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Scaling food regime analysis: a framework for national case studies

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ABSTRACT

Food regime analysis is a prominent approach to study the role of agriculture and food in global capitalism, being broadly used in agrarian change studies since late 1980s. A move towards problematizing the spatiality of the food regime approach has been identified among food regimes scholars mainly due to its insufficient accountability of national and regional variability in the experience of food regimes. Nevertheless, in the last decade an emerging body of studies have used the food regimes' lenses to look at regional, national and even regional scales all over the world.

While food regime analysis was 'global' in scope from the beginning, McMichael -one of its founders- recently made a distinction between identifying food regimemoments - that is, periods of accumulation and associated transitions- and using food regime analysis to identify significant relationships and contradictions in the political history of capital across space and time. In this regard, food regime analysis could be deployed in a variety of ways to illuminate local, national, regional and global processes.

Thus, granted that scaling food regimes analysis is possible and needed, the question remains as to how, theoretically and methodologically, this can be achieved. In this paper, we aim at filling this gap by creating a framework that allows to use food regime analysis to examine national case studies.

Our methodological approach is based on three stages. First, we will conduct a systematic literature review of studies that have already used food regimes at a national level in order to identify the aspects of food regimes at which their authors commonly



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look at. Secondly, we will review the main contributions made by food regime scholars so far from a theoretical and methodological standpoint. Thirdly and finally, we will contrast evidence from previous experience obtained from stage one with the main insights from stage two to come up with our framework.

The resulting framework will be tested in an upcoming paper that will look at the transformations of the Spanish agri-food system from 1980s onwards, the underlying purpose of this paper.

We hope to significantly contribute to food regimes literature in methodological and theoretical terms. We wish to open the path to scaling the food regime analysis not only at a national scale, but also at regional and local levels. In addition, we hope that our framework can facilitate future research works when studying agrarian change at a country level.