

Food Sovereignty: The Case and the Space for Community Led Agricultural Autonomy within the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition

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Abstract

Much has been written about food security, nutrition security and the ability of people to access their food needs. Food sovereignty and the associated ability of people to participate in the production, distribution and consumption decisions of their food have been at the fringe of this discussion. Linked with this is the debate on the question of pursuing policies of food self-sufficiency or policies of self-reliance where food imports are considered a natural extension of food security. Examining the elements of food security through the food system participation framework of food sovereignty is an opportunity worthy of further exploration.

This paper seeks to add a dimension to the understanding of food security by considering the value that a food sovereignty perspective has on the right to access food that is nutritious and safe for consumption. Current themes are cited and reviewed, and the implications of both food security and food sovereignty perspectives for the food system are argued. Agricultural trade liberalisation has benefited some societies and harmed others. To this end, the Global Strategic Framework (the Framework) on Food Security and Nutrition has recently incorporated the philosophy of the food sovereignty movement into its guidelines. The Framework provides an opportunity to view food security through a lens of food sovereignty providing guidance for all societies on how to safeguard their food security.

Keywords: food sovereignty, food security, agriculture, political economy

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

Population growth, increased consumption of animal proteins, and the emergence of biofuels as an alternative use of grains and other agricultural products have been cited as reasons for the recent increase in food prices after a 150 year period of relative food price decline (Koning et al., 2008; Koning & Van Ittersum, 2009). The current situation of global food abundance will probably change during the life of the generation born today. By 2050, agriculture will need to produce at least 70 per cent more food, a volume that ignores the demands from biofuel production (Lobell et al., 2009; FAO, 2013). The growth in crop yields has almost halved since 1990 and is now growing at just 1 per cent (Funk & Brown, 2009; Bailey, 2011) and the loss of fertile soil for agricultural production is encouraging experimentation with alternative farming systems (Montgomery, 2007; Lal, 2013), yet investment in agricultural research and development continues to decline (Pinstrup-Andersen & Watson, 2011).

The first of the eight United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDG) was to *Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger*. The hunger target was to *halve, between 1990 and 2015, the number of people who suffer from hunger* (UN, 2014a). In essence, this goal was achieved, however, one in nine people in the world still suffer from chronic hunger (FAO, 2013; UN, 2016a).

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) replaced the MDG in 2015 with the aim to *end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all* (UN, 2016a). This new program takes the number of goals from eight to 17, splitting the original first goal of the MDG into two new goals, *No Poverty* and *Zero Hunger* with the third new

goal, *Good Health and Wellbeing* as a closely related theme. By 2030, the ambitious second goal aims to *end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round*. The UN has identified the steps required to reduce to zero, the remaining 795 million people who are undernourished in the world today (UN, 2016a).

Not only is malnourishment alarming, but so too is the greater number of people suffering from malnutrition. A threefold malnutrition crisis exists: overt hunger caused by insufficient calorie intake; *hidden hunger* caused by insufficient micronutrient intake; and obesity caused by excess calorie intake (Pinstrup-Andersen & Watson, 2011; Biesalski, 2013; UN, 2014b). Increasing dietary diversity reduces the incidence of a diet limited in nutritional variety and can mitigate shock should a specific food category be unavailable (Headey & Ecker, 2013). International programs are aimed at supporting *at risk* communities and have been successful to a point, achieving nutrition security through international trade.

1.2 Food Security

The concept of food security has emerged in the last 40 years – since the mid-1970s. In the context of on-going international food distribution problems during that period, the focus was on food supply (UN, 1975; FAO, 2002). In an effort to balance food supply *and* demand, the definition of food security was expanded. By the mid-1980s, a definition by the World Bank incorporated concepts of “*sufficient food for an active and healthy life*” (World Bank, 1986). Emerging from the 1996 World Food Summit (FAO, 1996), an acceptable definition remains as that stated in the Global Strategic Framework (the Framework) for Food Security and Nutrition (CFS, 2015):

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”

According to the Committee of Food Security (CFS) of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the UN, the authors of the Framework, “*the four pillars of food security are availability, access, utilisation and stability*”. Nutrition also plays a vital role within the CFS’s scope of food security (CFS, 2015). In brief, food security implies the rights of the individual at the household level to have access to food that is nutritional in content and is safe to eat.

1.3 Food Sovereignty

Most food in the world is grown, collected and harvested by more than a billion small-scale farmers, pastoralists and artisanal fishermen and women (UN, 2014a). The processing and consumption supply chains associated with this output is managed locally, providing support to domestic economies and nutrition societies, particularly in the developing world (Mulvany, 2005). It is these poor communities who are the most vulnerable to the vagaries of the weather and, over time, will be the most susceptible to the impacts of climate change (IPCC, 2014).

“The Peasants’ Way” known by its Spanish title, *La Via Campesina*, is a civil society organisation/non-government organisation (CSO/NGO) that promotes family-farm based sustainable agriculture run on the principles of agro-ecology. It coordinates the peasant organisations of small and middle farm-scale producers, agricultural workers, rural women and indigenous communities, 164 in total, across 79 countries, including those in North America and Western Europe (*La Via Campesina*, 2014). In parallel with the World Food Summit in 1996 when definitions of food security were being developed, *La Via Campesina* created a food sovereignty movement with some guiding principles.

Food sovereignty is a philosophy that puts people at the centre of food systems. Food sovereignty is not about the sovereignty of food, but rather is about the sovereignty of people and the values assigned to food (Hospes, 2014).

These people include farmers, food distributors and consumers seeking a right to participate and produce food on their own territory (NGO/CSO Forum for Food Sovereignty, 2007). The food sovereignty movement encourages greater participation in agricultural production by local rural populations; expanded access to healthy, ecologically produced food; the reduction of food imports by protecting local farmers from subsidised food or dumping through food aid; and gives recognition to a right for consumers to define their own food and agriculture systems. These food and agricultural systems support choices on what is eaten and how that food is produced, free from external influence (Windfuhr & Jonsen, 2005; Schanbacher, 2010; Rosset et al., 2011; Patel, 2012; *La Via Campesina*, 2014).

Where food *security* implies the rights of the individual at the household level to have *access* to food that is nutritional in content and is safe to eat, food *sovereignty* implies the rights of the individual to *participate* in the food production system and importantly, determine their own food future.

1.4 Progress towards Institutional Acceptance

The definition of the right to food is precise and has strong support among states with legally binding obligations. The concept of food sovereignty, however, does not enjoy the same recognition (Beuchelt & Virchow, 2012; Haugen, 2009; Schanbacher, 2010). Nevertheless, until recently, the food security policies supported by the international community have not completely resolved the problems of providing adequate access to food to those societies at risk (Robertson & Pinstrop-Andersen, 2010; Postolle & Bendjebbar, 2012). As established, this challenge is not a food production issue; this is about distribution, access and participation, making it both an economic and a political issue requiring an alternative approach. Recent initiatives by the FAO have given scope to incorporate the direction of the food sovereignty movement into a new global strategic framework (The Framework). This has increased the potential to achieve the outcomes of food security beyond the household level, to communities and nations where reliable access to food is at risk.

1.5 Paper Aim

The aim of this paper is to explore the case for the food sovereignty movement offering both an economic and a political perspective. This paper will also introduce the direction of the revised Framework and the food sovereignty movement's response, and highlight the political economy implications of the new Framework.

2. The Economics of Global Food Policies

2.1 Self-Sufficiency or Self-Reliance?

The first strategic decision concerning food security the government of a nation needs to consider is whether or not to pursue a policy of *self-sufficiency*, where all the food needed is grown domestically, or one of *self-reliance*, an auto-centric approach where the balance of food not produced domestically is imported. International policies will influence the domestic strategy of either food self-sufficiency or food self-reliance through trade. Bangladesh, for example, pursued a policy of food security through self-sufficiency until 1993, when a decision was made to import food when prices were cheaper than growing food domestically (Deb et al., 2009). Saudi Arabia has similarly switched to a policy of self-reliance (Khoury et al., 2011). As part of the Lagos Plan of Action, 1980 to 2000, which aimed to increase Africa's self-sufficiency, a number of African countries took steps to achieve food self-sufficiency as a way to reduce food aid dependence (Dupraz & Postolle, 2013; UN, 2014b), yet this has not always been successful (Luan et al., 2012). Cuba too has attempted to return to a self-sufficiency model (Altieri et al., 2012). The economics of global food supply and demand and a nation's ability to efficiently produce food will influence the choice of the appropriate policy.

2.2 Food Security as an Established Charter

Food security concerns sufficient *quantity*, with sufficient *nutrition*, provided in an environment where food is *safe* (WHO, 2013). These pillars take global food security beyond merely ensuring food provides a minimum amount of energy. The 2013 Global Food Security Conference emphasised the food security challenge under five topics: the availability to provide sufficient food in terms of quantity and quality; access to food for all people; nutritional security; the stability and environmental impact of food production systems; and finally, food losses and wastage (Dogliotti et al., 2014). The availability, accessibility, and nutritional value of food, coupled with care of the environment regarding how food is produced, are all core food sovereignty issues.

The fifth challenge of food losses and wastage offers opportunistic insight. Approximately one-third of the edible food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted along the supply chain, amounting to 1.3 billion tonnes annually. In wealthier countries, food is more often wasted at the household level. In poorer countries, food perishes on its journey along the supply chain (FAO, 2011). Where food enjoys a financial and cultural value, food losses and wastage will be minimised. Reducing this food waste offers an incredible opportunity to either increase the amount of food available, or reduce the stress placed on the agricultural environment to produce it.

2.3 The Move from Keynesian Economics to Trade Liberalisation Changes the Nature of Food Supply

The aims of the stated definitions for food security are noble, *food access for all*, yet the mechanisms to achieve it are at the heart of this discussion. From the time of the Great Depression of the 1930s to the early 1970s, Keynesian theory supported a regulated market with fixed exchanges in an effort to support price stability. More recently, the political economy of neoliberalism supports a theory that market mechanisms and a free flow of capital will more efficiently sustain human needs and wellbeing (Harvey, 2007).

The theory of comparative advantage suggests that if each country produced that which it does best, the combined world output would be increased. The alternative is that each country attempts to be self-sufficient by allocating resources to the production of *all* the goods it needs (Ricardo, 1996). Trade liberalisation is

deliberately designed to force a structural change in an economy, encouraging movement to industries and activities away from those that do not have a global comparative advantage. Thus, by specialising, overall world output increases, technological innovation intensifies, and prices drop as technologies are transferred, domestic monopolies are dismantled and choice is increased for consumers.

Following the Uruguay Round of Trade Talks from 1986 to 1994, in 1995 the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was established and with it, the internationally endorsed *Agreement on Agriculture* (AoA). The intention of the AoA is to reduce domestic state support for agriculture, improve market access to agricultural imports, and reduce subsidies provided for export. The WTO, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund support further trade liberalisation, a philosophy applied equally to industry and agriculture. In the past, these institutions have influenced the UN and the FAO to pursue programs of trade liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation in all markets to deliver efficient food security.

The AoA trade liberalising agenda provides the opportunity for countries to focus on those areas where they have a comparative advantage, be that in land availability for farming, labour force, or in physical and human capital. If, after the removal of tariffs and state assistance, the agricultural sector is not competitive globally, such policies will shift resources in farming to other activities in which the nation has a lower cost of production comparative advantage. The consumer enjoys lower cost imported food from another country that has a lower cost of production competitive advantage. In moving from farming to these other sectors and specialising the economy, the country shifts from food self-sufficiency to food self-reliance.

2.4 Trade Liberalisation Has Successfully Contributed to Global Food Supply

The OECD states that all countries that have had sustained growth and prosperity have opened their markets to trade and investment. Specifically, the advantages of free trade include: specialisation under comparative advantage principles, increased world output, increased competition, lower prices and higher quality (OECD, 2014). This has worked well for many countries; for example, countries in the Middle East are vulnerable to environmental conditions such as water scarcity and shortages of arable land (Khouri et al., 2011). In 2007, Saudi Arabia reduced its agricultural sector output and self-sufficiency in wheat, acknowledging that using water from prehistoric underground aquifers was an unsustainable practice. A plan was established to phase out wheat production by 2016 (Cotula et al., 2011). This plan was largely achieved, however the production of less than 10,000 tonnes is likely to continue in order to support traditional bakery (FAO, 2017). Because long-term self-sufficiency for food production in such nations is not a viable option, food security has been obtained through trade.

2.5 Trade Liberalisation Policy, Comparative Advantage and the Consequences of Specialisation

A problem arises when food prices no longer have a Keynesian-style mechanism to support price stability. When the change in domestic food purchasing options sees a shift to a mix of more internationally supplied food, consumers in poorer nations are at a disadvantage when world food prices increase and domestically grown food is no longer available. The citizen must pay the higher world prices. The OECD recognises that “*trade liberalisation may negatively affect some industries or some jobs*” and that “*many commentators worry about negative effects on the environment through intensive industrial farming techniques*” (OECD, 2014). The unintended consequence of well-meaning trade liberalising programs is that they have actually reduced domestic diversity through specialisation and concentrated the wealth of the world’s food economies in the hands of ever fewer multi-national corporations. Global markets in agriculture are intensely distorted to meet the interests of those nations that benefit from the free trade system (Hawkes & Plahe, 2013), an outcome that marginalises the world’s small-scale food producers, processors, local traders and consumers (Mulvany, 2005). The WTO’s AoA highlights a shift from a predominant concern for human rights to a focus on technical detail and process compliance. A focus on process has lost sight of the outcome – protection and fulfilment of the right to food (Hawkes & Plahe, 2013).

Countries with a significant share of their economic activity in the rural and agricultural sectors are particularly at risk of an impact to their industry and to loss of jobs through trade liberalisation. Where a country does not have a significant comparative advantage across any particular sector, it will be vulnerable to a global marketplace exposure. To surrender elements of a nation’s ability to feed itself in order to focus on other globally competitive activities risks exposure to an unexpected shock from the price increase of imported food.

Policies supporting competitive advantage may still be held as fitting for countries where the diversion of resources to other sectors of the economy supports intergenerational food security through trade. A shift to a self-reliance policy can be an appropriate reallocation of talent and resources when the opportunity exists to enhance a socio-economic outcome. However, a different approach is required if peasant-farming communities

are to be protected from international exploitation in countries where an alternative competitive advantage is limited.

2.6 Food Security through Trade Can Be an Illusion When a Trading Partner Collapses

Cuba provides an interesting case study where having an established food security arrangement was actually detrimental. Pre-1990, Cuba was aligned with the Soviet bloc. Although an agriculturally productive nation, Cuba specialised in the production of sugar and tobacco with significant export advantage to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but this trade ceased when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. With a US imposed trade embargo in place, Cuba had difficulty finding new trading partners for its two major comparative advantage products in exchange for food. The embargo ensured chemical fertiliser and fuel could not be imported. Having no significant domestic food agriculture, Cuba experienced a food shortage for four years (Franco et al., 2008). Known as the Special Period, Cuba embarked on a change of political administration and agricultural policy until it could establish a rural sector capable of feeding the nation (Funes et al., 2001). In the long run, Cuba's reliance on foreign food imports and its export of limited agricultural products turned out to be dangerously dependent on foreign trade, providing temporary *food security*, but not *food sovereignty* (Rosset et al., 2011).

2.7 Agricultural Subsidies Unfairly Manipulate Comparative Advantage

If the aim of food security is to ensure a basic access to food, exposing farmers in poorer nations to global competition puts them at an unfair disadvantage (McMichael, 2009). Industrial agriculture, with its cheap production possibilities, increases output, but often at an environmental, animal welfare and societal cost (Pollan, 2006; Clunies-Ross & Hildyard, 2009). Market and price distortion with subsidies for agricultural production from industrialised farming corporations in wealthy countries will give an appearance of comparative advantage when agricultural products appear cheaply on the world market. Wealthier industrial countries gain a benefit from other economic strengths, making it possible to transfer support through subsidies to agricultural production that enable them to lower costs and manipulate food markets. This is an opportunity not enjoyed by developing nations. While this is protested at international forums, such as at the WTO, it can take years for a resolution to be determined (Steger, 2009; Brewster, 2011), during which time economic structural pressures and poverty persist.

2.8 Maintaining a Capability Is a Good Insurance Policy

The endurance of long run complex systems survives on a trade-off between efficiency, resilience and productivity, which need not be satisfied by short-term market forces. Keeping an agricultural capability within an economy when it might not have a comparative advantage does not play to concepts of economic efficiency but it does provide a platform of resilience to a failure of trade. This can therefore be an argument to justify some protectionist measures. Utilising the ancient Roman principle *si vis pacem, para bellum* (if you want peace, prepare for war) (Flavius Vegetius Renatus 390BCE) military forces the world over will maintain capabilities which can be expanded at the time of crisis so that talent, expertise and techniques are not lost. This is despite the fact that it is not economically efficient to maintain military forces, and can be very expensive to maintain extreme capabilities within those forces.

The analogy of maintaining some capability in any endeavour and providing some state financial protection to it does provide a wise form of insurance in the case of a crisis. Scotland has debated the merits of such insurance, noting that farming provides a range of public goods for which market mechanisms do not always exist to reward the farmer sufficiently; for example, protecting the environment, sustaining communities in remote areas, and *maintaining a national food producing capacity* (Midgley & Renwick, 2012).

The FAO recognises the right to self-sufficiency for food production, insisting that food security must include food self-sufficiency in agrarian countries (Thomson & Metz, 1998; Boyer, 2010). The trade liberalisation and deregulation policies of the 1980s across the Central American republics, led by the United States, had an impact on reforms being undertaken for tenant farmers. In response, European governments established the Committee for Economic and Social Development in Central America (CESDCA) in order to balance the US neo-liberal economic policy approach. In Honduras, for example, in response to the Agricultural Modernisation Law, CESDCA offered a training program on food security for both government and peasant leaders, focussing on food self-sufficiency and grass-root participation in policy-making. The EESC (European Economic and Social Committee) continues to provide similar support to organised civil society across Latin America (Boyer, 2010; EESC, 2012).

2.9 Competing Interests for the Economic Return on Land

Food security has tended to focus more on the food component than on security. Food production therefore competes with other development proposals, trading food production for resource extraction for temporary monetary gain. To secure food, it must be given the highest priority over other land uses as soil is a non-substitutable resource. For example, in Laos, a poor and geographically isolated country, the security of food production is being bargained in exchange for exploitation of Laos' hydro-electric potential, its mineral deposits of gold, copper and coal, and its soil and climate for forestry products (Fullbrook, 2010). Similarly in Australia, the rich soils of the Liverpool Plains of eastern Australia also hold significant deposits of coal and gas, which compete with agriculture for land use, leading to political resistance (Miller & Roots, 2012). Food is as critical to national security as are mineral resources which are traded. Yet "food security will improve when food is recognised as security" (Fullbrook, 2010).

2.10 Measuring Something Other Than Economic Output to Define a Social Good

While policies to support comparative advantage may grow the world's economic output, measured nationally as either gross domestic product (GDP) or gross national product (GNP), it does not consider social equity, environmental impact, community needs or growing just enough to be sufficient. Other measures such as the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) broaden the conversation by including the depreciation of social capital as a cost. GPI includes 24 measures, among them income disparity, the ecological footprint, life satisfaction, and community safety. This approach balances purely economic measures of activity with broader long-term community welfare (Kubiszewski et al., 2013).

Some countries are questioning the policies of trade liberalisation by reframing what it is they measure. Thailand is moving to a *sufficiency economy*, whereby economic growth for its own sake is replaced with an economy that is sufficient enough but no more, to meet the needs of the Thai people (Noy, 2011; Bunnag, 2013). Bhutan has pursued a measure of Gross National Happiness since its eighth five-year plan in 1997 (Royal Government of Bhutan, 2014). While Bhutan remains less industrially advanced, and noting that many measures of well-being are difficult to quantify (Bates, 2009), the people of Bhutan do enjoy a sense of community, of belonging and of wellbeing (Brooks, 2013). This is the focus of the *Deep Economy* where human satisfaction and a restoration of local economies in close-knit communities take precedence over economic growth. Deep economy moves away from encouraging the comparative advantage of industrial agriculture to more community-based economies. It aims to reinvigorate community-centred farming, restore the environmental impacts of agriculture, and spread the risk of sabotage or disease outbreak by decentralising farming activity, thereby reducing agriculture's reliance on oil and water (Leopold, 1949; McKibben, 2007). Ideologically, this is some distance from the policies of trade liberalisation but more akin to those of the food sovereignty movement.

2.11 Networks and Resilience

Multilateral trading networks provide an element of resilience to agricultural failure in any part of the system as supply arrangements allow produce to be sourced from elsewhere. However, if the entire system finds itself under pressure, as would be the case from the impact of increased climate change, then the interconnectedness of the network is at risk. By specialising through comparative advantage principles, the entire network has produced more, but paradoxically, because it is so dependent on the network's success, any failure in the trading network will be catastrophic for those nations dependant on food from elsewhere. Complexity can lead to resilience of a network because of the nature of feedback systems within complex systems (Burdock & Crawford, 2012). However, interconnectivity means that any shock to the network will be felt throughout the system, particularly in a food trading system (Ingram, 2011). The FAO and the World Food Program (WFP) have created a global food security cluster in response to such a shock to create resilience in a food crisis (Maxwell & Parker, 2012). In 2015, the global food security cluster gave emergency assistance to 78.9 million people in Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, the Central African Republic, and Nepal (Global Food Security Cluster, 2016).

For some wealthy nation city-states such as Singapore or the cities of the United Arab Emirates, there is little choice but to pursue a policy of self-reliance. In these countries the population size is larger than the ability of the land within their national boundaries to provide for food. For others, diversification from an economy reliant on self-sufficient agriculture has been a choice. Paradoxically, South Korea, which in 1953 was listed by the UN as the world's poorest country is now the fifteenth largest economy, with a diversified industrial export oriented focus (Kim & Jaffe, 2010), yet its farmers are champions of the food sovereignty movement as the country continues to pursue a policy of food self-sufficiency (Beghin et al., 2003; WTO, 2012). More recently and to a lesser extent, Bangladesh is another example that has pursued a policy to expose its agricultural sector to rice imports. The wisdom of this policy has been tested with the advent of price volatility during 2007-08 (FAO,

2008). A self-reliance policy for diversified economies creates an inherent complexity capable of providing resilience across other non-agricultural economic shocks.

3. The Politics of Global Food Policies

3.1 *The Right to Food Is Different from Food Security and Food Sovereignty*

The UN's Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food differentiates the right to food from food security and food sovereignty, but does acknowledge some overlap. Food security is a *precondition* to the right to food, but is not a legal concept per se and does not impose obligations (de Schutter, 2012a). The right to food does place a legal obligation on States to overcome hunger and malnutrition and realise food security for all. It also extends trade related obligations on States, for example, to take the measures necessary for an equitable distribution of world food supplies. The Special Rapporteur recognises the importance of food sovereignty and agrarian reform. How States execute their obligations through free trade policy mechanisms by ensuring equitable distribution of world food supplies, risks alienating self-reliance in poorer nations (UN, 2010).

3.2 *Inequality of Food Access Needs to Be Addressed First*

Food insecurity is not generally a result of insufficient production or availability but is usually linked to the politics of inequality. The critical issue is not whether food is available but whether it can be accessed through exchange, monetary or otherwise, in an adequate quantity by the population (Allouche, 2011). In developing countries, citizens in the middle-income class spend around 35-65 per cent of their income on food, while the poor spend 50-80 per cent (UN, 2009). Examining these extremes, if a middle income family is paying 35 per cent of its household income on food, a food price increase of 10 per cent becomes a loss of 5.4 per cent [$((10 \times 35)/(100 - 35)) = 5.4\%$] of remaining non-food discretionary spend. This is relatively easily absorbed. If 80 per cent of an income is spent on food, the same price increase sees a loss of 40 per cent [$((10 \times 80)/(100 - 80)) = 40\%$] of remaining non-food discretionary spend which is not so easily absorbed.

A population's *access* to food will also be denied either through programs and policies of self-sufficiency where not enough food is produced domestically, for example, the People's Republic of China during the cultural revolution (Dikotter, 2010), or through policies of self-reliance where food imports are restricted, for example, Cuba when trading with the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s (Aponte-Garcia, 2009; Thornburg, 2013). Both restrictions lead to widespread suffering and political turmoil. In 2008, when export restrictions were imposed as a means of curbing domestic food price inflation in exporting countries, the FAO's world food price index rose by 50 per cent, causing a food crisis and subsequent civil unrest for those in the lower middle class and the poor in exposed countries (World Bank, 2008; Piesse & Thirtle, 2009; FAO, 2013). These countries included Ethiopia, Mozambique, Bangladesh, Yemen, Haiti, Egypt, Indonesia, Mexico, Morocco, the Philippines, Thailand and Uzbekistan (Trostle, 2008). At the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, further increases in food prices caused considerable anti-governmental protest in North Africa and the Middle East (Lagi et al., 2011). Higher food prices could not be absorbed by low-income families, which led to riots, civil unrest, and eventually to civil war in Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen. What was termed *The Arab Spring* in 2011 was initiated by an increase in food prices, which widened to protests of broader political dissatisfaction (Lagi et al., 2011; Sternberg, 2012; Sneyd et al., 2013).

3.3 *Food Security and International Conflict*

Trade can facilitate peace between nations and act as a deterrent to war (Kleinberg & Fordham, 2010; Kinne, 2012), particularly between two nations engaged in a committed bilateral trading relationship (Glick & Taylor, 2010). Regardless of the accepted expenses of going to war, the loss of the benefits of bilateral trade further exacerbates the cost. Research has found that countries engaged in global trade with multiple trading partners have a higher probability of war than a limited bilateral engagement. Risk is spread through multilateral trade openness. This decreases bilateral dependence to any given country and consequently reduces the fallout from particular a bilateral conflict (Martin et al., 2008).

Some observers have suggested that future international conflict will be fought over food and water (Shiva, 2002; Chellaney, 2013), however this is not supported by evidence. Instead, conflict is more likely to be local in nature as a result of the politics of domestic resource allocation and distribution. If food and water security is understood to be a political problem, then a political solution will be required to resolve it (Allan, 2004; Allouche, 2011).

3.4 *Purchases of Foreign Farming Land*

It is politically expedient for a government to ensure that its population remains fed to avoid the triggering of civil unrest mentioned above, yet there may be good reasons for not growing food domestically. These may

include the need to maintain a comparative advantage for industrial output capacity, a lack of arable land, land use being more profitable for other purposes than for growing food, population demographics, or challenging geography and climate. Agricultural value chains have tended to concentrate returns in processing and distribution, while the risks fall mainly on primary production, acting as a disincentive for investment in agriculture. This is now changing, as raw materials from primary production are experiencing price and yield volume fluctuations. While rising food prices put pressure on governments, they also make the agricultural industry an increasingly attractive investment option (Robertson & Pinstrup-Andersen, 2010; Cotula, 2011).

To secure food supplies, some nation states are safeguarding food security by going beyond reliance on trade exchanges to owning the land on which food is produced in foreign countries, giving a greater guarantee to the line of supply. This includes control over several aspects of the supply chain, including procurement of agri-businesses, and the development of transport networks and ports (Alden, 2013; Sippel, 2015). While agricultural infrastructure development requires further investment in developing countries (Pinstrup-Andersen & Shimokawa, 2007; Nally, 2015), this activity has generated neo-colonial claims that countries as diverse as China, South Korea, Kuwait and Sweden are obtaining their own food and energy security by buying agricultural land in poorer countries, notably in Africa, to grow biofuels and food for their own domestic consumption (Mackenzie, 2008). Moving from self-sufficiency to self-reliance by importing food from a vertically integrated sovereign-owned farm abroad could create geo-political tensions (Boland, 2000; Nally, 2015).

There is not only a right to food, but proponents of food sovereignty argued that there is also a right to the land on which food can be grown (de Schutter, 2011). Direct investment in agricultural land has encouraged debate on the impacts of these investments on the environment, rights of the host nation's citizens to have access to the food grown for export, rural livelihoods, infrastructure development, internal conflict for competing resources of food production, and food sovereignty (Cotula & Vermeulen, 2009; Cotula et al., 2011; Golay & Biglino, 2013).

Trade-oriented food security is silent on issues concerning the environment, social justice and equity, educational opportunity and national self-determination. The associated legal framework focuses on private property rights (including intellectual property rights) and support mechanisms to increase agricultural productivity through the application of science and technology (Lee, 2013). There may be a role to play for organisations responsible for food security such as the FAO to create mutually agreed international criteria by which investing nations must comply when investing in agriculture abroad, backed with effective monitoring and enforcement procedures.

3.5 Alternative Attempts to Participate in Food Security in Industrialised Societies

It is not just developing nations such as Scotland and South Korea that are resisting market force economics. In the US for example, low-income communities have pursued food sovereignty frameworks under a banner of community food security and food justice to support farmers' markets. These have connected low-income consumers with African-American farmers and migrant farmers from Latin America who use agro-ecological farming methods. While this attempts to engage the community with food production, such programs have been criticised as they work within a neoliberal political economy framework to sell their produce (Anderson, 2008; Alkon & Mares, 2012; Clendenning et al., 2016).

European farmers too have struggled to shift debate to community-oriented agriculture with failures in sustainable agriculture shifting the policy objective to sustainable rural development (Hilden et al., 2012). Even with state protection to support agrarian lifestyle choices, countries are under pressure to comply with neoliberal policies to reduce agricultural subsidies, specialise production and export surpluses. This leaves little opportunity for agricultural systems in Europe that do not employ high input, high output agricultural systems to co-exist (Potter & Tilzey, 2005).

4. The Revised Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (Framework)

4.1 International Institutional Recognition for Food Sovereignty

La Via Campesina's statement that food sovereignty is a *precondition* to genuine food security (La Via Campesina, 1996) goes further than the UN's recognition that food sovereignty is a concept that promotes an alternative model that *serves* people's rights to food. The right to adequate food is a legal concept, while food sovereignty should be understood as a political concept (Beuchelt & Virchow, 2012). Nevertheless, the food sovereignty movement is being accommodated to serve food security policy. Successive reports of the UN *Special Rapporteur on The Right to Food* have included *participation* in the food system as part of the solution to achieve food security. Food insecurity is not a case of there being insufficient food available, but rather it is an issue of resource allocation (Jackson, 1999; Ziegler, 2004; de Schutter, 2012a).

The International NGO/CSO Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Sovereignty is a global network of CSOs and social movements engaged with the subject of food sovereignty. Through the World Food Summit process in 2002, the FAO has recognised the IPC as the food sovereignty movement's principal global civil society interlocutor on the initiatives and themes emerging from the process (FAO, 2005) and has included the definition of food sovereignty in its *Glossary on Right to Food* (FAO, 2009).

La Via Campesina (2013) gave considerable representation to the UN for a resolution on the promotion of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas (La Via Campesina, 2009). The UN General Assembly resolved to “*establish a commitment through a process to negotiate, finalise and submit to the Human Rights Council a draft declaration on the rights of peasants*”, which gave further legitimacy to the food sovereignty movement (UN, 2016b).

4.2 Food Security through the “Lens” of Food Sovereignty: A New Framework

The member bodies of the Committee for Food Security (CFS) include the main UN agencies and bodies with associated responsibility for food and nutrition security or the right to food. These are listed by de Schutter (2012b) to include the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, and the Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN). The membership also extends to civil society and NGOs; international agricultural research systems; the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, regional development banks and the World Trade Organization (WTO); and the private sector and philanthropic foundations active in the area of food security. This is a diverse group with significantly different ideologies.

Following from the food sovereignty movement's influence, in 2009 the CFS agreed on an ambitious reform to the committee's vision and roles to develop a flexible framework for food security and nutrition. In order to synchronise action by the widest range of stakeholders possible, the CFS invited social movements, including the IPC and other adherents to the food sovereignty movement, to contribute to a revision of the Framework.

The Framework vision is to *strive for a world free from hunger where countries implement the voluntary guidelines for the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national security* (CFS, 2015). Non-government actors were invited to participate autonomously in order to support their engagement with the CFS, leading to the creation of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) and the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM). The CFS's aspiration to be inclusive of all stakeholders and to be the leading platform for policy debate has followed its success at achieving a degree of political centrality (Brem-Wilson, 2015). Inclusion has helped the CFS to progress towards its aim of being “*the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform ... ensuring food security and nutrition*” (CFS, 2015).

The Framework is not a legally binding document but offers guidelines and recommendations to support international, national and local action with primary responsibility taken by national governments to own the programs to combat food insecurity and malnutrition (CSM, 2014). As a document designed to be amended as new priorities emerge, the fourth version of the Framework was published in 2015 to include a framework for investing in smallholder agriculture. The principles promoting responsible investment in agriculture and food systems recognise the vital role of smallholders and the importance of strengthening their capacity to invest (CFS, 2015).

4.3 Support to the Framework by Food Sovereignty Movement CSO/NGOs.

The Framework is evidence that the principles of food sovereignty are being incorporated into global policy in an effort to achieve universal food security. The food sovereignty movement recognises this as a step forward in promoting a new model of governance on food, agriculture and nutrition (Boincean et al., 2013). The document aligns with the food sovereignty movement in that firstly the Framework is human rights based; secondly that the small landholder is central to the solution; and thirdly, the document recognises that an environment harmony exists between small landholders and their land.

What changed in the creation of the Framework was the *process* by which the Framework was achieved. An exchange of views was incorporated between the food sovereignty movement and those promoting the status quo to meet common objectives. As with any negotiation, not all food sovereignty demands were met but the response document acknowledges that the Framework, while not flawless, provides a promising start. The response strongly recommends any international initiative should be taken through the CFS as the common framework to avoid other global initiatives that may seek to support investors' rights over food rights.

5. Political Economy Implications of the Framework

5.1 A Conflict Concerning “Rights”

The cognitive dissonance required by international institutions in order to embrace food sovereignty concepts is a challenging departure from the decades of economic policies promoting free trade and competitive advantage. The lack of an open, non-discriminatory, equitable, distortion-free, transparent multilateral trading system that promotes agriculture and rural development in developing countries has been identified by the CFS within the Framework as one of the structural causes contributing to hunger and malnutrition (CFS, 2015). Consequently, the international trade in agriculture has become intensely distorted to meet the interests of those with power (Hawkes & Plahe, 2013).

Changing definitions of food security have supported neoliberal ideology from shifting food security at the international and national level, to households (Jarosz, 2011). The language of the CFS has transferred food security to the community level, with nation-states being held responsible for delivery of this outcome, not the free market. The potential for a disconnected ideology exists from rights associated with trade and property in conflict with the right to food. A criticism by food rights advocates is that international trade law, developed through the WTO, has ignored international human rights law (Dommen, 2002; UN, 2008). While the AoA sought to reduce agriculture trade barriers, it has provided institutional protection to the wealthiest participants in the global market, violating the right to food and failing the promise of *more for all* under policies of free trade (Hawkes & Plahe, 2013). How the trade friendly institutions such as the WTO, which is a member of the CFS, deal with this conflict remains to be observed.

5.2 Balancing Neoliberal Ideology

Food sovereignty offers an alternative approach that “*puts food security first and treats trade as a means to an end, rather than as an end in itself*” (Ziegler, 2004). It is a response designed to support smallholder food producers to overcome the disadvantages inflicted by agricultural trade liberalisation policies (Cotula & Vermeulen, 2009) and offers a practical path and an alternative framework to ending hunger, and proposes a new kind of relationship between nation-states and society (Shattuck et al., 2015) as articulated in the Framework. Without the Keynesian system of regulated markets with fixed exchanges that support price stability, liberalised free market agri-businesses and nations are in a position to produce food surpluses to control supply and demand, allowing unregulated markets to set the price. More needs to be done to remove the volatility from food prices, which have their greatest impact on the world’s poor, who cannot participate in the global food system.

It is controversial to suggest policies should be considered to reintroduce trading regulations, tariffs and other market control mechanisms to stabilise food price volatility. Gross Domestic Product measures economic activity in an economy but does not measure changes in community capital; the social costs of inequality (Kubiszewski et al., 2013). Further, food security through trade is silent on ecological sensitivities or resource constraints (Lee, 2013). If the market economy has failed to deliver food security for nearly one in seven humans, a revision of the policy framework is timely.

5.3 A Convergence in Governance

Governance can be viewed as “*self-organising, inter-organisational networks that complement markets and hierarchies as governing structures for authoritatively allocating resources and exercising control and co-ordination*” (Rhodes, 1996). A recent definition for food security governance refers to the “*formal and informal interactions between public and/or private entities ultimately aiming at the realisation of food availability, food access, and food utilisation, and their stability over time*” (Candel, 2014), hinting at the complexity of the problem. The more good governance a food producing nation has over production, the more it appears to achieve higher yields without the expansion of agricultural land (Mandemaker et al., 2011), preserving a “soft” governance to reconfigure state, market, and societal relationships towards an improved environmental outcome (Brannstrom et al., 2012). Fundamental shifts to provide the option to pursue a food self-sufficiency program cannot be realised without changes being implemented at the global governance level.

The Framework provides a sound contribution to guidance on global governance; however, responsibility for program execution is to be held at the national and regional level. The Framework response document incorporates human rights based accountability and monitoring as a priority issue, holding decision-makers accountable, and allowing for stakeholder participation and engagement to strengthen support. To achieve coherence, the question is asked against each criteria, “*Are national legislation and public policies on food and agriculture in line with the Framework?*”. Where the answer is negative, action is guided to find what corrective

measures or laws must be adopted. As national legislation and public policies are adjusted, collectively national governance can aggregate globally.

The CFS provides a platform for improved coordination, policy convergence, and collective learning. It should also promote accountability based on common indicators to monitor progress towards agreed upon objectives and actions (De Schutter, 2012b). The Framework has provided scope for the principles of the food sovereignty movement to be a catalyst to achieve the outcome of food and nutrition security. With its diverse membership base stretching from the WTO, the World Bank and various UN humanitarian organisations, the CFS has the opportunity to reset and deliver an international food trading regime which can provide global access to food, and provide some protection to the more than one billion small-scale farmers, pastoralists and artisanal fishermen and women who grow, collect and harvest most of the food in the world. The FAO is the suitable institution to monitor and identify where and why progress is not being made against criteria in the Framework.

6. Conclusion

Free markets are an attempt to balance supply and demand across national borders (Godfray et al., 2010). Neoliberal trade policies have capitalised on the opportunities presented by comparative advantage and have contributed to a significant increase in total global output. Yet poorer nations with few prospects to compete internationally have been at a disadvantage when exposed to the price variations of agricultural exchange, thus risking their ability to achieve food security (Pinstrup-Andersen, 2009). The outcome is that the poorest nations are the most vulnerable to food price fluctuations as they have the least influence on market variability (Anderson, 2009).

Food security implies the *rights* of the individual at the household level to have *access* to food but fails to guide *how* food is produced or from *where* it is sourced. Food sovereignty implies the *rights* of the individual to *participate* in the food production system. It does not replace food security, which is a clear framework to develop policy, and does not directly address the structural causes of poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

Process is determined from policy. The philosophy of food sovereignty to achieve food security has been incorporated into the Framework, giving guidance for governance to solve complex local problems. Where local needs are met across the world, validity is given to the global process (Desmarais, 2007). The international multilateral trade system will require further revision of international institutional ideology and policy to support national programs aligning counteracting messages and conflicting values in food system governance (Hospes, 2014). In order to deliver on the right to food to the rural poor, these policy revisions will need to support a right to participate in the food system, give access to land to grow food, and provide the opportunity for self-determination for rural communities. Resolving rights associated with trade and property laws when in conflict with humanitarian rights laws will pose an interesting challenge for international bodies.

The noble goal remains to ensure sufficient access to food for all. It remains unclear whether food sovereignty will contribute to worldwide food security and poverty reduction or whether it will simply lead to a shift in the population groups affected (Beuchelt & Virchow, 2012). Nevertheless, the Framework is an attempt to incorporate community-led agricultural autonomy as part of the solution to achieve greater food security and nutrition for all people, no matter the wealth of their nation or an individual's economic circumstances.

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