Recommended Citation
Lin, Scott Y. (2021), "Restoring the State back to Food Regime Theory: China's Agribusiness Investment in the Global Soybean Commodity Chain," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* (forthcoming).
https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjoc20/current

Restoring the State back to Food Regime Theory: China's Agribusiness Investment in the Global Soybean Commodity Chain

Scott Y. Lin

National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan

scottlin@nccu.edu.tw

Food regime theory identifies three distinct food regimes: the British (1870–1914), American (1945–1973), and corporate food regimes (late 1980s onwards). In the first two regimes, political economic orders were dominated by two separate nation-states, whereas the current third regime is dominated by a few mega-corporations. Consequently, traditional super nation-states are finding it challenging to use food trade measures to ensure favourable world orders. However, China's agribusiness state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are quickly joining hands with the corporate food regime. This study aims to answer the following questions: Where is the state in the contemporary corporate food regime? How are these rising Chinese agribusiness SOEs changing the current food regime context? Applying the food regime theory, this paper aims to analyse the expansion of China's influence in the global soybean commodity chain, which is driven by four forces from the corporate food regime: liberalisation, technologicalisation, securitisation, and accumulation. These forces lead the Chinese state apparatus to address China's domestic food needs and then to establish agricultural free trade projects, biotechnology projects, soybean commodity-chain nationalisation projects, and transnational land-grabbing investments. Furthermore, such a dynamic Chinese food security context is gradually moving towards a "SOEs corporate food regime".

Keywords: food regime theory, corporate food regime, SOEs, capitalisation, food security, China

Recommended Citation
Lin, Scott Y. (2021), “Restoring the State back to Food Regime Theory: China’s Agribusiness Investment in the Global Soybean Commodity Chain,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* (forthcoming).
https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjoc20/current

Introduction

In the beginning of the 21st century, to combat the shortage in domestic agricultural resources and ensure domestic food security, China launched a strategy to supported agribusiness corporations in their drive towards “going-out” to access overseas agricultural resources (Cheng 2013; Hofman and Ho 2012; Hoering and Sausmikat 2011). The Chinese government’s strategy is to help its agriculture and food corporations through acquisitions of top agricultural enterprises, bilateral investment treaties (BITs), bilateral agricultural co-operation, and overseas farmland investments (Lin 2017a, 2017b; Cheng and Zhang 2014; Cotula 2012). Accordingly, the China National Cereals, Oils, and Foodstuffs Corporation (COFCO), a Chinese national state-owned enterprise (SOE), successively acquired 51% equity in the Dutch firm Nidera and the Singaporean enterprise Nobel in March and April 2014, respectively. This helped COFCO acquire Nidera-invested soybean farmland in Latin America and Nobel-invested palm farmland in Southeast Asia, which made COFCO one of the world’s top five food trading companies, alongside four major global agricultural agri-food groups: Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), Bunge, Cargill, and Louis Dreyfus Co. (Louis Dreyfus), referred to as ABCD (Wang and Li 2016). Second, in 2016, China National Chemical Corp.

(ChemChina), another national SOE, acquired Syngenta, the world's third largest agrochemical corporation. This made Syngenta's seed patents and agricultural planting technology the assets of ChemChina and ChemChina-Syngenta, a leading agrochemical and seed corporation, alongside key agrochemical giants such as Dow-Dupont, BASF, and Bayer-Monsanto (Clapp 2018). Third, the "going-out" goal of provincial SOEs includes investing directly in overseas farmland. Further, the Chongqing Grain Group (CGG), Heilongjiang Beidahuang Nongken Group (Beidahuang), Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), and other provincial SOEs have invested in agricultural farmland in Latin America, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa, and other regions; they are also planning to grow soybean, palm, and other grain and oil crops. Consequently, China has become an important investor country for transnational farmland investments, thereby significantly dispersing China's food production chain (Lin 2015).

To ensure domestic food security, China has been employing its state apparatus to diversify the import sources of its agricultural products. In 2018, such a strategy gradually demonstrated its effectiveness when China and the United States (US) became involved in a trade war. In response to US tariffs on Chinese products, China imposed a 25% retaliatory tariff on US soybeans. Figure 1 shows that US soybeans accounted for more than 70% of the Chinese import market in the 1990s. The import market share peaked at 77.6% in 1995–1996; thereafter, the share showed a downward trend, dropping to only 40.7% in 2015–2016, and even lower to 27% in 2018–2019. Simultaneously, Brazilian soybeans increased its share in China's import market; imports rose from 4.8% in 1995–1996 to 45.5% in 2015–2016, and jumped to 63% in 2018–2019. Therefore, from 2013 onwards, Brazilian soybeans replaced American soybeans, with the highest market share in China. In addition, since the early 21st century, Argentine soybeans have gradually progressed towards acquiring a stable share of 5–14% in China's import market. Consequently, China's total imports of soybeans from Latin America have surpassed imports from the US. Even in 2018–2019, Latin American soybeans had a dominant share of approximately 70% in the Chinese import market. This has raised concerns that Chinese soybean farmland is invading the Amazon rainforest and causing man-made forest fires (Pierre-Louis 2019). In this context, COFCO's control over various segments of the Latin American soybean commodity chain has gained relevance, implying that COFCO is gradually breaking through the traditional pattern in which the ABCD corporations control the global soybean trade (Baraibar Norberg 2020, 142). In the Brazilian soybean market, COFCO surpassed ADM, Cargill, and Louis Dreyfus in terms of trade volume in 2017, making it second only to Bunge and Marubeni (Freitas 2018). Similarly, in the Argentine soybean market, COFCO surpassed Cargill, ADM, Bunge, and Louis Dreyfus, becoming the largest agriculture and food trader in Argentina (Patiño 2018). In short, the rise of the previously mentioned Chinese agri-food groups has made it possible for the Chinese government to levy a 25% retaliatory tariff on US soybeans.

[Insert Figure 1 around here]

The rise of Chinese agri-food groups in the global soybean supply chain has become a reality. This makes it difficult for countries in the Global North to sustain their dominant role in the global political and economic order through sanctions of agriculture and food trade. This allowed China to break out from the food trade framework that has traditionally been dominated by agribusinesses in the Global North. Contemporary food regime theory argues that, since the late 1980s, the global food regime system has transitioned to the current corporate food regime (McMichael 2005, 2009). In the corporate food regime, a small number of large agri-food groups have weakened intervention from state apparatus through neo-liberalism and have dominated the global political and economic order in food supply chains. Consequently, except for some social protection measures that target nutrition (Pritchard et al. 2016), the degraded state apparatus will not be in a position to intervene in the agricultural market through policy instruments, such as agricultural subsidies and trade tariffs (Pechlaner and Otero 2008, 2010; Otero 2012). However, the theoretical hypothesis in food regime theory that the state apparatus has become subject to the agribusiness companies fails to account for the fact that the Chinese state apparatus is vigorously protecting China's agricultural markets and supporting the rise of its agribusiness SOEs. Therefore, this study, based on the above context, will address the following questions: Where is the state in the contemporary corporate food regime that drives China's rapidly growing agribusiness SOEs? How are such SOEs changing the current food regime context?

Based on McMichael's interpretation (2005, 2009, 2012) of food regime theory, and in conjunction with Chinese agri-food groups rising in the global soybean supply chain, this study aims to illustrate that liberalisation, technologicalisation, securitisation, and accumulation—the four driving forces emphasised by food regime theory (Bernstein 2016, 627)—are being used by China's state apparatus. Further, the resulting establishment of agricultural free trade, biotechnology, and nationalisation programs of food and oil supply chains, as well as acquiring overseas farmland resources, has helped China's SOEs to rise rapidly and form an SOEs corporate food regime. While one of the important founders of food regime theory—Friedmann (2005, 2016)—remains inconclusive in her perspective on the post-US food regime and retains an openness to the term "corporate food regime", this study will join the conversation and provide a further theoretical complement to food regime theory by elaborating on the previously unexplained rise of SOEs in the corporate food regime and address Chinese agri-food groups' gradual domination of the global soybean supply chain, which is rapidly weakening the influence of the Global North in East Asia. In this paper, section 2 explains the components of food regime theory, and section 3 explains the rise of Chinese agribusiness SOEs in the global soybean supply chain based on the framework of food regime theory. Section 4 addresses the effect of these rising SOEs on the components of the food regime, and the final section presents directions for future research.

Food Regime Theory

Food regime theory dates to the late 1980s. From the perspective of international political economy, Friedmann (1987, 250) showed that capitalism permeates rural society. The consequential capitalisation of agricultural production resources turned farmers—from advanced capitalist countries—into agricultural businessmen and crops into agricultural commodities, which led to the formation of commercial family farms in rural societies. Such an economic order made it difficult to explain the real social class of family farms within Marxist theory. However, large agri-food groups and commercial family farms in Western Europe and the US that provide single agricultural commodities are dominating global food production through rural capitalisation. Therefore, traditional self-sufficient and multi-planting agrarian societies are relying on importing agricultural products from Western European countries and the US. Such an agricultural trade arrangement constitutes the components of the international political economy of food and the framework of the international food regime.

In 1989, Friedmann and McMichael further defined the theoretical content of food regime theory. According to them, the theory explores "the role of agriculture in the development of the capitalist world economy, and in the trajectory of the state system" (Friedmann and McMichael 1989, 93). The traditional international political economy believes that the development model of human society is one in which agriculture supports industry and thus moves the national economy toward modernisation and globalisation. This makes the industry the mainstream voice of globalisation; however, agricultural discussions only exist in a country's industrial decision-making process and thus fall outside the theoretical scope of international political economy and international relations. Therefore, food regime theory is intended to complement the noteworthy role of agriculture in the international political economy by reviewing its historical context. The academic contribution of food regime theory is "to reconstruct a preliminary history of agriculture to shed light on its impact on the state system, and … to offer a critique of the nationalist presuppositions that inform the literature on development and dependency" (Friedmann and McMichael 1989, 93–94). Based on this theoretical definition, Friedmann and McMichael concluded that the modern global political and economic order have experienced two different food regimes: the British regime from 1870–1914 and the US regime from 1945–1973.

Further, McMichael (2005, 2009, 2012) noted that, since the late 1980s, the contemporary global political and economic order has evolved into a third stage, namely, the corporate food regime. The first two stages of the food regime are characterised by single countries dominating the political and economic order. In the first stage, the British regime consisted of free trade imperialism in agriculture and a free trade development model, which was centred on the United Kingdom (UK) and established through free trade in agriculture between the British mainland and the British colonies. In the second stage, the US regime consisted of an aid-based food order and an aid-based development model, which revolved around the US and was established through the export of cheap agricultural products by the US through foreign aid. However, the third stage of the food regime is characterised by a handful of large multinational food enterprises dominating the global political and economic order in food supply chains. Consequently, the traditional nation-states are finding it difficult to monopolise food trade through national policies and continue their global dominance.

There is no doubt that compared with the nation-states, agri-food groups have become increasingly powerful in the political and economic order of the current food regime because of the rapid capitalisation of food production factors. Nevertheless, some disagreements on the current food regime's operational order still remain especially between the major founders of food regime theory. First of all, due to the complicated relations of Chinese agribusinesses to the state, market, and finance, Friedmann (2016, 673) proposed that COFCO's purchases of other agri-food groups need a broader explanatory ability of food regime theory for better analysis, rather than McMichael's simple term of corporate food regime. Moreover, a similar conversation is contained in the work of Bernstein (2010), who believed capitalist agriculture embraces not only "agriculture" but also "farming" while the concept of corporate food regime merely rests on the former and therefore needs the wider lens of food regime analysis. Bernstein's recent study (2016, 627) further indicated that the driving forces for capitalist agriculture include liberalisation, technologicalisation, securitisation, and accumulation that introduce a dual-track development between agriculture and farming. Although these driving forces promote the rise of agri-food groups and the establishment of a food regime analysis, McMichael (2016, 656), Friedmann (2016, 687), and Bernstein (2016, 636–637) hold disagreements on the role of the nation-states in today's food regime but reach agreements on the way in which these agri-food groups' most primitive sources are rooted in the infrastructure and legal norms that were established in the first-stage British regime and the second-stage US regime. The following sections will continue the discussion on food regime analysis where the rise of Chinese agribusiness SOEs in the global soybean supply chain and the role of the state apparatus will be addressed in succession.

Chinese Agribusiness in the Global Soybean Oilseed Supply Chain

Currently, the Chinese state apparatus is leveraging the four driving forces of liberalisation, technologicalisation, securitisation, and accumulation to promote the rise of Chinese agribusiness SOEs. This section will focus on these driving forces.

Liberalisation

The liberalisation of China's soybean trade originated in the 1990s, when the Chinese economy began to improve. Since then, Chinese eating habits have gradually become more Westernised, requiring more edible oil and protein. Therefore, soybean-oil and meal that are obtained from crushed soybean have become important foreign agricultural by-products, imported in large quantities by China to meet Chinese demand for edible oil and animal feed. In 1999, the Chinese government decided to develop the local soybean crushing industry and thus removed soybeans from the list of strategic agricultural products. Thus, soybean imports were no longer subject to tariff quotas and the soybean import tariff was lowered from the original 40% to 3%. Simultaneously, the Chinese government began to apply a tariff quota to imported soybean-oil and meal and imposed a high import tariff, such as 63% (2001) and 9% (2006), on soybean-oil. Meanwhile, the import tariff on soybean meal was maintained at a relatively high level of 5%. Consequently (Figure 2), China has become the world's largest soybean importer (accounting for 62.92% of the global trade volume in 2017) and the largest soybean-oil crusher (accounting for 25.6% of the global production in 2014).

[Insert Figure 2 around here]

China has supported its giant agribusiness SOEs in the process of importing foreign soybean raw material and developing the domestic soybean crushing industry. In terms of soybean imports, before 2013 China relied heavily on US soybeans, making multinational corporations (MNCs), particularly Japanese agribusinesses like Marubeni (20% of soybean imports to China in 2012), Mitsui (7% of soybean imports to China in

2012), Itochu, and Mitsubishi the main soybean exporters to China (Hiraga 2018, 170). These companies traded US soybeans to China while shipping US soybeans to the Japanese marketplace. In 2014, following COFCO's acquisition of Nidera and Nobel, COFCO International was established. Thereafter, China gradually shifted its source of soybean imports to Latin America, which made Brazil the top soybean exporter to China and COFCO the top soybean importer in China in 2018, accounting for more than 20% of China's soybean imports (Bloomberg 2019). Second, since US soybeans monopolised the Chinese market in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the Chinese soybean crushing industry was controlled by American agribusiness MNCs. ADM was the first MNC to enter the Chinese crushing market, and before 2004, it was the largest soybean crushing company in China (Goldsmith et al. 2004, 102). Subsequently, Singapore's Wilmar also entered the Chinese crushing supply chain. Moreover, Bunge entered the Chinese soybean crushing market in 2004. In 2006, Cargill entered the Chinese crushing market with Taiwan's Uni-President Enterprises Corp. Thus, in 2010, foreign MNCs accounted for 70% of Chinese crushing facilities (Schneider 2011). However, the Chinese government was aware that American agribusiness MNCs dominated the Chinese soybean crushing supply chain, so it began to support local crushing companies fully. China's top two agribusiness SOEs, COFCO and China Grain Reserves Corporation

(Sinograin), were tasked with heavy responsibilities by the Chinese government. In 2014, COFCO acquired Nobel and absorbed Nobel's previous 10% share of China's soybean crushing facilities into the production capacity of COFCO. As a result, COFCO rocketed to the top and became the largest soybean crushing company in China and Asia in 2018, accounting for 18% of Chinese crushing facilities. Sinograin, on the other hand, started to play an exclusive role in domestic soybean farmland and food storage equipment in 2010, through national financial support and by co-operating with Cargill as a shareholder. In just eight years, Sinograin built a crushing facility from scratch and became China's sixth largest soybean crushing company in 2018, accounting for 5% of total crushing facilities nationwide. Consequently, in the same year, the total China-based soybean crushing capacity of MNCs decreased to only 29.1% (Bloomberg 2019).

In the future, the previously mentioned Chinese agribusiness SOEs will grow with China's agricultural trade liberalisation. In the summer of 2017, when the author spoke to officials of China's Ministry of Commerce regarding China's agricultural trade liberalisation, they stated that China's strategy for agricultural trade liberalisation would be to let "government set up the stage and enterprises put on the show" (which is a translation of *zhengfu datai, qiye changxi* (Chinese phonetic alphabet)[1]. In this regard, the stage refers to free trade agreements (FTAs) and BITs made by the Chinese government, with FTAs aimed at providing a legal international basis for justifying and protecting China's important overseas agricultural BITs to encourage and safeguard overseas investment of Chinese agricultural enterprises. Kong (2012, 1199) also found that China uses FTAs to rebuild its international image as a benign emerging power and to establish mutual trust with other countries to obtain the commercial benefits of economic co-operation. Simultaneously, "as China imports a large quantity of agricultural products, it is not in China's interests to follow the position of most developing economies and demand the elimination of export subsidies" (Kong 2012, 1200). Additionally, this highlights the bias in China's position in signing FTAs with developed economies; China will not use the abolition of agricultural export subsidies as a prerequisite for signing FTAs. On the contrary, the main driving force for China to sign FTAs and create a bilateral free trade market is that China needs cheap raw material, particularly raw material for agricultural products, to supplement its relatively insufficient domestic agricultural productivity. However, although Zeng (2010) agrees that China's

[1] Interview conducted on June 29, 2017 in Beijing, China

liberalisation strategy entails signing FTAs to obtain cheap raw material and capture a large export market, China is not opening the agricultural market without restrictions. China protects and supports the agricultural products and agribusinesses that are relevant to Chinese food security and rural development. In the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China has shown that, in the China-ASEAN FTA (CAFTA), it treats rice, wheat, corn, soybean-oil, palm-oil, cotton, sugar, and tobacco as highly sensitive products, which have been placed under tariff protection by China. Since such a tariff protection mechanism will implement the allocation of the agricultural import quota to a few agribusiness SOEs, Tso (2019, 367) found that Chinese agribusiness SOEs are benefitting and growing under the CAFTA framework in the rice trade between China and Vietnam. Meanwhile, agricultural trade liberalisation under the China-New Zealand FTA and China-Australia FTA has also ensured the rapid growth of Chinese agribusiness SOEs in the global agricultural supply chain, particularly COFCO–Mengniu Dairy, COFCO–Tully Sugar, and Shandong RuYi–Cubbie Station Cotton.

Regarding the soybean commodity chain, BITs also play an influential role. Since imported soybeans is subject to only a 3% import tariff in China, China does not need to sign additional FTAs to obtain cheap soybeans. However, China has increased its investment in the soybean production capacity of Latin America by signing BITs. These

BITs include China's expansion of investment and infrastructure loans to the soybean industry in Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, thereby changing the agricultural and rural landscapes of Latin American countries (Larmer 2019) and making soybeans the second largest (18%) commodity traded with Latin America in 2016—second to iron ore (19%)—before the outbreak of the Sino-US trade war (Gil and Aguilera 2017). This eventually made COFCO the largest soybean exporter in Argentina and the third largest soybean exporter in Brazil in 2017. Thus, COFCO leads the group of four Asian agribusiness MNCs, followed by Japan's Marubeni, Korea's CJ Corporation, and Singapore's Wilmar that together account for 45% of Brazil's total exports of soybeans, soybean-oil, and soybean-meal; contrarily, the trade volume of the traditional Global North ABCD agri-food groups decreased from 57% in 2003 to 37% in 2017 (Daily Oil, 2018).

Technologicalisation

Technologicalisation is mainly driven by three factors, namely, the commercialisation and chemicalisation of nature, and the World Trade Organization (WTO)'s Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) (McMichael 2013a, 130). Consequently, the rapid commercial production of genetically modified (GM) soybeans began and entered international trade in large quantities in 1996. This led to the rise of agricultural corporations that own seed patents of GM soybeans and agrochemical equipment, and eventually, to the formation of the corporate food regime. In the early 21st century, the Chinese government gradually realised the importance of biotechnology in food production. Thus, China first enacted the *Seed Law of the People's Republic of China* in 2000, which allowed nature to enter commercial transactions, leading to the preliminary commercialisation of nature. Second, in 2001, China issued the *Regulation on Administration of Safety of Agricultural Genetically Modified Organisms*, enabling GM crops to be managed, developed, produced, traded, and used while encouraging the development and production of seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, breeds of food animals (livestock, poultry, and aquaculture), and veterinary drugs, among other agricultural and chemical products relevant to GM food production. This has led to a wave of rapidly formed Chinese seed and agrochemical companies in the early 21st century, with the total number reaching 8,700 in 2011. Such progress promotes the commercialisation of nature in the food regime and realises the chemicalisation of nature in China.

Finally, although TRIPs have been adopted by the WTO and came into effect as early as 1995, the domestic legalisation of the implementation of TRIPs in Chinese agriculture was not as smooth as expected. Thus, despite having 8,700 seed companies in

China, more than 90% are small companies without the ability to develop seed and are mostly intermediary traders engaged in introducing foreign seed to China. This allowed large US seed companies to monopolise 70% of the Chinese seed market in the early 21st century (IFENG 2010). In 2011, China passed the *Measures for the Administration of Licenses for Crop Seed Production and Business Operations* and implemented the newly revised *Seed Law* in 2016, thereby significantly increasing the funding sources, innovative breeding technologies, patent application capabilities, and chartered market size of China’s domestic seed companies through legal regulations. Subsequently, China’s applications for seed variety registration reached 4,854 in 2018, gaining the top position in the world, for the first time. Among them, soybeans, rice, wheat, and other food crops grown in China are 100% fully cultivated varieties by China; 77% of these varieties are independently cultivated by Chinese agribusiness corporations. This indicates that Chinese peasants have become heavily dependent on Chinese agribusiness corporations and this has led to the formation of corporation-centred agriculture in China (China Economic Net 2019). The process of technologicalisation has also led to the emergence of two world-class seed companies, namely, Yuan Longping High-Tech Agriculture Co.—which is focused on rice seed biotechnology—and ChemChina-Syngenta—which is focused on soybean seed biotechnology.

Regarding the soybean commodity chain, ChemChina is a giant agribusiness SOE in the commercial soybean seed industry and the agrochemical industry. ChemChina was established in 2004, originally because many SOEs under the direct supervision of the then Ministry of Chemical Industry (MCE) underwent restructuring and mergers to establish a large new SOE to replace the role of the MCE after it was dissolved. After the establishment of ChemChina, it immediately acquired France's Adisseo in 2005, a global leader in the production of animal feed additives. In 2006, it acquired the Australian company Qenos, one of the largest manufacturers of polyethylene, which is used in food packaging. In 2011, it acquired the Norwegian company Elkem, the world's leading provider of silicones, which are used in food processing and production. Next, in the same year, it acquired the Israeli company ADAMA, the world's largest producer of generic crop protection chemicals. In 2015, it acquired the Italian company Pirelli, one of the largest tyre manufacturers, and in 2016, it acquired the Swiss company Syngenta, a leading producer and distributor of agro-chemicals and seeds. The acquisition of Syngenta is the largest acquisition in Chinese history to date. Therefore, through continuous acquisitions, ChemChina entered the Fortune Global 500 list for the first time in 2011, and was ranked 144th in 2019, behind Dow-Dupont (100) and BASF (115), as one of the top three global chemical companies.

In addition, ChemChina's acquisition of Syngenta in 2016 not only made ChemChina-Syngenta the world's largest supplier of agro-chemicals and pesticides, but Syngenta's seed patents and agricultural cultivation technology regarding GM soybean and GM maize also became the assets of ChemChina. Moreover, given the SOE background of ChemChina and other large agri-food groups, the state apparatus provides significant support for their growth in China's agricultural technologicalisation process for obtaining scientific and technical assets in the global supply chains of food, feed, and fuel to ensure China's food security (Belesky and Lawrence 2019, 1133; Clapp 2017, 8). For example, since more than half of Brazil and Argentina's soybean seeds (mostly GM soybeans) are from Syngenta and Nidera (Nidera was acquired by COFCO in 2014), the 2016 ChemChina-Syngenta acquisition and merger ensured that China's largest agro-chemical company, ChemChina, and its largest food trader, COFCO, worked together more closely after 2017, with the two parties promoting the cultivation of GM soybeans bred by COFCO-Nidera and ChemChina-Syngenta. Further, the adoption of corresponding cultivation technology in Brazil, Argentina, and neighbouring Latin American countries was aimed at selling the soybeans back to China to meet its soybean demand (MercoPress 2017).

Securitisation

Food security continues to be one of China's important considerations for national security. The global food crisis of 2007–2008 strengthened China's determination to intervene in the food market through the state apparatus and to secure the food supply chain through SOEs (Morton 2012). Szamosszegi and Kyle (2011, 33–34) believe that China's national security policy is closely related to the development of state capitalism. Therefore, China needs to control "strategic industries" and support "pillar industries" to maintain internal national security, wherein food storage and transportation are considered industries of strategic importance. This calls for national SOEs to monopolise the market to maintain food distribution security. Food production and processing are considered pillar industries, which require local SOEs to control the market and maintain food production security. Szamosszegi and Kyle (2011, 87–90) also noted that China is implementing a "going-out strategy" through the external investment strategies of large SOEs and SWFs to obtain overseas agricultural resources and further secure the supply of important resources such as Latin American soybeans, corn, and beef (particularly those produced in Brazil and Argentina). Haley and Haley (2013, 10) found that the development of state capitalism in China is characterised by making good use of WTO norms, for instance, looking at the food industry to produce non-commodities of key importance to national security. Accordingly, China can circumvent the requirements for domestic market opening and trade liberalisation and thus support SOEs related to China's national security through the processes of centralization and concentration of capital for agri-food industries and rural development that tactically embrace financial loans, tax subsidies, trade protection, and other processes. As a result, more national and SOE interests are achieved and the relevant national security indicators are reinforced. Belesky and Lawrence (2019, 1122) argued that state capitalism and SOEs are indivisible in China's national security policy for ensuring China's food security. State capitalism is typified by a "proliferation of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and sovereign wealth funds (SWFs) and their increasingly powerful positions in global value chains for agri-food, feed, and biofuel" (Belesky and Lawrence 2019, 1120). The agri-food, feed, and biofuel sectors are closely related to the three factors of national security: socio-political stability, economic development, and domestic food security. Such sectors are considered strategic by the Chinese government, where specific SOEs are to be financially and diplomatically supported to maintain relevant core interests, ultimately allowing the Chinese government to protect China's overall agri-food industries and national food security through state capitalism and the role of SOEs.

Lin (2017a) further found that through state capitalism, China is protecting domestic food security and expanding Chinese agribusiness SOEs to secure China's global food supply chain. China's use of state capitalism to ensure its food security may include the four neo-mercantile tasks of SOEs: "scaling-down domestic market control, scaling-up international market investment, scaling-out social stability, and scaling-back nationalism" (Lin 2017a, 115). The rise of Sinograin represents the most typical case of securitisation. Sinograin is a national SOE established in accordance with the *State Council's Response to the Establishment of China Grain Reserves* issued in 2000. Sinograin is dedicated to serve China's grain reserve tasks; these reserves include rice, wheat, corn, and other grains, as well as soybean, rapeseed, palm, and other edible oils. After the establishment of Sinograin, all the local-level reserve organisations in China were incorporated as its subsidiaries, which transformed the emerging trend of China's food market liberalisation in the early 1990s into the monopoly of SOEs. Second, Chinese provincial governments are required to implement the policies of the Provincial Governor's Responsibility System (PGRS) to safeguard food availability and accessibility in its territory. Therefore, Chinese provincial governments must work closely with Sinograin to secure the quantity and quality of grains and edible oils in the province. Third, as the seeds of China's edible oils, including soybeans, rapeseed, and palm kernels, are heavily depend on imports since 2010, Sinograin has also strengthened the implementation of "going-out polices" by investing in foreign agricultural markets to secure a safer and more stable source of oil seeds. Moreover, Sinograin has begun to build its own crushing facilities to secure the production and reserves of Chinese edible oils. Thus, under the PGRS-based food security governance framework, the main governance actors are Sinograin and its provincial subsidiaries, alongside the State Administration of Grain (SAG) and its provincial branches. Each provincial subsidiary of Sinograin works closely with the provincial government to conduct the reserve management and control of grains for edible oils in storage and warehouses under provincial jurisdiction and assists the provincial government with interprovincial food production and flow agreements. When implementing interprovincial food contracts, the relevant provincial subsidiaries of Sinograin interact and co-operate with the corresponding provincial branches of SAG. This links food security to the promotion mechanism of local officials and SOE management staff and closely supervises the relevant heads for implementing food security policy. Therefore, China's current overall food availability, accessibility, and safety is relatively ensured, and Sinograin becomes an important supplier of edible oils in China, with its total assets growing by a factor of 70 within 20 years from its establishment. This progress eventually led to the realisation of neo-mercantile tasks on four scales—emphasised by state-capitalism—namely, domestic market control, international market investment, social stability, and economic nationalism, thereby ensuring China's food security and driving the rise of Sinograin.

Accumulation

Accumulation is a component of the corporate food regime, and it is a factor that promotes the rise of Chinese agribusiness SOEs. Hence, the global trend of capital accumulation in farming and agriculture will be addressed first before the description of the Chinese agribusiness SOEs.

First, the neo-liberal looking policies of the 1990s throughout the world and the global food crisis later in 2007–2008 led to accumulation through dispossession and national food security policies, which encouraged transnational farmland-grabbing and the planting of grains and oilseeds to supply food to the investor country, consequently forming a global wave of agricultural investment under neo-mercantilism. McMichael (2013b) studied recent land-grabbing cases and found that the farmland investment behaviour of agribusiness corporations has transformed into agro-security mercantilism, "by which certain states seek to guarantee access to food and biofuels via sponsoring the direct acquisition of lands offshore, and a proliferation of governance mechanisms to justify and enable a new phase of land investments" (McMichael 2013b, 48). Lin (2017c, 493) further discovered that two major considerations, namely, a concern for the development mode based on developmental state theory and that for the national anticipation of food insecurity, have led Asian countries to actively engage in transnational land-grabbing activities since the beginning of the 21st century. Second, taking China as an example, it has become the world's leading investor country for land grabbing and has been most interested in investing in the farmland of Southeast Asia and Latin America. On the one hand, China's investment in the farmland of Southeast Asia is intended for the planting of rice, corn, palm trees, rubber trees and promote aquaculture fishery; on the other hand, China invests in Latin America's farmland to obtain primarily soybeans, corn, and beef to meet domestic market demand in China.

Thomas (2013) and Zhan, Zhang, and He (2018) noted that in Southeast Asia, CAFTA makes agricultural resources the investment target of Chinese agribusiness SOEs. They further noted that by using agricultural co-operation deals—particularly, agricultural outbound direct investment (AODI)—the Chinese government encourages and helps Chinese agribusiness SOEs to invest in or acquire agriculture, forestry, and fishing enterprises in Southeast Asia to gain access to the region's fertile farmland and water resources. Meanwhile, the Chinese government sells the agricultural products back to China under the CAFTA to secure China's domestic food security, with typical cases including Jilin Jinhua investing in the Philippines, Sinochem International in Indonesia, and Yunnan Agricultural Reclamation Group and ZTE in Laos. These SOEs have received financial loan support from Chinese state-owned banks; the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs are tasked with ensuring China's domestic food security.

In Latin America, Borras Jr. et al. (2013, 167–168) studied Brazil's land-grabbing cases and noted that the state apparatus has become a tool of agricultural multinationals. The role of the state can be divided into the following five stages. In stage 1, the state intervenes in transnational farmland investment and justifies the investment's necessity. In stage 2, the state defines, classifies, and quantifies marginal land, empty land, and under-utilised land. In stage 3, the state identifies the locations and areas of such farmlands. In stage 4, the state acquires and occupies those farmlands, and in stage 5, the state redistributes the acquired and occupied farmlands to investors. In each stage, the state apparatus may demonstrate coercion to simplify the farmland investment process. The state's use of violent means can also highlight that ultimate land ownership is under state sovereignty and government authority. Therefore, when Chinese agribusiness SOEs acquire overseas farmland in Latin America, the required commercial environment, legal basis, financial support, and coerced expropriation are all achieved with the assistance of the state apparatus of Latin American countries, which ultimately leads to the business behaviour of accumulation through dispossession. The most obvious case is that of CGG, a provincial agribusiness SOE based in Chongqing and founded in 2008, which invested in Brazil for soybean planting (Chang 2011). In 2010, CGG announced that it would invest $500 million to launch soybean processing, storage, and port investment projects in Brazil’s north-eastern state of Bahia. This investment was realised through the Brazilian government’s implementation of the previously mentioned five-stage intervention steps, allowing CGG to obtain 200,000 hectares of soybean farmland where they are expected to grow 10 million tons of soybean annually to supply China’s market. Once these soybeans are shipped back to China, the production capacity of CGG’s crushing facilities in China will reach 1.5 million tons of cooking oil per year. In 2012 and 2013, CGG took a step further by obtaining soybean farmland in Argentina, with the total area reaching half a million hectares, thereby making CGG one of the top three soybean-oil producers in China within ten years of its establishment. Further, Ellis (2014, 40) also found that in addition to CGG, other provincial SOEs, particularly Beidahuang, a provincial agribusiness SOE based in Heilongjiang, also invested in farmland in Argentina and Brazil, with the obtained farmland in Argentina reaching 300,000 hectares.

These cases of investment involve the installation of irrigation systems, storage, and processing facilities to grow soybeans. COFCO-Nidera has become one of the top three food traders in Brazil and the leading food trader in Argentina. In addition, ChemChina-Syngenta's GM soybean seeds and related agrochemical technology account for more than 50% of the markets in Brazil and Argentina. Therefore, Giraudo (2020) argued that the previously mentioned land-grabbing activities of Chinese agribusiness SOEs would lead to a greater market share of COFCO and ChemChina in Latin America. Once COFCO and ChemChina have increased their influence and are equipped with better skills, they will attract more Chinese agribusiness corporations to Latin America to grab farmland and invest in agriculture, which in turn would make the region's development more dependent on China. Meanwhile, Chinese agribusiness SOEs will rapidly adopt accumulation by dispossession and become more influential in the corporate food regime.

In addition, to cope with the Sino-US trade war and look for more sources of soybeans, China began to plant more domestic soybeans and expanded the sources of their soybean imports in 2019. Regarding China's domestic market, China implemented the *Plan to Rejuvenate Soybean Farming* in May 2019 to increase China's soybean planting area by 10 million mu (0.7 million hectares) by the end of 2019. This will bring the total soybean planting area in China to 140 million mu (9.33 million hectares) in 2020 and 150 million mu (10 million hectares) by 2022, and will also increase China's soybean self-sufficiency rate by one percentage point in 2020 and 2022, respectively. Most of the increased soybean farmland in China is concentrated in the northeast and Inner Mongolia, where the farmland is managed by Beidahuang. Therefore, the soybean rejuvenation plan is expected to promote the state apparatus and support the rise of Beidahuang. Regarding China's overseas farmland, China stopped buying US soybeans in 2019 and is seeking alternative soybeans from other countries. In addition to expanding the purchase of Brazilian and Argentine soybeans, China has begun to purchase soybeans from Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, India, Canada, and Uruguay. Beidahuang in particular, has rented 100,000 hectares of farmland in the Russian Far East to plant and sell back to China the same soybean varieties that is being cultivated in north-eastern China. Ukraine plans to lease 3 million hectares of farmland to XPCC, a provincial agribusiness SOE based in Xinjiang, which will use the farmland to plant soybeans and corn as well as raise pigs; Kazakhstan plans to lease 1 million hectares of farmland to COFCO, which will plant soybeans and wheat. Although soybean imports from Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan accounted for only around 3.5% of China's soybean imports in 2019, in the long term, these land-grabbing processes will gradually turn the Russian Far East, Central Asia, and

Eastern Europe into China's granaries. Moreover, these processes will gradually promote the rise of a new batch of Chinese agribusiness SOEs (Zhou 2016), whose paths will be similar to that of COFCO, ChemChina, and CGG. Previously, these SOEs used Latin American agricultural resources and developments along with China's national food security policy to rationalise accumulation by dispossession and have successively become important members of the corporate food regime.

The Emergence of the SOEs Corporate Food Regime in the Global Soybean Commodity Chain

In the soybean commodity chains, China's state apparatus is driving the rapid rise of China's agribusiness SOEs through the previously mentioned driving forces of liberalisation, technologicalisation, securitisation, and accumulation, and by exerting influence in the contemporary corporate food regime. This gradually leads to the formation of an SOEs corporate food regime in the national and global soybean commodity chains and affects the development of food regime theory.

First, when it comes to the national soybean commodity chain, since the time of the ancient Chinese, soybeans have remained a staple food. Before the mid-20th century, China was the world's most important and largest soybean producer, accounting for nearly half of the world's soybean production. Simultaneously, because China's soybean farmland was mostly concentrated in the northeast, Japan—the colonial home country of north-eastern China in the early 20th century—earned a large amount of international trade profits through the commercialisation and globalisation of soybeans and soybean by-products. This led to the formation of Japan's first batch of large transnational agribusiness corporations, particularly Mitsui and Mitsubishi (trading companies), as well as Nisshin and Honen (oil companies) (Hiraga and Hisano 2017, 6). Accordingly, Japan has been one of the Asian food hegemons since the first food regime, resulting in the rise of Japanese agribusinesses that broadened overseas investments for soybeans (Horita 2020, 10). Recent findings further presented that not only Japan but also some other East Asian and ASEAN states have been rising in the current regional food regimes especially in the edamame industry (Wang, Kuan-chi 2018), vegetable trade networks (Wang 2020; Wang, Chi-mao 2018), and the meat production chain (Schneider 2017; Hansen 2018; Jakobsen and Hansen 2020), where agribusiness SOEs have played a significant role.

Back to soybeans, after WWII, soybean plantings in the US increased rapidly and the US replaced China as the world's largest soybean planting country, with the emergence of the US's earliest large transnational agribusiness corporations in the supply chain of soybeans, namely, ADM and Cargill. Since 1993, with the commercial planting and use of GM crops in the US, the US soybean supply chain has grown substantially. Meanwhile, as China prohibits the commercial planting of GM crops in China, China’s domestic non-GM soybean lost its competitiveness. For China’s soybean supply chain, the Chinese government can only use national policies and financial subsidies to support soybean planting in north-eastern China, besides helping Beidahuang operate local state-owned farms. In 2019, China’s domestic soybean production only accounted for around 4% of the total global soybean production.

However, since the 2010s, the pressure of an increasing demand for soybeans has forced the provincial government in north-eastern China to implement an agricultural “going-out strategy” (outside China) and a farmland transfer policy (inside China). When it comes to the “going-out strategy”, Beidahuang is the largest provincial agribusiness SOE in north-eastern China and thus it is supported by the government. Further, Beidahuang conducts overseas land-grabbing activities to plant soybeans in Latin America and the Russian Far East. Currently, Beidahuang and other Chinese agribusiness SOEs, particularly COFCO and CGG, have become major actors in the global land-grabbing wave. When it comes to domestic policy, China has implemented a farmland transfer policy, since the promulgation of *The 2013 No. 1 Central Document*, for scaling up China’s agricultural production and increasing grain yields. Under the farmland transfer policy, large agribusiness corporations, large agriculture-specialised households, agricultural co-operatives, and family farmers are considered important targets for government support that may be used to obtain a wider range of farmland for large food production. Such a move is aimed at replacing current small-scale farming that typically produces limited production (Gong and Zhang 2017). Accordingly, the provincial government of north-eastern China is tasked with assisting local governments in setting up farmland circulation centres or corporations to direct the flow of contracted land to large corporations and big households, such as Beidahuang and its subsidiaries. Consequently, China is encouraging investment capital to shift from urban to rural areas, guiding Chinese agriculture towards industrialisation accompanied by rural capitalisation and farmers' de-peasantisation. Yan and Chen (2015) noted that China's rural areas are experiencing a top-down agrarian capitalisation, which is replacing the traditional bottom-up rural development path of capital accumulation.

In addition, more than 90% of China's domestic and imported soybeans enter the crushing process, where they are made into soybean-oil and meal, the key sources of Chinese edible oils and animal feeds. Before the 2010s, most of China's crushing process was controlled by foreign MNCs. However, by 2018, six of the top ten soybean crushers in China were Chinese companies, including four Chinese SOEs, namely, COFCO, Jiusan, Bohi, and Sinograin. Chinese SOEs thus account for more than half of the total soybean crushing capacity (Bloomberg 2019). Therefore, China is self-sufficient in domestic soybean-oil and some of it is even exported. Consequently, "Chinese SOEs have since muscled into the soy-processing industry: today, Brazil, Argentina and China produce 54% and crush 61% of all soybeans in the world" (McMichael 2020, 127). In particular, the global top ten animal feed companies in 2016 included three Chinese companies (Reus and Roembke 2018). This strong market advantage not only benefits state capacity to safeguard China's pork industry domestically but also supports its "dragon head enterprises" development and marginalises the Global North corporations' market share in the pork commodity chain (Schneider 2017). In addition, before the 21st century, the Chinese government oversaw China's domestic purchases, storage, and distribution of soybeans and oils, with the SAG and provincial grain administrations as the departments with the chief responsibility. However, since the beginning of the 21st century, the Chinese government—through the establishment of Sinograin—has commissioned the implementation of the previously mentioned government duties to an SOE, thereby allowing Sinograin's current monopolisation of the storage and distribution of China's soybeans and oils.

Recommended Citation
Lin, Scott Y. (2021), “Restoring the State back to Food Regime Theory: China’s Agribusiness Investment in the Global Soybean Commodity Chain,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* (forthcoming).
https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjoc20/current

Second, regarding global soybean commodity chains, COFCO has been one of the world’s top five grain traders since 2015 and is one of the top three soybean traders in Latin America. ChemChina became one of the world’s top three transnational agrochemical and seed corporations in 2019 and a major supplier of GM soybean seeds and agrochemical technology in Latin America. These developmental trends are further illustrated in Figure 3, which indicates the gradual monopolisation of soybean planting by large Chinese agribusiness SOEs. The figure further indicates that most of China’s soybean crushing capacity is also controlled by Chinese agribusiness SOEs, even with the emergence of important producers in the global animal feed industry. On the contrary, the storage of soybeans and oils is monopolised by Sinograin, and the soybean import trade to China is controlled by COFCO, while the seed rights and planting techniques of soybeans are held by ChemChina, “thus bestowing Chinese food security governance with heavy tinges of [SOE] corporate-centric food security governance” (Lin 2017b, 680).

[Insert Figure 3 around here]

The rise of China’s agribusiness SOEs is also affecting global governance in environment and food. For example, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) is an environmental governance norm for maintaining global biodiversity and a food governance norm for the global regulation of GM crops. The UNCBD was opened for signing on June 5, 1992 and China signed it on June 11, becoming the first signing power and the fifth signatory. The UNCBD has held a Conference of Party (COP) every year from 1994 to 1998; from 2000 to the present, it holds the COP every two years. The subsequent COPs of the UNCBD have produced three norms, namely, the 2000 *Cartagena Protocol*[2] (by 1999 EXCOP 1), the 2010 *Nagoya Protocol*[3] (by 2010 COP 10), and the 2010 *Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety*[4] (by 2004 COP 7 and 2010 COP 10). Although China has ratified the first two norms, the third norm has not been ratified, primarily due to the need for maintaining the rights of its agribusiness corporations. Since 2011, China has supported its domestic seed companies and GM biotechnology in the hope of increasing the agricultural production resources owned by China, particularly aiming to obtain more patents on crop seeds and upgrade related biochemical technologies for planting to ensure China's food security.

---

[2] It was opened for signature on May 15, 2000, and China signed it on August 8, 2000.

[3] It was opened for signature on February 2, 2011. China did not sign it during the signing period, but joined in 2016 after the signing period.

[4] It was opened for signature on March 7, 2011. China has not signed it, nor has it joined the norm.

However, the *Supplementary Protocol* will constrain China in the acquisition of overseas seed improvement technologies and the development of agribusiness corporations, and thus the Chinese government has withheld its signature to date. Thus, signing the *Supplementary Protocol* will require the users of GM biotechnology to bear the ecological risks of planting GM crops in other countries. Without the constraints of the *Supplementary Protocol*, ChemChina and COFCO can commercially plant GM soybeans in Latin America without being required to bear any responsibility. Meanwhile, China's recent proposed *Biosecurity Law* and revised *Wildlife Protection Law*, responding to the spread of COVID-19 in 2020 due to the misuse of biotechnology, will require the Chinese agribusiness corporations to take a more cautious approach to the GM biotechnology development (Wang and Jiang 2020). This may affect China's food security and deserves future attention.

Since the US has not signed the *Supplementary Protocol*, China's ChemChina-Syngenta can work closely with US agrochemical giants, particularly Dow-Dupont and Bayer-Monsanto to promote the legitimacy of GM soybeans. Bratspies (2017) noted that the previously mentioned six companies have become "Big Six" agro-biotech companies that have resulted in three mega-mergers through consolidation. These companies are gradually controlling the GM seed industry and setting the prices, R&D, planting techniques, seed options, and market information of GM soybeans monopolised by the "Big Six". This ultimately benefits Chinese and American manufacturers but undermines farmers' incomes, consumers' food safety rights, and the conservation of biodiversity. Oliveira and Schneider (2016) also found that these Chinese agribusiness SOEs, particularly ChemChina and COFCO, co-operate with traditional Global North soybean agribusinesses to promote the use of GM soybeans in the Global South and also closely co-operate with the Brazilian government and the local agribusiness corporations to form the "United Soybean Republic" across Latin America's Global South states. This new entity supports the rise of China's agribusiness SOEs in the global soybean commodity chain, forming the trajectory of global agro-industrial restructuring. Zhang (2019, 144) referred to this trajectory as South-South Cooperation, as China has not yet permitted the commercial planting of GM organisms (GMOs), and China is not bound by the *Supplementary Protocol*, which allows the ChemChina-owned GM seeds and technologies to be generously shared with the Global South states. Thus, "China aims to transfer agro-technologies to less-developed countries to help them increase their grain outputs because increased world output will indirectly enhance China's food security. Hence, China's embrace of GMOs could have substantial spill-over effects across other countries" (Zhang 2019, 144). Simultaneously, the rise of

China's agribusiness SOEs and the formation of South-South Cooperation ultimately led to the world's leading food security governance agency—the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)—being led for the first time by a Chinese director-general, Dongyu Qu of China in June 2019. He received a total of 108 votes out of 191 and succeeded Brazil's José Graziano da Silva. Qu is an expert biochemical technologist who served as vice-minister of China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs since 2015, where he oversaw China's agribusiness co-operation with the Global South and China's main trading partners of produce. One could expect the FAO led by Qu will help Chinese agribusiness SOEs continue to expand their influence in global food commodity chains.

However, these emerging Chinese agribusiness SOEs in the global soybean commodity chain are also forming a different component of the corporate food regime that cannot easily be explained by food regime theory. Contemporary food regime theory generally assumes that large agribusiness corporations are private agribusiness corporations (Bernstein 2016, 626) and that private corporations are only driven by pursuing the highest profit. Given these assumptions, the food regime theory believes that agribusiness corporations will exploit farmers, which will lead to food sovereignty movements in the corporate food regime, and that the dialogue partner of La Via

Campesina—a promoter of food sovereignty movements—will be private agribusiness corporations (Bernstein 2014, 1035; Agarwal 2014, 1260). However, from the merger cases of ChemChina-Syngenta, Bratspies (2017, 597) found that instead of focusing on antitrust investigations to protect consumers' rights, every committee on foreign investment of the US, the European Union, Australia, and some other countries in 2016 was most concerned with ChemChina's SOE background when reviewing the merger cases. Thus, the rapid growth of agribusiness SOEs in global food commodity chains is highly correlated with securitisation. Its growth is mainly intended to ensure the food security of the home country of the SOEs, rather than resulting from a consideration of commercial profit and market dominance[5]. Second, the driving force for SOEs to follow the corporate food regime and compete for technologicalisation is primarily the consideration of neo-mercantilism, rather than the use of biotechnology, to control agricultural production and exploit farmers for profit. Zhang (2019, 97) studied the cases of ChemChina and Yuan Longping High-Tech Agriculture Co. and found that since the

[5] However, recent findings indicate factors of security and technology have expanded discussions of food regime theory to consider farming data security and data sovereignty, as well as the digitalisation of agriculture that helps agribusinesses of China and other countries to gain access to long-term agricultural financing, and the digitisation of global supply chains (Praus, Hackfort, and Lindgren 2020; Klerkx and Rose 2020).

release of *The 2016 No. 1 Central Document,* the Chinese government has been striving to acquire the seed ownership of GM soybeans, rice, and cotton, and to develop GM biotechnology through the technicalisation of agribusiness SOEs. Such a move aims to increase China's domestic and overseas food production to alleviate the problem of insufficient food supply in China. Third, liberalisation does help China's target to obtain cheap overseas soybeans and China's agribusiness SOEs to grow through international trade. Since China is now the largest agricultural importer and second-largest economy of the world, it is also the largest soybean trader and importer, consuming more than 60% of globally traded soybeans since 2012. By taking advantage of its domestic market needs and through a variety of special state subsidies, trade promotion measures, and loans at low state-prescribed interest rates, the Chinese government always promotes and protects its primary import-export SOEs in order to secure its access to offshore natural resources (Shambaugh 2013, 160). In the agricultural sector, Zhang (2019) found that China's global investment in agricultural production is related to changes in its domestic agricultural structure. The goal of this investment is not for investment-profits but "to get more secure channels of overseas food supplies and gain global power in the global agricultural commodity trade" (Zhang 2019, 756). This state-supported agricultural trade further drives Chinese agribusiness SOEs to grow as larger buyers in the global commodity value chain. Consequently, liberalisation in the state-support international trade and investment makes China's agriculture and food market evolve from a food self-sufficiency status to a food self-supporting status that privileges the rise of the Chinese agribusiness SOEs (Lin 2015). For example, COFCO International, a subsidiary of COFCO, lost money every year but could still expand its investment in 2019 in soybean commodity chains of Brazil, Argentina, and Russia. These observations further confirm that the operation mode of agribusiness SOEs is different from that of private agribusinesses, with the former emphasising food security of the home country. In addition, China's agribusiness SOEs have joined transnational land-grabbing activities through accumulation, which is intended to maintain food security rather than exploit foreign farmers and neo-colonialism. Bräutigam and Zhang (2013) confirmed from an African survey that the operating mode of China's agribusiness SOEs in Africa is different from that of Global North agribusiness corporations; the former does not take profit earnings as the most important objective, but is rather committed to eventually promoting the planting and consumption of rice in Africa. Once rice is promoted successfully in Africa, African countries can rid themselves of hunger and the rice can be sold back to China to solve China's food security problems indirectly. Therefore, compared with Global North MNCs facing frequent protests in Africa, Chinese agribusinesses rarely experience such protests, indicating that the label of neo-colonialism does not apply to Chinese agribusiness SOEs. Finally, a recent study by Lin (2017b) also found that because SOEs represent the Chinese government's position, the food sovereignty movement in China does not confront China's agribusiness SOEs. Rather, it is more intended to assist the government in fulfilling the task of food security governance, with a focus on educating farmers on planting methods in ecological agriculture and educating consumers on food safety. This is quite different from the radical social protests in the global food sovereignty movements and La Via Campesina. The relationship between SOEs corporate food regime and food regime theory is further illustrated in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1 around here]

Conclusion

Based on evidence relevant to soybean commodity chains, this study shows that China's state apparatus emphasises China's domestic needs for food and therefore develops in the corporate food regime, especially by establishing agricultural free trade projects, biotechnology projects, soybean commodity-chain nationalisation projects, and transnational land-grabbing investments. Such projects are centred on the goal of ensuring China's domestic food security by using liberalisation, technologicalisation, securitisation, and accumulation, the four key components of the regime. Consequently, China's agribusiness SOEs are being supported to rise in the contemporary corporate food regime, forming the SOEs corporate food regime that is unique to the global soybean commodity chain. As soybeans have been a major crop in food regime analysis due to its multiple uses contributing to flexing functions in food, feed, and fuel (Oliveira and Schneider 2016; Borras Jr. et al. 2016), other agri-food production chains, such as oil palm, maize, meat, and vegetable, are emerging in recent food regime studies, in which the state and SOEs continue to promote their role in contemporary food regimes (Pietilainen and Otero 2019; Jakobsen 2020; Schneider 2017; Hansen 2018; Jakobsen and Hansen 2020; Wang 2020). These findings enhance the explanatory ability of food regime theory for the state and SOEs.

However, since the rise of China's agribusiness SOEs is a recent phenomenon, an issue that was not addressed in this study but is worthy of future exploration, is that the components of food sovereignty movements may undergo changes under the SOEs corporate food regime. The main dialogue partner and protest target of La Via Campesina in promoting global food sovereignty movements are Global North agribusiness corporations, under the corporate food regime. These corporations are private enterprises that consider commercial profits and market dominance to be the most important factors. Therefore, food sovereignty movements are seldom suppressed by the government and even the Central American governments support the local food sovereignty movement (Edelman 2014, 964). However, the main actors under the recent SOEs corporate food regime are Chinese SOEs and the Chinese government, which places most emphasis on China's food security. Therefore, when the dialogue partner of La Via Campesina changes to the government and SOEs, food sovereignty movements may easily come into conflict with the diplomatic and strategic interests of a country, which in turn would result in more frequent governmental suppression of these movements[6]. Therefore, how food sovereignty movements would continue and vary between the contemporary corporate food regime and the developing SOEs corporate food regime has not been addressed in this study and remains a research focus of food regime theory.

[6] Recent studies (Oliveira 2018; Giraudo 2020; McKay, Oliveira, and Liu 2020; Lu 2020; Böhme 2020; Peine 2020) have discovered that transnational farmland investments (or land-grabbing) triggered by China on other countries, such as South American countries, Laos, and Australia, have caused some diplomatic, political, social, and environmental concerns in the food regimes, which, however, seldom refer to food sovereignty movements, except Oliveira, McKay, and Liu (2020) that nevertheless made no mention of SOEs.

Recommended Citation
Lin, Scott Y. (2021), "Restoring the State back to Food Regime Theory: China's Agribusiness Investment in the Global Soybean Commodity Chain," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* (forthcoming).
https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjoc20/current

References

Agarwal, B. 2014. "Food Sovereignty, Food Security and Democratic Choice: Critical Contradictions, Difficult Conciliations." *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41 (6): 1247–1268.

Baraibar Norberg, M. 2020. *The Political Economy of Agrarian Change in Latin America: Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Belesky, P., and G. Lawrence. 2019. "Chinese State Capitalism and Neomercantilism in the Contemporary Food Regime: Contradictions, Continuity and Change." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 46 (6): 1119–1141.

Bernstein, H. 2010. *Class Dynamics of Agrarian Change*. Sterling, Virginia: Kumarian Press.

Bernstein, H. 2014. "Food Sovereignty via the 'Peasant Way': A Sceptical View." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 41 (6): 1031–1063.

Bernstein, H. 2016. "Agrarian Political Economy and Modern World Capitalism: The Contributions of Food Regime Analysis." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 43 (3): 611–647.

Bloomberg. 2019. "China Plans Overhaul of State Agriculture Giants." *Bloomberg News* (May 7). https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-05-07/china-is-said-to-plan-overhaul-of-state-agriculture-giants. (Accessed December 8, 2019).

Borras Jr., S. M., J. C. Franco, and C. Wang. 2013. "The Challenge of Global Governance of Land Grabbing: Changing International Agricultural Context and Competing Political Views and Strategies." *Globalization* 10 (1): 161–179.

Borras Jr., S. M., J. C. Franco, S. R. Isakson, L. Levidow, and P. Vervest. 2016. "The Rise of Flex Crops and Commodities: Implications for Research." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 43 (1): 93–115.

Böhme, M. 2020. "Shared Interest or Strategic Threat? A Critical Investigation of Political Debates and Regulatory Responses to Chinese Agricultural Investment in Australia." *Globalizations*, advance online publication. Available from https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2020.1769414. [Accessed August 2, 2020].

Bratspies, R. M. 2017. "Owning All the Seeds: Consolidation and Control in AG-Biotech." *Environmental Law* 47: 583–608.

Bräutigam, D., and H. Zhang. 2013. "Green Dreams: Myth and Reality in China's Agricultural Investment in Africa." *Third World Quarterly* 34 (9): 1676–1696.

Chang, B. 2011. "CGG is Setting up a Soybean Base in Brazil." *China Daily* (November 24), http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2011-11/24/content_14154127.htm. (Accessed December 29, 2019).

Cheng, G. 2013. *Quanqiu Nongye Zhanlue: Jiyu Quanqiu Shiye de Zhongguo Liangshi Anquan Kuangjia* [Global Agricultural Strategies: China's Food Security Framework from a Global Perspective, 全球農業戰略：基於全球視野的中國糧食安全框架]. Beijing: China Development Press.

Cheng, G., and H. Zhang. 2014. "China's Global Agricultural Strategy: An Open System to Safeguard the Country's Food Security." *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies Working Paper*, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/WP282.pdf. (Accessed December 2, 2019).

China Economic Net. 2019. "Chinese Grain Majorly from Chinese Seeds [zhongguoliang zhuyaoyong zhongguo zhongzi, 中國糧主要用中國種子]" *XINHUANET* (April 12). http://www.xinhuanet.com/food/2019-04/12/c_1124356950.htm. (Accessed December 20, 2019).

Clapp, J. 2017. *Bigger Is Not Always Better: The Drivers and Implications of the Recent Agribusiness Megamergers*. Waterloo, ON, Canada: Global Food Politics Group, University of Waterloo.

Clapp, J. 2018. "Mega-Mergers on the Menu: Corporate Concentration and the Politics of Sustainability in the Global Food System." *Global Environmental Politics* 18 (2): 12–33.

Cotula, L. 2012. "The International Political Economy of the Global Land Rush: A Critical Appraisal of Trends, Scale, Geography and Drivers." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 39 (3-4): 649–680.

Daily Oil. 2018. "Sinograin, ADM, and other 4 Companies Signing Soybean Purchase Agreements [zhongchuliang yu ADM deng liujia gongyingshang qianding dadou caigou xieyi, 中儲糧與 ADM 等六家供應商簽訂大豆採購協議]," *Kuai Bao* (November 8). http://kuaibao.qq.com/s/20181108A0F1DS00?refer=spider. (Accessed December 13, 2019).

Edelman, M. 2014. "Food Sovereignty: Forgotten Genealogies and Future Regulatory Challenges." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 41 (6): 959–978.

Ellis, R. E. 2014. *China on the Ground in Latin America: Challenges for the Chinese and Impacts on the Region*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

FAOSTAT. 2020. *FAOSTAT: Data*. http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data. (Accessed July 13, 2020).

Freitas, T. 2018. "China Food Giant Expands in Brazil." *Bloomberg* (May 10). https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-05-09/china-food-giant-is-said-to-expand-in-brazil-amid-u-s-tensions. (Accessed December 28, 2019).

Friedmann, H. 1987. "The Family Farm and the International Food Regimes." In *Peasants and Peasant Societies*, edited by T. Shanin, 247–258. New York, NY: Basil Blackwell.

Friedmann, H. 2005. "From Colonialism to Green Capitalism: Social Movements and Emergence of Food Regimes." In *New Directions in the Sociology of Global Development*, edited by F. H. Buttel and P. McMichael, 227–264. Bingley, United Kingdom: Emerald Publishing.

Friedmann, H, and P. McMichael. 1989. "Agriculture and the State System: The Rise and Decline of National Agricultures, 1870 to the Present." *Sociologia Ruralis* 29 (2): 93–114.

Gil, J. M., and A. Aguilera. 2017. "China and Latin America: Strategic Partners or Competitors?" *Revista EAN* 82: 73–90.

Giraudo, M. E. 2020. "Dependent Development in South America: China and the Soybean Nexus." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 20 (1): 60–78.

Goldsmith, P., B. Li, J. Fruin, and R. Hirsch. 2004. "Global Shifts in Agro-Industrial Capital and the Case of Soybean Crushing: Implications for Managers and Policy." *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review* 7 (2): 87–115.

Gong, W., and Q. F. Zhang. 2017. "Betting on the Big: State-brokered Land Transfers, Large-scale Agricultural Producers, and Policy Implementation." *The China Journal* 77: 1–26.

Haley, U. C.V., and G. T. Haley. 2013. *Subsidies to Chinese Industry: State Capitalism, Business Strategy, and Trade Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hansen, A. 2018. "Meat Consumption and Capitalist Development: The Meatification of Food Provision and Practice in Vietnam." *Geoforum* 93: 57–68.

Hiraga, M. 2018. "Financialization in Japanese Agri-Food Regimes: Uncovering the Role of Sogo-Shosha in Global Soy Investment." In *The Financialization of Agri-Food Systems: Contested Transformations*, edited by H. Bjorkhaug, A. Magnan, and G. Lawrence, 156–175. New York: Routledge.

Hiraga, M., and S. Hisano. 2017. "The First Food Regime in Asian Context? Japan's Capitalist Development and the Making of Soybean as Global Commodity in the 1890s-1930s." *AGST Working Paper Series No. 2017-03*. Kyoto: Asian Platform for Global Sustainability & Transcultural Studies. https://agst.jgp.kyoto-u.ac.jp/workingpaper/1240. (Accessed September 5, 2020).

Hoering, U., and N. Sausmikat. 2011. *Agriculture in China: Between Self-Sufficiency and Global Integration*. Essen, Germany: Asienstiftung/German Asia Foundation.

Hofman, I., and P. Ho. 2012. "China's 'Developmental Outsourcing': A Critical Examination of Chinese Global 'Land Grabs' Discourse." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 39 (1): 1–48.

Horita, A. 2020. "Japanese Agriculture and Capital Expansion: The Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Global Food Value Chain Strategy." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, advance online publication. Available from https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2020.1788120. [Accessed August 1, 2020].

IFENG. 2010. "The US Companies Dominating China's 70% Seed Market [meiguo qiye longduan zhongguo 70% zhongzi shichang, 美國企業龍斷中國 70%種子市場]" *XINHUANET* (July 11). http://finance.ifeng.com/news/industry/20100711/2395307.shtml. (Accessed December 20, 2019).

Jakobsen, J. 2020. "The Maize Frontier in Rural South India: Exploring the Everyday Dynamics of the Contemporary Food Regime." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 20 (1): 137–162.

Jakobsen, J., and A. Hansen. 2020. "Geographies of Meatification: An Emerging Asian Meat Complex." *Globalizations* 17 (1): 93–109.

Klerkx, L., and D. Rose. 2020. "Dealing with the Game-changing Technologies of Agriculture 4.0: How Do We Manage Diversity and Responsibility in Food System Transition Pathways?" *Global Food Security* 24 (100347): 1–7.

Kong, Q. 2012. “China’s Uncharted FTA Strategy.” *Journal of World Trade* 46 (5): 1191–1206.

Larmer, B. 2019. “What Soybean Politics Tell Us About Argentina and China.” *The New York Times Magazine* (January 30). https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/30/magazine/what-soybean-politics-tell-us-about-argentina-and-china.html?_ga=2.70236368.1779254590.1565147214-1830708253.1528170701. (Accessed January 13, 2020).

Lin, S. Y. 2015. “From Self-Sufficiency to Self-Supporting: China’s Food Security under Overseas Farmland Investment and International Norms.” *Issues and Studies* 51 (3): 89–129.

Lin, S. Y. 2017a. “State Capitalism and Chinese Food Security Governance,” *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 18 (1): 106–138.

Lin, S. Y. 2017b. “The Evolution of Food Security Governance and Food Sovereignty Movement in China: An Analysis from the World Society Theory.” *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 30 (5): 667–695.

Lin, S. Y. 2017c. “An Asian Way to Safeguard Food Security—Transnational Farmland Investment.” *Asian Perspective* 41 (3): 481–518.

Lu, J. 2020. “Grounding Chinese Investment: Encounters between Chinese Capital and Local Land Politics in Laos.” *Globalizations*, advance online publication. Available from https://doi.org/ 10.1080/14747731.2020.1796159. [Accessed December 28, 2020].

McKay, B. M., G. de L.T. Oliveira, and J. Liu. 2020. “Authoritarianism, Populism, Nationalism and Resistance in the Agrarian South.” *Canadian Journal of Development Studies / Revue canadienne d'études du développement*, 41 (3): 347–362.

McMichael, P. 2005. “Global Development and the Corporate Food Regime.” In *New Directions in the Sociology of Global Development*, edited by F. H. Buttel and P. McMichael, 265–299. Bingley, United Kingdom: Emerald Publishing.

McMichael, P. 2009. “A Food Regime Genealogy.” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 36 (1): 139–169.

McMichael, P. 2012. “The Land Grab and Corporate Food Regime Restructuring.” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 39 (3–4): 681–701.

McMichael, P. 2013a. *Food Regimes and Agrarian Questions*. Halifax, NS, Canada: Fernwood.

McMichael, P. 2013b. "Land Grabbing as Security Mercantilism in International Relations." *Globalization* 10 (1): 47–64.

McMichael, P. 2016. "Commentary: Food Regime for Thought." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 43 (3): 648–670.

McMichael, P. 2020. "Does China's 'Going Out' Strategy Prefigure a New Food Regime?" *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 47 (1): 116–154.

MercoPress. 2017. "Nidera Seeds, Which Operates Mostly in Latin America, Sold to Syngenta." *MercoPress-South Atlantic News Agency* (November 8). http://en.mercopress.com/2017/11/08/nidera-seeds-which-operates-mostly-in-latin-america-sold-to-syngenta. (Accessed November 21, 2019).

Morton, K. 2012. "Learning by Doing: China's Role in the Global Governance of Food Security." *Indiana University Research Center for Chinese Politics & Business Working Paper* 30. (September 1).

Oliveira, G. de L. T. 2018. "Chinese Land Grabs in Brazil? Sinophobia and Foreign Investments in Brazilian Soybean Agribusiness." *Globalizations*, 15 (1): 114–133.

Oliveira, G. de L. T., and M. Schneider. 2016. "The Politics of Flexing Soybeans: China, Brazil and Global Agro-industrial Restructuring." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 43 (1): 167–194.

Oliveira, G. de L.T., B. M. McKay, and J. Liu. 2020. "Beyond Land Grabs: New Insights on Land Struggles and Global Agrarian Change." *Globalizations*, advance online publication. Available from https://doi.org/ 10.1080/14747731.2020.1843842. [Accessed December 31, 2020].

Otero, G. 2012. "The Neoliberal Food Regime in Latin America: State, Agribusiness, Transnational Corporations and Biotechnology." *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 33 (3): 282–294.

Patiño, J. P. 2018. "Chinese COFCO Surpasses US Companies as Largest Grain Exporter from Argentina." *eFarmNewsAR* (Aug 6). https://efarmnewsar.com/2018-08-06/chinese-cofco-surpasess-us-companies-as-largest-grain-exporter-from-argentina.html. (Accessed November 28, 2019).

Pechlaner, G., and G. Otero. 2008. "The Third Food Regime: Neoliberal Globalism and Agricultural Biotechnology in North America." *Sociologia Ruralis* 48 (4): 351–371.

Pechlaner, G., and G. Otero. 2010. "The Neoliberal Food Regime: Neoregulation and the New Division of Labor in North America." *Rural Sociology* 75 (2): 179-208.

Peine, E. K. 2020. "Chinese Investment in the Brazilian Soybean Sector: Navigating Relations of Private Governance." *Journal of Agrarian Change*, advance online publication. Available from https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12391 [Accessed December 28, 2020].

Pierre-Louis, K. 2019. "The Amazon, Siberia, Indonesia: A World of Fire." *The New York Times* (August 28). https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/28/climate/fire-amazon-africa-siberia-worldwide.html. (Accessed September 16, 2019).

Pietilainen, E. P., and G. Otero. 2019. "Power and Dispossession in the Neoliberal Food Regime: Oil Palm Expansion in Guatemala." *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 46 (6): 1142−1166.

Praus, L., S. Hackfort, and M. Lindgren. 2020. "Digitalization and the Third Food Regime." *Agriculture and Human Values*, advance online publication. Available from https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-020-10161-2 [Accessed December 11, 2020].

Pritchard, B., J. Dixon, E. Hull, and C. Choithani. 2016. "'Stepping back and Moving in': The Role of the State in the Contemporary Food Regime." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 43 (3): 693−710.

Reus, A., and J. Roembke. 2018. "Infographic: World's Top 10 Animal Feed Companies." *WATTAgNet* (April 11), https://www.wattagnet.com/articles/34083-infographic-worlds-top-10-animal-feed-companies?v=preview. (Accessed September 5, 2019).

Schneider, M. 2011. "Feeding China's Pigs: Implications for the Environment, China's Smallholder Farmers and Food Security." *Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy* (May 17). https://www.iatp.org/documents/feeding-china%E2%80%99s-pigs-implications-for-the-environment-china%E2%80%99s-smallholder-farmers-and-food. (Accessed December 8, 2019).

Schneider, M. 2017. "Dragon Head Enterprises and the State of Agribusiness in China." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 17 (1): 3−21.

Shambaugh, D. 2013. *China Goes Global: The Partial Power*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Szamosszegi, A., and C. Kyle. 2011. *An Analysis of State-owned Enterprises and State Capitalism in China*. N.P.: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Thomas, N. 2013. “Going out: China’s food security from Southeast Asia,” *The Pacific Review* 26 (5): 531–562.

Tso, C. 2019. “Business Groups, Institutions, and the China-Vietnam Rice Trade.” *Asian Survey* 59 (2): 360–381.

Wang, C., and Y. Jiang. 2020. “The Legal Proposals Shaping the Future of Wildlife in China.” *China Dialogue* (April 3). https://chinadialogue.net/en/nature/11940-the-legal-proposals-shaping-the-future-of-wildlife-in-china/. (Accessed June 5, 2020).

Wang, J., and X. Li. 2016. “COFCO Assumes Full Control of Grain Trader.” *Global Times* (August 25). http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1002599.shtml. (Accessed November 2, 2019).

Wang, C. 2018. “Assembling Lettuce Export Markets in East Asia: Agrarian Warriors, Climate Change and Kinship.” *Sociologia Ruralis* 58 (4): 909–927.

Wang, K. 2018. “East Asian Food Regimes: Agrarian Warriors, Edamame Beans, and Spatial Topologies of Food Regimes in East Asia.” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 45 (4): 739–756.

Wang, K. 2020. “Measuring the Reach of Asian Regional Food Regimes in the WTO Era.” *Geographical Review*, advance online publication. Available from https://doi.org/10.1080/00167428.2019.1702428. [Accessed December 25, 2020].

Yan, H., and Y. Chen. 2015. “Agrarian Capitalization without Capitalism? Capitalist Dynamics from Above and Below in China.” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 15 (3): 366–391.

Zeng, K. 2010. “Multilateral versus Bilateral and Regional Trade Liberalization: Explaining China’s Pursuit of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).” *Journal of Contemporary China* 19 (66): 635–652.

Zhan, S., H. Zhang, and D. He. 2018. “China’s Flexible Overseas Food Strategy: Food Trade and Agricultural Investment between Southeast Asia and China in 1990–2015.” *Globalization* 15 (5): 47–64.

Zhang, H. 2019. *Securing the 'Rice Bowl': China and Global Food Security*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

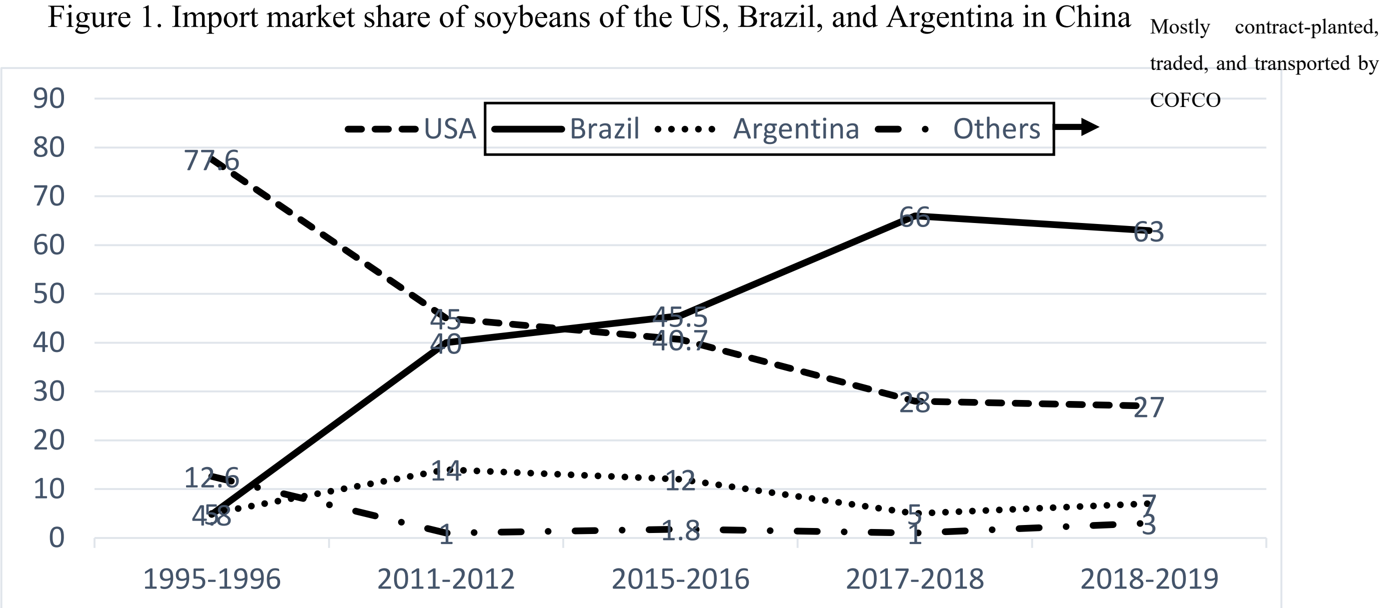
Zhang, J. 2019. "Beyond the 'Hidden Agricultural Revolution' and 'China's Overseas Land Investment': Main Trends in China's Agriculture and Food Sector." *Journal of Contemporary China* 28 (119): 746–762.

Zhou, J. 2016. "Chinese Agrarian Capitalism in the Russian Far East." *Third World Thematics* 1 (5): 612–632.

Recommended Citation
Lin, Scott Y. (2021), "Restoring the State back to Food Regime Theory: China's Agribusiness Investment in the Global Soybean Commodity Chain," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* (forthcoming).
https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjoc20/current

Figure Legends

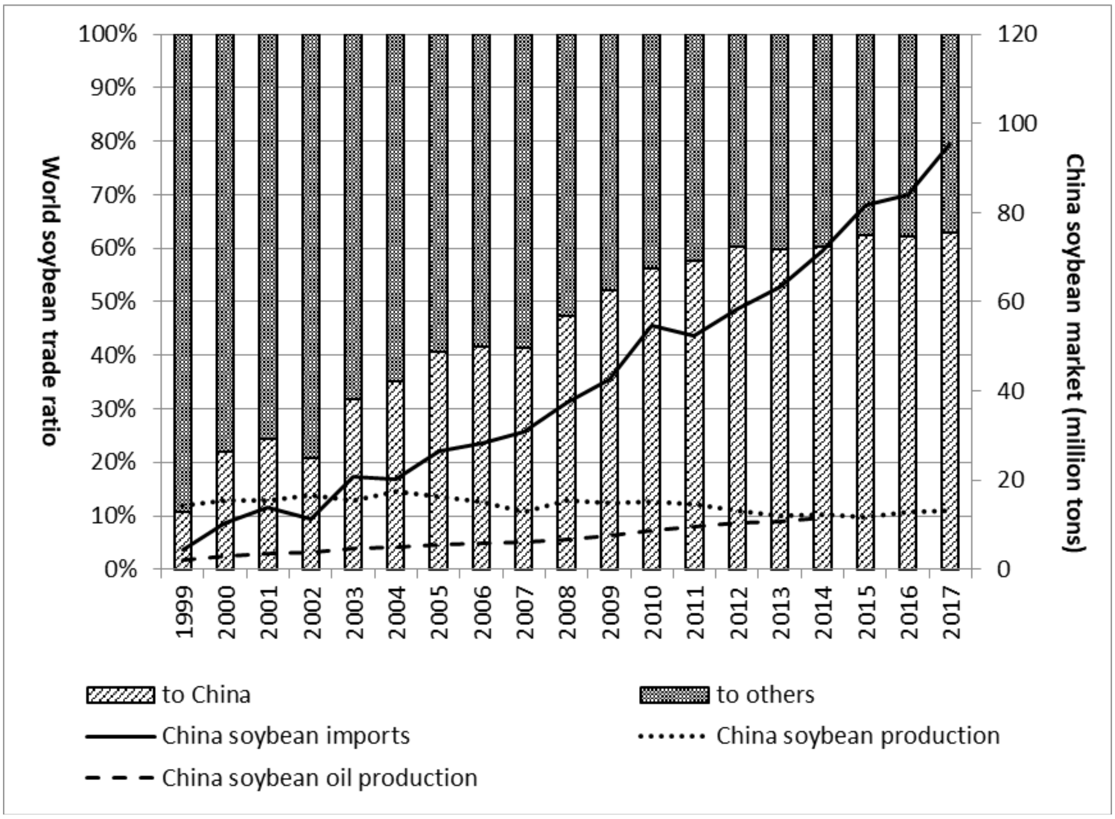
Figure 1. Import market share of soybeans of the US, Brazil, and Argentina in China



Sources: Collected from China's General Administration of Customs.

Recommended Citation
Lin, Scott Y. (2021), "Restoring the State back to Food Regime Theory: China's Agribusiness Investment in the Global Soybean Commodity Chain," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* (forthcoming).
https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjoc20/current

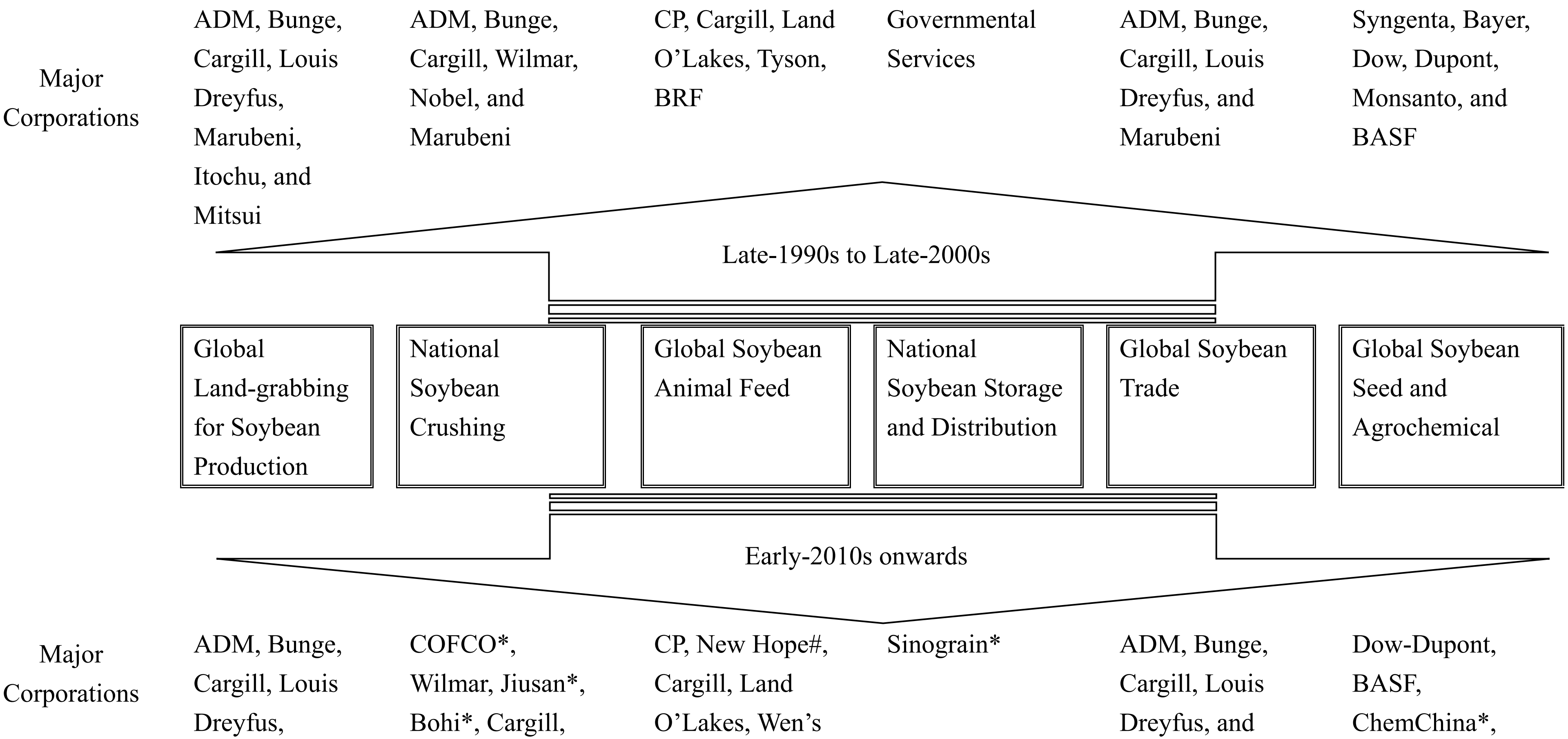
Figure 2. Chinese and the global soybean markets



Sources: FAOSTAT (2020).

Recommended Citation
Lin, Scott Y. (2021), "Restoring the State back to Food Regime Theory: China's Agribusiness Investment in the Global Soybean Commodity Chain," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* (forthcoming).
https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjoc20/current

Figure 3. China in the Global Soybean Commodity Chain



	COFCO*, Marubeni, Beidahuang*, and CGG*	Sinograin*, Bunge, Louis Dreyfus, Hopeful#, Zhonghai#	Food#, East Hope#, BRF, Tyson	COFCO*	Bayer-Monsanto

*Chinese agribusiness SOE; #Chinese agribusiness private firm

Sources: Collated by the Author.

Table 1. SOEs Corporate Food Regime in the Food Regime Theory

Food Regime Theory	The First Regime **British Food Regime**	The Second Regime **US Food Regime**	The Third Regime **Corporate Food Regime**	Global Soybean Commodity Chains in the Third Regime **SOEs Corporate Food Regime**
Time	1870-1914	1945-1973	Late 1980s-present	2010s-present
Actors	The UK and British colonies	The US, US-aided countries, and WTO	Large private agribusinesses, World Bank, WTO, and OECD	China, Chinese SOEs, large private agribusinesses, World Bank, and WTO
Driving force for development	Free trade in agriculture between the British mainland and the British colonies	Exports of cheap agricultural products from the US in its foreign aid	Liberalisation, technologicalisation, securitisation, and accumulation	Liberalisation, technologicalisation, securitisation, and accumulation
Development characteristics	UK-centred empire of agricultural free trade	US-centred food aid infrastructure and system	Global political and economic order centred on *agribusiness corporations* and *profits*	Global political and economic landscape of food centred on China's *national needs* and *food security*

Development model	Free trade development model	Foreign aid-based development model	Capitalisation of the agricultural and food production factors, and expansion of the markets and profits of corporations	The Chinese government addresses national food security needs and then helps SOEs to obtain capitalised agricultural and food production factors, thus establishing a development model that comprises agricultural free trade projects, biotechnology projects, soybean commodity-chain nationalisation projects, and transnational land-grabbing investments

Sources: Created by the author.

Recommended Citation

Lin, Scott Y. (2021), "Restoring the State back to Food Regime Theory: China's Agribusiness Investment in the Global Soybean Commodity Chain," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* (forthcoming). https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjoc20/current