergone extensive long-term testing. The herbicide tolerant crops withstand spraying of chemicals (that Monsanto also makes coincidentally), while insect resistant crops create their own insecticides internally so that if a bug tries to eat the plant, it will die. This alone at the very least caused a tremendous amount of suspicion during the course of research; if it is fatal to insects, how can it be safe for human consumption? The fact is "these new, genetically engineered plants could cause serious allergies, render formerly non-toxic food toxic, increase our resistance to antibiotics, depress our immune systems and remove the nutrition from our foods."<sup>67</sup> Safety testing on the very first GE food, the 'Calgene FlavrSavr Tomato,' resulted in stomach lesions and ulcerations in lab rats, and worst of all is the fact that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration was aware of that, yet still allowed it.<sup>68</sup>

The tests led to low organ development, weakening immune response and a loss of overall nutrition among other things. "The claim that these GM tomatoes were as safe as conventional ones is at best premature and, at worst, faulty."<sup>69</sup> Far more concerning today is that highly influential governments around the world are ignoring the genetically mutated problems

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<sup>65</sup> Countless examples in (Smith 2007).

<sup>66</sup> (Monsanto v U.S. Farmers 2005).

<sup>67</sup> (Kimbrell 2007, 30).

<sup>68</sup> (Statistical Analyses of Three 28-day Toxicity Studies, Rats Given a Transgenic Tomato 1993).

<sup>69</sup> (Pusztai 2002).

associated with GMO, primarily due to lobbying, profits, and contributions by massive corporations. The fact is, business is important to business, regardless of how unnatural, dangerous, and exploitative it may be. Independent research studies on almost-all-things-GMO-related have concluded that the products cause adverse health effects, and need to be prohibited until further research is concluded. Instead of listening to scientific researchers, politicians decided to “speed up and simplify the process of bringing” Monsanto’s genetically modified products to the market without “being hampered by unnecessary regulation.”<sup>70</sup>

Unfortunately, genetically modified organisms managed to sneak through legislation processes and infiltrate the public markets without considerable and reliable testing, simply because of corporate agenda-setting and influence. From a theoretical environmental justice framework, this is ridiculously unbelievable. This is not justice, and it certainly is not democracy. Of course, the concepts advocates in support of genetically engineered foods contend makes it very hard to be against them.<sup>71</sup> Usually the excuses used are they could end world hunger, reduce manufacturing waste, and produce life-saving drugs; but most people bound to scientific reality would agree the “image of helping and healing the world through GM crops turned out to be a manufactured reality—a lie—crafted to gain public acceptance and to push products” onto the shelves. After all, Monsanto is “just another profit-oriented company.”<sup>72</sup>

The fact is that these organisms were proven to have alternative effects, but the testing simply has not been conducted thoroughly enough, nor by the proper authorities. These foods were rushed into dispersal, and ignored of suitable research literally because the agency that is

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<sup>70</sup> It was 3 days after this former US Vice President’s speech that the FDA revealed its non-regulative policy. (Quayle 1992)

<sup>71</sup> (University of California, Santa Cruz 2005).

<sup>72</sup> (Smith 2007, 1).

supposed to regulate these matters was hushed and ignored in the name of good business interests. In their 1992 report on GM foods, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) concluded they were “not aware of any information showing that foods derived by these new methods [genetic modification] differ from other foods in any meaningful or uniform way.” So basically because these foods are not ‘different enough,’ they do not require extensive testing by the FDA prior to being released on the market; despite being completely unnatural and fabricated in a Missourian laboratory.

This should raise multiple, serious alarms among populations, and in reality it has. The only problem is the people (most of them prominent researchers, scientists of various kinds, and professors) are not given any attention. When they are given attention, corporate money shuts them down immediately.<sup>73</sup> It then begs the question why? Why would a governmental agency ignore something so very important with regard to the health of its own population? Certainly it would lead one to believe there is some instance of foul play. If the obviously profit-seeking company manufacturing the product is also responsible for its own regulation, clearly there is conflict of interest presented with such a situation.

“The FDA was *fully* aware that GM crops were meaningfully different” according to the FDA’s very own technical experts and engineering scientists statements.<sup>74</sup> Their own inhibitions led them to conclude that these newly developed technologies would require extensive testing, even on humans, because of the long-term risks that would be difficult to predict, including new diseases, allergies and toxins, as well as serious nutritional problems.<sup>75</sup> These concerns were

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<sup>73</sup> Even when whistle blowers make attempts, corporations collude: (Achbar and Abbott 2003), (Gaddy 2003).

<sup>74</sup> (Smith 2007, 1).

<sup>75</sup> “Statement of Policy: Foods from Genetically Modified Plants” was a Federal Register Document containing a memo sent to superiors outlining many concerns raised by a panel of scientists (Kahl 1992).



subversively kept quiet all while FDA policy was enacted. Not only were they kept quiet, but they were actively denied and ignored by politicians, despite overwhelming scientific evidence. Perhaps this could have a little something to do with the fact that Monsanto's former attorney and later on vice president, Michael Taylor, was specifically appointed to a newly-created position in the FDA to oversee its policy development. This, along with many other political linkages, will be reviewed further in detail later on.

More often than not, the test results used and cited are those conducted by the actual biotech companies that create the products themselves. The FDA receives conclusions and summaries, but because it has been rendered the obligation of the company to conduct testing. There is no balancing measure in place to ensure the findings of a given corporation are accurate, or otherwise inaccurate for that matter. Ignacio Chapela, a prominent microbial ecologist and mycologist at the University of California, Berkeley asserts that "it just confounds common sense to have companies being their own regulators. That cannot work because it is clearly not in their corporate interest to use sound science to find problems with their products. Even if they look hard enough to find a problem, history teaches us that they are far more likely to hide it than call attention to it."<sup>76</sup> When comparing results in outcomes of scientific research and testing related to GMOs, pesticides, and herbicides, the differences between those of the company and those of independent conductors are vastly disparate.<sup>77</sup> But of course, the test results belonging to that of the company are the ones taken as indiscriminate fact.

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<sup>76</sup> Interview in: (Kimbrell 2007, 39).

<sup>77</sup> The longest and most thorough was a French two-year study conducted by professor Seralini while Monsanto or FDA studies were only 3 months (Engineering 2011).

### 3.2.1 Global Response

“The rest of the world has been leaps and bounds ahead of the U.S. when it comes to regulating GE foods” mainly because corporate power is not yet so influential.<sup>78</sup> Over 140 countries have ratified the first international legislation regulating trade of GMO, the *Cartagena BioSafety Protocol*, which allows nations to ban the import of genetically engineered products that may be deemed a threat to humans, animals, or the environment. It also requires some sort of labeling when genetically modified products are traded across borders. Nearly 60 countries mandate, in one way or another, the labeling of GE foods; including China, Japan, Australia, Russia, the EU and Mexico, according to the Center for Food Safety’s “Genetically Engineered Crops and Foods: Worldwide Regulation and Prohibition” report in October of 2005.<sup>79</sup> Yet big agribusinesses lobby for, and demand removal of labeling.

Clearly there is some controversy and differing opinions surrounding this area of discussion. If biotech companies are so proud of their product, why are they so against having them labeled? What could possibly warrant such shame and clandestine anonymity? Independent research conducted in multiple countries has obviously come to the conclusion that these organisms are different enough to warrant labeling. The most protective nations have banned the products altogether. Is the United States reacting differently for a reason?

The US produces 55.3% of the world’s GM crop distribution, and impedes any form of labeling propositions. While China produces about 3%, yet deems it necessary to have modified foods at least labeled.<sup>80</sup> This discrepancy should raise at least some kind of questioning as to the motives behind these legislation types. Clearly the more business one has in the realm, the more

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<sup>78</sup> (Kimbrell 2007, 43).

<sup>79</sup> (GM Crops and Foods, Worldwide Regulation, Prohibition and Production n.d.).

<sup>80</sup> (Clive 2006).

in support of deregulation one will be. Only the U.S., Canada, Argentina, Australia, Chile and Uruguay export GMOs currently, and it is the U.S. and Australia alone that have not signed the international *Cartagena BioSafety Protocol*, citing free-trade issues as an argument. Apparently, profits are more important than human and environmental well-being. In 1999 the European Union declared a moratorium on the development of genetically engineered products until further testing and consideration could be put into place. Today, as a result of tremendous lobbying, the moratorium has ended on new GM products, but the EU *has* instituted a strict labeling and traceability policy for foods in the EU. New GE food must also be approved by the European Commission, which sounds a lot more realistic and fitting given the curious nature of the products in question. The Union went even further and established rigorous approval processes including extensive testing for future genetically engineered crops, foods, and ingredients.<sup>81</sup>

So if a variety of independent studies and nations across the world had proven GMO to be significantly different, and even fellow FDA scientists were suspect of the risks they could pose: how were they allowed to continue to be developed and sold? It is the FDA that is responsible for the requirements and introduction of all food-related regulations in the United States, so with that they are entitled to remove an item from the shelves if they perceive it to be dangerous in any way. The FDA can also hold the companies liable for any harm caused by their products, as well as require extensive pre-market human and environmental safety tests, unless the products are ‘generally recognized as safe’ (GRAS). So why haven’t they? Certainly these genetically-manipulated, unnaturally-occurring, self-chemical-creating organisms are different enough and could use some research and testing before we the people consume them, right? –Wrong. In

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<sup>81</sup> Kimbrell gives a brief history of GE foods (Kimbrell 2007, 28).

1992, under George H.W. Bush's era of business deregulation, GM foods were declared 'GRAS' which then exonerated them from labeling and any testing (apart from optional, self-monitored, self-conducted testing under the company's own volition of course).

All of this was accomplished even though there was no affirmative and positive conclusion of GM food safety among scientists. In fact the FDA's own scientists had documented warnings and reservations about premature GMO release. Monsanto played a crucial role in engineering this FDA policy through lobbying, political campaign contributions, and government linkages. "To ensure marketplace success and international acceptance, biotech companies have developed strategies to influence the United States government in their favor. Companies like Monsanto have dictated policy to many federal agencies, including the USDA, EPA, and FDA."<sup>82</sup> Bush even visited Monsanto headquarters in a PR stunt. This explains the absence of regulation without proper testing, despite the massive uproar and protest it has caused for testing requirements by the Center for Food Safety, which is a coalition of various farming, scientific, environmental, and consumer organizations.<sup>83</sup>

### ***3.3 Democracy's Environmental (in)Justice***

Even more surprising are the range of other environmental and ecological impacts and quarrels surrounding genetically modified organisms that are constantly ignored and downplayed by corporations such as Monsanto. This central to my argument because millions across the world are protesting these destructive actions, yet governments take little to no measure to heed

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<sup>82</sup> (Kimbrell 2007, 68).

<sup>83</sup> 'Revolving door' described in detail in his book, and offers a way to support the action through a website [www.centerorfoodsafety.org](http://www.centerorfoodsafety.org) (Kimbrell 2007, 27).

the public's opinions, mainly due to corporate influence.<sup>84</sup> GMOs pose a direct threat to wildlife and the already sensitive ecological balance through invasive species, pollution and extinction. They threaten food-security of poorer nations with seed patents, biodiversity loss and biological pollution with herbicides and pesticides, and even threaten extinction of entire species through genetic mutation of fish and other animals.<sup>85</sup> With that said, among the most imperative exploits is the rise of honeybee deaths across the world, and continual governmental disregard.

“With as many as 40 or 50 percent of commercial U.S. bee hives lost to colony collapse disorder, according to the New York Times, scientists are eyeing a relatively new class of pesticides as a likely culprit.”<sup>86</sup> This is particularly significant because of human reliance on bees to pollinate a multitude of diverse plant species across the globe. These newly genetically modified crops that produce their own pesticides have been proven to disturb and alter bees' natural instinctual ability to learn scents and collect food, which is a serious threat to humanity. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, ‘colony collapse disorder’ is a relatively new phenomenon which “surfaced around 2005, but has gotten dramatically worse in the past year.”<sup>87</sup> Despite the European Commission as well as a group of American environmentalists' concerns, the EPA curiously still approved the pesticide that was “repeatedly identified as highly toxic to honeybees, a clear cause of major bee kills and a significant contributor to the devastating ongoing mortality of bees known as colony collapse disorder.” The European Commission tried to instate a ban on the proven-damaging compound, but of course massive chemical-pesticide conglomerates and Monsanto affiliates remonstrated the ban offering

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<sup>84</sup> Very recently ‘Occupy Monsanto’ reported marches in over 400 cities worldwide, with very little coverage ((NGO) 2013).

<sup>85</sup> (Smith 2007).

<sup>86</sup> (Gerken 2013).

<sup>87</sup> (Gerken 2013).

‘increased monitoring of the subject’ to circumvent any form of prohibition on their chemicals.<sup>88</sup>

So a bit of ‘monitoring’ is supposed to ameliorate irreversible exploitative natural damage, all in the name of profit-seeking.

Corporations have effectively influenced, through government imposition, the transformation of old fashioned farming which has not only threatened human health, but also managed to completely alter the centuries-old practice of natural and holistic farming. With help from the government’s surplus of ammonium nitrate after World War II, big business, and ridiculous subsidies, “farming went from being solar powered, to being powered by oil, coal, and gas” which can of course be profited from.<sup>89</sup> This not only launched the chemical fertilizer industry, but also sparked the pesticide and genetically modified industries. These governmental decisions were entirely funded and lobbied by massive agri-business companies, and have obviously led to devastating environmental impacts. The irreversible consequences of these changes on the environment and sustainability are unconscionable. Its effects on farm ecology and diversity have been explained in countless journals, articles and books, but because of the money generated and profits earned from these big businesses, they go ignored or even worse—denied.

The fact that farmers buy nitrogen rather than using crop rotation and manure dispersal means that various plants and animals were rendered irrelevant on many farms, and the industrial farmer could produce just one profitable product. The problem is the destructive effect this has on the soil, the environmental nexus, and fossil fuel usage. Some of the nitrogen evaporates into

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<sup>88</sup> There are countless writings on this honeybee subject, but this one was particularly interesting because it mentioned Monsanto affiliates, and directly blamed the pesticide they produce. It was also alarming how the EC tried to ban the chemical because of PROVEN damages, but somehow corporations still manage to object. Going even further, Canada’s Environmental Ministry says the pesticide can have adverse effects on bird populations and water-born insects as well.

<sup>89</sup> (Pollan 2009, 30).

the air, creating acid rain, and other portions of it turns into nitrous oxide, which is one of the primary causes of global warming. Whatever residual nitrogen left over is then washed into river basins and eventually poisons the ocean by causing wild algae growth, which kills the fish by using all the oxygenated water.<sup>90</sup> This is a threat to the very delicate water, food and energy nexus in and of itself, let alone the multitude of other issues surrounding these companies and their releases. Water, food, and energy alike are all affected by Monsanto's influence on government. Government subsidies equate directly to not only environmental degradation, but big corporate profits.

### ***3.4 Governmental Ties as the REASON***

According to the *New York Times*; “What Monsanto wished for from Washington, Monsanto and—by extension, the biotechnology industry—got. The control this nascent industry exerted over its own regulatory destiny through the Environmental Protection Agency, the Agriculture Department and ultimately the Food and Drug Administration was astonishing. In this area, the US government agencies have done exactly what big agribusiness has asked them to do, and told them to do.”<sup>91</sup> The ‘Monsanto Protection Act’ otherwise known as the “Farmer Assurance Provision” is a perfect and very recent example of this control. The measure quietly passed the US House of Representatives as an addition to the Agricultural Appropriations Bill in March of 2013. Protecting companies from litigation if genetically modified foods are found to cause health risks in the future, the bill was somehow enveloped into another confusing duplicitous measure, despite how revolutionary this is alone. It removes the ability of federal courts from stopping the planting or sale of GMOs regardless of any consumer health concerns.

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<sup>90</sup>Michael Pollan gives a step-by-step explanation of the process. (Pollan 2009, 34).

<sup>91</sup> (Eichenwald, Kolata and Peterson 2001).

The bill should have undergone review from an agricultural or judiciary board, but instead absolutely no hearings were held. As the *Washington Times* points out, the provision's success is viewed by many as a victory for companies like Syngenta Corp, Cargill, Monsanto and affiliated PACs that have donated \$7.5 million to members of Congress since 2009, and \$372,000 to members of the Senate Appropriations Committee.<sup>92</sup> This is the case, despite overwhelming public outcries for change and regulation, cementing the true agenda-setters.

Even though countless polls have demonstrated that Americans want to know if they are eating genetically modified food; not a ban, or even a moratorium, just a simple labeling measure to be aware of the products one consumes, these measures, bills and laws continue to be secretly passed.<sup>93</sup> The U.S. already labels GMOs on foodstuffs exported, yet American consumers still cannot manage to have the same information readily available to them. Is there anything curious or suspect about that? If it goes abroad, it requires labeling, if not, it does not. Products proven to reap havoc on the environment, cause birth defects and immune system suppression in animal tests, and that have outright bans in various countries across the world, cannot even get labeled in their primary country of origin and further proliferation. This is where governmental ties to Monsanto play a major role. As a literal exploitation of democratic processes, some states have even proposed and passed bills that “prohibit local governments and communities from enacting policies, ordinances and initiatives related to seeds and plants—including genetically engineered ones.”<sup>94</sup> Some states have them already enacted, and others are in the process.

These types of bans, and restrictions of freedoms are made possible only through big business linkages to government. Most people do not know that Supreme Court Justice Clarence

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<sup>92</sup> ('Monsanto Protection Act' Slips Silently Through Congress 2013).

<sup>93</sup> Various polls including a January 1999 Time Magazine Poll, and a 2000 MSNBC poll

<sup>94</sup> (Kimbrell 2007, 113).



Thomas was an attorney for Monsanto, for about four years. He has also ruled against every Monsanto V. the People case proposed.<sup>95</sup> Despite this clear conflict of interest, nothing has been done. President Obama was initially a proponent of GMO labeling saying on one of his campaign trails "Let folks know when their food is genetically modified, because Americans have a right to know what they're buying" promising an era of transparency and new-business. It comes as no surprise that his two largest contributors, Bill Gates and George Soros, purchased 900,000 and 500,000 shares of Monsanto respectively.<sup>96</sup> That all quickly changed after being elected, and being subjected to the lobbies and contributions of Monsanto. Contributions and lobbies literally affect political decision-making, which is a direct imposition on proper democracy. Propositions that were attempted to limit Monsanto's power and pollution, such as California's labeling Prop 37 were effectively smashed because huge corporate donations against them. This caused misinformation through media floods, sending people the wrong message through advertisements sponsored by the corporations that would be adversely affected by the laws themselves. The massive conglomerates outspent supporters of the proposition by millions of dollars, Monsanto leading them all at almost \$8 Million just against this one measure.<sup>97</sup> These kinds of manipulations directly exploit democratic systems, rendering citizenry powerless over fundamental autonomous, self-governing rights.

### ***3.4.1 Corporate Embedding***

Even more disturbing are the actual Monsanto representatives involved in the US government, responsible for these iconic passages and blockades in favor of profiteering. Certain powerful positions in U.S. government agencies are occupied by current and former Monsanto

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<sup>95</sup> This is described and outlined further in (Kimbrell 2007).

<sup>96</sup> (Rappoport 2012).

<sup>97</sup> (Frank 2013).

representatives. The company's former vice-president, Michael Taylor, is also the deputy commissioner of the FDA. He was instrumental in the FDA policy on non-regulation.<sup>98</sup> Tom Vilsack is Iowa's governor, while at the same time developed the Governors' Biotechnology Partnership, which includes members from Monsanto. Islam Siddiqui is a former Monsanto lobbyist who pushed for GMO support, and he's the new Agriculture Trade Representative.

Biotech corporate counsel Ramona Romero is the new counsel for the USDA. President Obama's nomination to the US Supreme Court, Elena Kagan, was a federal solicitor general arguing for Monsanto in a Supreme Court seed case (*Monsanto v Geertson*). Even Hillary Clinton, the American Secretary of State previously worked for a law firm that counseled Monsanto.<sup>99</sup> The former EPA deputy and assistant administrator, Linda Fisher, spent five years as a Monsanto executive. Margaret Miller was a chemical laboratory supervisor for Monsanto working on the rGBH compound, but she is now the FDA's Deputy Director of Human Food Safety.<sup>100</sup> Essentially, the ties between government and big-business are jaw-dropping and warrant an immediate review of conflicting interests between them, their positions, and the American people's desires. If massive corporations such as Monsanto are so intertwined with governments, and elected officials in politics are the ones who enact new laws, then it is impossible to deny that corporations are in essence indirectly (yet directly) behind the creation and passage of such policies, which is a clear subversive exploit of innocent democratic processes.

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<sup>98</sup> (Smith 2007, 176).

<sup>99</sup> (Rappoport 2012).

<sup>100</sup> The author names many others (Kimbrell 2007, 68).

## Chapter 4 : Movements for Democracy

Felix Kolb alters the implications behind the words of a global social movement many journalists and academics entitle the ‘antiglobalization movement’ by using the terminology ‘global justice movement.’ Clearly there is a different connotation that can be inferred from one to the other. ‘Antiglobalization’ has a negatively rebellious tone, while ‘global justice movement’ has a righteous emanation. This ‘movement’ is global, and directly relates to ‘March against Monsanto’ referenced earlier. Kolb focuses on the organizations that arrange social movements and transnational protests, but more importantly the effect said protests have on the organizations themselves. Initially Kolb questions the causal timeline of whether organizations shape contentious interactions themselves, or vice versa. These sorts of awareness movements are precisely what is needed to reverse democratic erosion by TNCs.

Examining ATTAC (Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens) as the case in point, he notes that mass media coverage and protest events are a defining combination. “The timing of changes in ATTAC’s success rate strongly suggests that its sudden increase in membership and visibility might be the consequences of the protests against the European Union (EU) summit in Gothenburg, Sweden in June 2001 and the massive demonstrations against the G7 summit in Genoa in July.”<sup>101</sup> Involving various data sets, internal e-mails of the organization, and archived newspaper articles on ATTAC, Kolb uses resources available to him, as one of the founding members of the German branch. He gives a basic rundown of the organization’s development through its French predecessor which “called for the formation of a worldwide organization to counter the destructive forces of neoliberal economic

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<sup>101</sup> This is all generally outlined with more detail in the first few pages of (Kolb 2005, 95-98).

globalization.”<sup>102</sup> Despite various meetings with international delegates from a multitude of diverse countries and regions, as well as a cooperative effort from existing organizations in the development, religious, peace, environmental and antinuclear movements, ATTAC still received very little recognition initially. The author uses phrases to describe the attention and growth like; “only minor coverage,” “very slow progress,” “unable to influence” with regard to the facts that “no one in the German government considered ATTAC a serious political actor or an expert on globalization” and “its claims remained largely uninteresting to journalists.”<sup>103</sup> How or why can this change?

#### ***4.1 Collectively Moving***

The transformation that led to ATTAC becoming a recognized force is directly connected to media coverage. In today’s modern era, TV, internet and other techno-info sources are increasingly important for getting any form of legitimate recognition, no matter how righteous the cause may be. The media itself has become a shaping force in politics because of its tremendous affect on public awareness and opinion. A slanted or biased info-blast can create opinions that would otherwise not exist (as previously demonstrated). “The growth of ATTAC was a direct consequence of a very sudden increase in media coverage, which eventually became a self-reinforcing upward spiral.”<sup>104</sup> The organization’s reverse trajectory of growth from coverage, rather than coverage after growth, enabled it to receive the acclaim and recognition it deserved, and eventually even lending it the ability to influence and shape political agendas and parties. “News coverage that gives social movements a prominent place in the discourse on public policies, or depicts populations affected by public policy as potential agents, can

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<sup>102</sup> (Kolb 2005, 99).

<sup>103</sup> (Kolb 2005, 100-101).

<sup>104</sup> (Kolb 2005, 101).

encourage a sense of collective agency, which in turn makes participation in social movements more likely”<sup>105</sup>. Kolb places emphasis on one particular protest in Gothenburg, Sweden against the EU summit. It was one of the largest and most violent European protests in decades, and lent much awareness to ATTAC’s causes in general, despite it not being organized by the association itself.

According to a few of Kolb’s figures (5.6 & 5.7), it could be safely assumed that ATTAC and organizations of its kind clearly benefit from violent/nonviolent forms of public protest. The media attention these resistance movements receive can then be transferred to the organizations that represent the ideals of the protestors. There are of course a few reservations to that stance, because if a mass mobilization results in any form of violence, it can obviously diminish the claims of a group by association. “Organizations must be radical enough to plausibly claim involvement in the protests, while at the same time convincingly distancing themselves from violence.”<sup>106</sup> This suggests that there must be more attention paid to the relational dynamic. Further research should be conducted to test the affects of protests, media coverage and movement organizations, on growth and efficacy.

## ***4.2 The Identity of Democracy***

Donatella Della Porta opens her chapter by questioning the existence of a ‘new global movement’, and further deconstructing the suggestion itself into segments. A sentiment of ‘antiglobalization’ is surely palpable in most of these new international institution protests, “—addressing as main enemies multinational corporations as well as international governmental

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<sup>105</sup> (Kolb 2005, 104).

<sup>106</sup> (Kolb 2005, 117).

organizations—“.<sup>107</sup> The question that emerges which Della Porta attempts to tackle in this section is methods of mobilization within a movement, and how to use various opportunities and resources. Much like Felix Kolb’s writing, “the challenge appears to be the ability to combine consciousness-raising with the capacity to affect political decisions, translating the growing sympathies in public opinion into influence on the process of public deliberation.”<sup>108</sup> She admittedly pivots around the changes in identity embodied in social movements, and the different factors people choose to emphasize these days. There is a distinguishing aspect of these ‘new movements’ with regard to differing gender, age and other demographic factors, which is unlike the background of previous movements. “Data confirms the presence of a heterogeneous background...the activists come from various political and social backgrounds.”<sup>109</sup> This suggests that not only a lot of people feel this way, but also different kinds of people.

This newly adopted aspect to contentious movements in general reveals a shift in the acceptance of differing characters, that the author calls ‘tolerant identities.’ Many would have assumed these fragmented relationships to be threat to the mobilization and unification behind the movements, but instead it enhanced focus around the cause itself, rather than a shared identity. Diversity also adds a certain element of novelty and validity to the cause, because it displays the desires of not just one group, but rather the beliefs of a diverse many. “Building a common organizational network thus does not rule out other membership—indeed, the co-presence of organizational memberships and identities is seen as an enrichment, enabling a specific nature to be kept while building common identities.”<sup>110</sup> So it is not the identity of the members within the group that matters for success, but more importantly the identity of the

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<sup>107</sup> (Porta 2005, 178).

<sup>108</sup> (Porta 2005, 179).

<sup>109</sup> (Porta 2005, 181).

<sup>110</sup> (Porta 2005, 187).

group's holistic meaning. Differences in race, religion, gender, and generation have not affected the collective sense of togetherness, which is very unique for protests and/or movements.

The single most interesting and alarming aspect I would choose to address in Della Porta's chapter is the general decline of national and international protest. The fact of the matter is, with globalization, there has been a diminishing effect on the importance of populous opinion. Various global institutions, organizations and networks have become the dominant force in political policy. The author outlines this fact in a wonderfully iterated grouping of two sentence; "The attempts at influencing the political system via the traditional forms of protest apparently declined. At the same time, the transformations in representative democracy mentioned in the introduction of this volume—the increasing power of the market over the state, of the executive over the legislative, of global institutions over national ones—all converged in closing the channels of political influence to movements."<sup>111</sup> This assertion could not be truer than in the time period we are in now, only increasing in validity as time passes, and neoliberal institutional control solidifies, placing emphasis on big over small.

The ability to overtake multinational and transnational oligarchs will prove to be an insurmountable task, especially considering the current trajectory and balance of power. These institutions undermine democratic values, because it is they who control democracy through monetary strength obtained through the liberalized economy, which is exactly what is protested against in this writing. So what is it that will make a movement like this successful? How is it even possible? In the past it has been the social caliber of constituents, or the homogeneity of a group's members that mark strength. Kolb would argue that the media is to be instrumental in raising awareness of this new movement, but it should be mentioned that the media itself is

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<sup>111</sup> (Porta 2005, 191).

influenced, if not owned, by these massive transnational institutions. If contentious citizens try to counterbalance that with increased protesting, the media can simply frame them as anti-democratic or destructive, which would detrimentally impede the cause. Criticizing the forms of representative democracy will not be enough for these movements to succeed. They need mass awareness.



## Contentious Conclusions – Conclusion of Contention

Attempting to remain partial and balanced was crucial for research such this one on corporations, their influence, and the resulting exploitative effects on nature and human beings. From a completely unbiased perspective, it can plausibly be inferred that genetically engineering various organisms can and should be pursued. Certainly, the technology itself is a remarkable scientific feat and could possibly prove to be important for future generations. With that said the technology itself is wondrous, but remains just that, full of wonderment. Any questions or concerns surrounding it must be addressed and addressed in full, not ignored immediately for profit.

Ralph Nader was outspoken about GE foods and other GM products because they have “far outrun the science that must be [their] first governing discipline. Therein lie the peril, the risk, and the foolhardiness...the wanton release of genetically engineered products is tantamount to flying blind.”<sup>112</sup> It is not the technology that is the problem, but the issues surrounding its prematurely reckless release, especially as a result of corporate influence and manipulation of governmental processes. There must be considerable testing done and verified by independent parties before humans across the world are used as lab rats for a few companies’ revenue gains. Not even mentioning the fact that overwhelming majorities of people are against it. It is also questionable that some of those very-same companies have lied about and been sued over products released before.<sup>113</sup> The methods with which corporations such as Monsanto used to facilitate and expedite the release of such technologies without long term and proper testing are truly and utterly disgusting. It is an absolute mockery of democratic institutions when money

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<sup>112</sup> Ralph Nader, Foreword to *Genetically Engineered Food, Changing the Nature of Nature*. eds. Kimberly A. Wilson et al. (Vermont: Park Street Press, 2001), ix, x.

<sup>113</sup> Much more on lawsuits in referenced works: (Monique-Robin 2008).

overrules public sentiment, and the risks of severe health and environmental degradation are flat-out ignored, especially when scientific evidence readily available.

The concern is not the companies, or the dangerous products/life forms they produce, but most importantly the subversive and manipulating techniques used to exploit humanity as a whole. It is nothing short of an erosion of democracy when governments allow these corporations to conduct business in such a manner that ignores science and pillages the environment, in the name of rent-seeking. Even when citizens have tried to take a stand, and polls indicate enormous support siding with the movement, it is impossible to call that democracy when policies are constantly implemented supporting just the opposite because of profit. Creating something that could be considered harmful is one thing, but using political ties and other controversial methods to force people into unknowingly using them is another situation entirely. For lack of better terms, it is exploitation.

It is not even capitalism at this point because people are not justifying its sale in the market with knowledgeable purchase, but rather forcibly manipulated into using a product nobody really wants. Denying and ignoring empirical scientific data is unacceptable. Bribing politicians with campaign contributions and honorary position-appointments should not be tolerated. Being able to release a dangerous product, get sued for it years later, but still turn a profit is intrinsically faulty. Swaying elections with falsified reports and media floods of millions of investment dollars into media spins and story framing is simply misleading and undemocratic. And worst of all it appears the only reason this is allowed to continue is because corporations like Monsanto and governments such as the United States Government are colluding secretly or unknowingly.

It has been outlined how Monsanto managed to achieve just that sort of ubiquity through various manipulations and loopholes, but it occurs on a daily basis with other corporations as well. “Monsanto has brought this type of reckless denial into the field of GM foods. They have also added to their repertoire extensive bribery, hijacking of regulatory agencies, and threats to reporters and scientists” among other documented cases of treasonous and scandalous activity.<sup>114</sup> Even with blatant terrorist-style effects on biodiversity, human health, and democratic quality, these processes are allowed to continue through seditious and disloyal corporate-political ties, the influence of money on politics, and ignorant, misinformed populations.

## Solutions of Awareness and Realization

*“The worst illiterate is the political illiterate. He hears nothing, sees nothing, and takes no part in political life. He doesn’t seem to know that the cost of living, the price of beans, of flour, of rent, of medicines, all depend on political decisions. He even prides himself on his political ignorance, sticks out his chest and says he hates politics. He doesn’t know, the imbecile, that from his political non-participation comes the prostitute, the abandoned child, the robber, and worst of all, corrupt officials, the lackeys of exploitative multinational corporations.”*

—Bertolt Brecht

Rather than a recap I prefer method for solution, which is a combination of what Della Porta and Kolb dissect with regard to contentious politics, as discussed previously. In modern times, the use of social media provides a far less-regulated and controlled outlet for information sharing. These new technologies have already sparked brazen ‘Facebook Revolutions’ and ‘Twitter Rebelions.’<sup>115</sup> If videos and documents about the cause are shared to a viral audience, there is no telling how far it can reach. It is this use of alternative media, without framing or corporate spinning, that can lead to a successful collective consciousness or awareness, which can then stimulate increased mobilization.

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<sup>114</sup> (Smith 2007, 5).

<sup>115</sup> (Wolman 2013).

Even more important is the amount of membership and actual participation. Today, people tend to be far more apathetic and passively-aggressive. There must be something used to stimulate action. I feel that the only way to get people to move in modern times is some gruesomely horrifying footage with a perfectly-scored, emotion-evoking soundtrack. This too helped amass support for revolution in Tunisia.<sup>116</sup> Unfortunately, people are just that fickle. The problem is not finding youth with an opinion, but finding youth willing to fight for that opinion...beyond the computer screen. Movements have always been dependent upon a strong commitment, and willingness to sacrifice and fight for the cause, not just social media. I am afraid that by the time people feel the need for this sort of passionate action, it will be too little too late. This is why awareness and sharing are crucial.

*“If the corporation is not to defeat democracy, then democracy must defeat the corporation—which is to say that the curbing of monopoly and the transformation of corporatism is a political, not an economic, task. Democracy proclaims the priority of the political over the economic; the modern corporation rebuts that claim by its very existence. Liberal democracy is too vulnerable—its citizens too passive and its ideas of freedom and individualism too illusory—to recognize, let alone do battle with, the mammoth modern corporation that has assumed the identity and ideology of the traditional family firm.”<sup>117</sup>*

When you consider where average citizens get their ideas and news, you are left with a question of how correct information can possibly be disseminated. Information today is of course filtered by global media corporations, which are naturally driven by the corporate advertisers who fund them. In the United States an appellate court allowed media corporations, such as Fox News, to knowingly lie on air. This ruling officially protects massive media conglomerates from being sued for disseminating false information, even knowingly.<sup>118</sup> It begs the question; how can the public have the ability to make well-informed decisions? When there is a direct connection

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<sup>116</sup> (Wolman 2013).

<sup>117</sup> (Barber 1984, 257).

<sup>118</sup> This is another story completely, but can be researched via: (Gaddy 2003).

between oppressive governments and corporate power, how are people expected to revolt, contend, or counter-against what they are in disagreement with? The people do not even know what it is they need to vote or rebel against, because of systematic corporate exploitations of democracy. It is an untold story of collusion between corporations and oppressive regimes, both in search of personal profit over greater good.

Today it is the United States that is becoming the tyrannical regime with harmful policies being passed and media stories being spun that completely disregard any semblance of truth, regardless of the human health or environmental implications. A corporation would be ignoring the fundamental laws of business if it decided to put any moral sense of obligation or national allegiance ahead of income. These are not the sentiments of most people, demonstrating the defect corporate strength and influence causes for democracy to function honestly and properly.

From democracy to tyrannical despotism, it is not the system of government that will protect a populace, but the citizenry itself who must stand for what it believes in. Far more integral to survival is an educated, well-informed, and mobilized population that is fervent in its beliefs. This type of social contention is what is needed to make any meaningful change. The corporations of today have managed to degrade every sense of ability within people by hypnotizing them, poisoning them, and worst of all hiding the truth from them. One family cannot stand up to millions and millions of dollars. It must come from within, the desire to change, collectively. This unfortunately is a new era, with new enemies to mankind, and therefore a new solution must be designed and embraced. The transnational and global nature of businesses has essentially rendered the very governments that are supposed to protect citizens, powerless. Democracy is in fact, failing, and failing miserably.

The government is not the enemy, but the hijacked, corporate-representative, exploitative governments of today. Just 50 or 60 years ago it was not so much the case. Corporate CEO's have been designated disproportionate power, reigning now as the new clerics and oligarchs of a global world, displacing public opinions with private funds. Industry and government are not only working with each other, they have quite literally *become* one another. Colossal corporations have been allowed to undermine democracy, most effectively in the United States but also around the world, because democracy has been exploited. There comes a time for a rude awakening, when laws are to be established that dismantle these giant monopolistic conglomerates. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the three branches of government in the United States, executive, judicial and legislative, have each been purchased by a modern corrupted form; the lobbyists, fund-raisers, and media framers. This needs to be addressed.<sup>119</sup>

Scholars and academics who research transnational corporations admit the complex dynamic between business and society, but there remains a disparate theoretical gap that must be bridged between corporate growth, erosion of democracy, and a systematic exploitation. While some authors argue about how transnational corporations are good for everyone, and others contend they are exploitative, it appears to be overlooked that the sheer power and control they now possess is in and of itself a threat to the very foundation of democracy, through a series of exploitative measures. Those who contend on behalf of corporations are simply outdated. The empirical numbers of corporate profits, growth, and influence are dumbfounding, but they still seem to be ignored in terms of what is implied for democratic representation. A direct measurement method is virtually impossible, but if a simple two and two are put together, the demonstration of its existence is clear.

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<sup>119</sup> Practical solutions put forth in (Clements 2012).

The data and proper support exist when pointing out exploitation in recent global trends, the problem is forming a movement strong enough to overturn the current economic order. In order for the message to have any effect, it needs to first be taken seriously, and disseminated across independent platforms. This is the only way the concept itself can within representative strands be further refined and documented when it occurs, just as exploitation needs to be in the literature of today. When considered it seems almost taboo and that creates a lack of ability to meaningfully research and apply the subject. ‘Exploitation’ as a concept has been approached to a certain degree, but it needs to be refined and elaborated upon realistically within international relations circles. In essence it needs to be conceptualized differently with its assumptions being more free-thinking and realistic with regard to transnational capitalist classes and institutions.

If capitalism can only thrive on the exploitation of a working class, and the corporations of today are materializations of capitalism, then the corporate institutions of the world are too becoming ever-more exploitative in nature. This basic transitive relationship has tremendous repercussions. The conceptual core is there, but perhaps international relations schools of thought too quickly place theories in nuanced groups with reputations that precede them. Sometimes writers too quickly ascribe themselves to one theoretical framework and are later presented barriers with regard to intention or implication. What needs to be considered is a more pragmatic approach to applying the concepts within ‘Marxism’ while renaming the framework as a whole so as to avoid confusion, and give credence to original thought. This can even be a new school; “Post-Realizationism,” for those who are truly awake, thinking independently after the realization of corporate exploitation through governmental control and media manipulation.

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