
THE POLITICS OF FOOD



The Global Conflict between
Food Security and Food Sovereignty

WILLIAM D. SCHANBACHER

The Politics of Food

*The Global Conflict between Food
Security and Food Sovereignty*

WILLIAM D. SCHANBACHER



PRAEGER SECURITY INTERNATIONAL



AN IMPRINT OF ABC-CLIO, LLC
Santa Barbara, California • Denver, Colorado • Oxford, England

Copyright 2010 by William D. Schanbacher

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Schanbacher, William D.

The politics of food : the global conflict between food security and food sovereignty / William D. Schanbacher.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-313-36328-3 (alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-313-36329-0 (ebook)

1. Food-supply—Political aspects. 2. Food-supply—Government policy. I. Title.

HD9000.6.S33 2010

338.1'9—dc22 2009037033

ISBN: 978-0-313-36328-3


EISBN: 978-0-313-36329-0

14 13 12 11 10 3 4 5

This book is also available on the World Wide Web as an eBook.
Visit www.abc-clio.com for details.

Praeger
An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC

ABC-CLIO, LLC
130 Cremona Drive, P.O. Box 1911
Santa Barbara, California 93116-1911

This book is printed on acid-free paper 

Manufactured in the United States of America

The Politics of Food

Introduction

Riots protesting the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the streets of Seattle in 1999, global demonstrations against the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), and civil unrest around the world due to rising food prices in 2008 all speak to a growing global awareness of and discontent with the fact that the basic necessity of food is not reaching hundreds of millions of people around the world each year.¹ These protests, marches, and often violent uprisings can be viewed, in part, as a growing chorus of voices speaking out against the political and economic policies by the world's affluent, industrialized countries and the global governance institutions that propagate these policies around the world. The creation of the World Bank and IMF in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire after the end of the World War II ushered in a new era of globalization that has culminated in forms of global governance that have left many asking: Who are the true beneficiaries of current models of globalization, and why do billions of people around the world continue to live in poverty despite World Bank and IMF promises to solve this problem?² Of particular importance with respect to these questions is the role food production, distribution, and consumption plays as an aspect of hunger and malnutrition.

Many multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, IMF, WTO, and the United Nations (UN) have utilized the term *food security* to describe the global effort to eliminate hunger and malnutrition. The effort to secure food for the global poor is, furthermore, intimately connected to the relationship between agricultural reform and small-scale, peasant, and landless farm production. These rural farmers are currently a central focus

of certain policy agencies, such as the UN, due to the potential economic importance they hold for many developing countries. As such, small-scale farmers are at the heart of discussion regarding food security for the rural poor. Unfortunately, the theories and policies of the aforementioned multilateral organizations have not achieved their goals of curbing hunger, malnutrition, and global poverty, and, consequently, the world's farmers are among those who suffer the most. Given the failure to implement successful policies, the notion of food security needs further scrutiny on both theoretical and policy grounds.

The concept of food security emerged in the 20th century as post-WWII reconstruction efforts and the decolonization of many Third World countries created a global food regime that was managed through complex local, national, and international relations. With the creation of the IMF, World Bank, and more recently, the WTO, food security is increasingly sought through economic policies including trade liberalization, privatization, deregulation of national industry, and the opening of economic markets. The guiding principle for these multilateral institutions is the idea that economic growth, via market mechanisms, provides the most suitable solution for curbing poverty and achieving food security. However, critics of these strategies point to how a purely market-based approach to food security remains entrenched in neocolonial power structures that have failed to create a just global food system.

Although the World Bank and IMF are the most powerful lending agencies on a global level, they are not the only players involved in global financial governance. This book does not investigate regional banks such as the Inter-American Development Bank, but it is important to note that these regional banks play a powerful role in terms of regulating macroeconomic conditions in their respective regions. Ultimately, however, regional banks often ascribe to the same neoliberal economic theory of the World Bank and IMF. Moreover, the power structure, for example, of the Inter-American Development Bank is similar to the IMF and the World Bank. The United States carries enough voting power to effectively veto any bank decisions it does not agree with, and thus the potential for regional banks to challenge World Bank and IMF policies is drastically undermined.³ In the end, neoliberal policies that underwrite World Bank, IMF, and regional bank decisions remain the fundamental problem with respect to food security.

Given these failures, an alternative concept and movement known as *food sovereignty* is garnering worldwide interest and support. A diverse amalgamation of small-scale, peasant, and landless farmers, rural workers, women, youth, and indigenous peoples, food sovereignty activists challenge both the theory that underlies the food security model and the policies that have emerged from it. This book offers an ethical analysis of the current food security model and the food sovereignty movement as they function within discourses on global poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. Focusing on these issues will also provide the context in which we can better un-

derstand the role food plays with respect to discussions on globalization and global poverty.

I argue that a critical analysis of the food security and food sovereignty models reveals fundamental antagonisms between the way hunger and malnutrition are conceived within these two constructs. Ultimately, the food security model is founded on, and reinforces, a model of globalization that reduces human relationships to their economic value. Alternatively, the food sovereignty model considers human relations in terms of mutual dependence, cultural diversity, and respect for the environment. Because food security has not been achieved for hundreds of millions of the world's poor, it is imperative that the food sovereignty model take center stage in the fight against global hunger and malnutrition. Furthermore, not only do we need to conceive of food as a human right, but, as food sovereignty argues, our definition of food should include the ways in which the poor deserve to have access to healthy, nutritious, and culturally important types of food. Given the massive amount of human suffering that goes on daily due to hunger and malnutrition, often unnoticed by the world's more well-off, the global food system is in desperate need of the same attention we give to other human rights issues such as genocide and terrorism. Ultimately, if food sovereignty's demands are not met, the current global food system constitutes a massive violation of human rights.

THE NEED FOR A UNIFIED FRONT AGAINST GLOBAL HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION

Given the complex relationship between economic, political, and cultural forms of globalization, research and input from multiple disciplines is required for a nuanced and critical investigation of global hunger and poverty. Various academic, technical, and local perspectives all contribute to how we conceive of the global poor, and provide perspectives on how to craft strategies to eliminate hunger and poverty. This book offers an ethical examination of these issues, although in doing so also draws from other disciplines involved in researching and discussing global food concerns.

The fields of political science and economics contribute crucial insights on neoliberal and developmental economic theory and policy implemented by multilateral organizations such as the UN, World Bank, IMF, and WTO. In order to critically understand how these organizations address global poverty, one must look at factors such as how poverty is conceived; how World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) have influenced foreign and domestic macroeconomic policies; how the emergence of powerful transnational corporations (TNCs) has established new and amorphous boundaries between states, citizens, and industry; and how a free market system has concentrated wealth in certain economic sectors. Examining these issues is important because they provide a fruitful resource for analyzing themes such as sustainable economic growth and development, the

relationship between food and poverty, and how macroeconomic policies have succeeded or failed in certain countries and regional contexts.

From an ethical perspective, there is increasing acknowledgment of the interrelation between economics, politics, and ethics. With respect to global hunger and malnutrition, this interconnection is most visible in the alternative perspectives presented by the food sovereignty movement. This movement advocates and embodies a local-, family-, and community-based ethic that stresses values of sustainability, interdependence, environmental protection, and local production for local consumption. To a certain extent these values are increasingly at odds with an industrialized, corporate-driven rationale of individual autonomy, profiteering, and unfettered consumption. Ethicists are progressively demanding that the discipline of ethics should not be relegated to the sidelines in favor of more scientific disciplines. Rather, ethics should be considered a viable, foundational perspective from which we approach problems associated with hunger and global poverty. In other words, ethical discussions on globalization and poverty should not be confined to how poverty can be eliminated *given* current trends in global integration, but should also include how the existence of poverty is created and perpetuated by certain political, economic, and corporate policies that can be contravened.

The ethical proposals contained in the final two chapters are pragmatic in nature. Topics of social justice and economic, social, and political equality are central themes within these chapters; however, I do not attempt to offer a grand ethical theory of justice or equality. Rather, following a remark by economist Amartya Sen, this project aims to contribute to “making the world less unjust rather than attempting to articulate a grand theory of justice.”⁴ While theories of justice are imperative for providing the philosophical foundations for why those concerned with social justice pursue the things they do, a practical investigation of the current global food system requires both a certain level of idealism and some concrete policy options that can be implemented to alleviate the world’s hungry and malnourished. The food sovereignty model includes both an idealism and a practicality that is required for tackling problems associated with hunger, poverty, and globalization.

Ultimately, food sovereignty is based on the hope that the global food system can be organized in such a way that the basic dignity of all humanity is restored. This hope is not unique. The Preamble to the United Nation’s Declaration of Human Rights, for example, notes that all people are united by our common humanity, which is rooted in the inherent dignity and “equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.”⁵ In other words, human dignity serves as the founding concept upon which all other aspects of human rights are based. However, the concept of dignity in the Declaration remains rather vague in nature and thus requires a certain level of substantiation. To address this issue, Martha Nussbaum’s list of basic human capabilities proves particularly useful. Living a life of dignity

requires first and foremost that people have adequate basic necessities that allow them to lead a normal life free of hunger, malnutrition, and premature death. But there is also more to dignity.

As humans, we have the unique capacity to use our creative energies, both mental and physical. We produce literary, musical, and artistic works, we build homes and gardens, and we cultivate the earth's natural resources to provide sustenance for our families. Our creative productions are expressions of our physical senses, our ability to reason, and our imagination. As such, a meaningful life of dignity requires basic social and political arrangements that allow us to fully develop our creative capacities. The only way to ensure this is through basic political freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of conscience. The food sovereignty movement recognizes this interconnection between human dignity, basic freedoms, and creative production, and draws attention to how an agrarian life is more than simply harvesting crops for sale on the global market. Instead, farming is a way of life that is intimately tied to familial and community relationships, religious beliefs and traditions, and a deep-seeded respect for the environment.

A life of dignity also involves the ability "to recognize and show concern for other humans" by developing social networks, meaningful friendships, and intimate relationships.⁶ Humans are social in nature, yet we often dismiss the extent to which we are interconnected and mutually dependent on each other. Food sovereignty activists inscribe this fundamental aspect of humanity into their struggle for social justice by reminding us that we are not simply self-interested, autonomous, competitive beings. Instead, we find joy in our ability to laugh, play, and participate in recreational activities. Farmer movements such as the *Campesino a Campesino* (Farmer to Farmer), which embrace the food sovereignty cause, embody these aspects of human dignity by demonstrating how farming communities are founded on community gatherings, the exchange of knowledge, and social events that express the cultural traditions of an agrarian livelihood.

Although the idea of human dignity is foundational in human rights documents such as the Declaration of Human Rights, the food sovereignty movement provides concrete expressions of the dignity of the world's small-scale, peasant, and landless farmers. Ultimately, however, the aforementioned aspects of human dignity all depend on whether people have basic necessities such as adequate food. If people suffer from malnutrition and hunger on a daily basis, they by no means have this opportunity.

CHAPTER DESCRIPTIONS

Chapter one analyzes the notion of food security deployed by organizations such as the United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), as well as multilateral organizations including the World Bank, the International

Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). While the WTO, World Bank, and IMF do not offer a systematic definition of food security, they deserve special attention given their direct influence upon global economic management and integration. Focusing specifically on production, distribution, and consumption patterns illustrates how food security is conceived and theorized both explicitly and implicitly within these institutions, and introduces the way food security falls somewhere along the spectrum of developmental and neoliberal models of globalization. Although this chapter ultimately argues that neoliberal, free-market economic concepts such as trade liberalization, deregulation, privatization, and growth still remain the dominant ethos of multilateral organizations, developmental approaches have identified past failures of World Bank, IMF, and WTO policies, and thus have begun reformulating strategies to more adequately attend to these failures.

On an analytical level, what is important about examining how these organizations conceive of global poverty in general, and food security as an aspect of global poverty in particular, is the fact that there is a spectrum of theory and policy. Developmental economic approaches utilized primarily by the FAO and IFAD have adjusted to past failures of many World Bank, IMF, and WTO policies, and have recognized that the effort to achieve food security must involve greater levels of sustainable development, agricultural reform, and coordination with the agricultural communities affected by policy. Indeed, even the World Bank, IMF, and WTO have recognized many failures of past policy and have begun, at least on a rhetorical level, to reconsider how their policies should be reformulated in the future. With that said, however, this chapter demonstrates that, on a foundational level, food security remains entrenched in a particular conception of human relations, a conception that understands the human qua human as *homo economicus*, or the economic man. The principle aim of highlighting this conception of humanity, which will be clarified in chapters three and five, is to demonstrate how this conception not only influences the nature of policy, but perhaps more importantly, reflects a notion of human relations that is contestable. After investigating these themes, a brief historical overview provides the contextual conditions, such as the rise of developmental economic growth paradigms, for what is now coined the global politics of food.

Chapter two investigates critical issues associated with how these multilateral organizations conceive of and implement policy for food security. This analysis presents counter arguments to multilateral financial and trade policy by examining the concrete successes and failures of these organizations' policies. Developmental policies promoted by the FAO and IFAD have made progress in terms of linking development workers with local communities in an effort to create more sustainable practices of agricultural production. Documents from the FAO and IFAD also reveal a concerted effort to include development communities in the process of development. Strategies such as microfinance, for example, have been implemented in certain regions and in particular contexts to help build rural financial infra-

structure as well as educate rural peoples on how to manage finances for future use. To this extent, the food security model conceived by UN agencies holds much potential. However, critical examination of these organizations' documents also reveals that knowledge sharing between UN field workers and their rural counterparts remains managerial in nature. Despite increasing attempts to incorporate rural peoples in the development process, documents still appear dedicated to the idea that growth, competition, and profiteering are values necessary for a bolstered global economy. Although this is true to a certain extent, underlying this process is the question, to what end or purpose is developmental growth envisioned? These documents suggest that building rural infrastructure and educating farmers in methods of sustainable development is the first step in the larger goal of integrating the rural poor into global market relationships.

Following an examination of developmental approaches propagated by the FAO and IFAD is an interrogation of the policies pursued by the World Bank, IMF, and WTO. Historically these processes emphasized a neoliberal economic approach that ultimately proved detrimental to efforts to both reduce global poverty and to reduce hunger and malnutrition. WTO policies guided by World Bank and IMF-sponsored Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) will be analyzed to show how certain trade agreements asymmetrically benefited, and continue to benefit, industrialized, Northern economies such as the United States and Europe while at the same time created immense hardships, particularly for the rural poor in developing countries. World Bank strategies of agricultural reform, which were guided by principles of market-based reform, ultimately benefited the rural elite in developing contexts, as well as helped to establish the necessary conditions for the monopolization of certain agricultural sectors by transnational corporations (TNCs). Teasing out how food security is envisioned by these types of policies is complicated by the fact that the aims of many of these strategies were more centered on curbing global poverty in general rather than on providing food security. However, what is clear is the underlying economic conception of food security. Rather than conceiving of food as a cultural commodity intimately linked with particular values such as interdependence, cooperation, love of nature, and so forth, food is considered an abstract commodity with no inherent value.

In an effort to contextualize some of these critical issues, this chapter also provides case studies, including the repercussions of World Bank-sponsored structural adjustment programs on the Mexican tortilla industry, the problems associated with food aid as a solution to food insecurity, and the Monsanto Company as an example of the emerging role of TNCs. As evidence will show, these policies and organizations have not only failed to achieve global food security, but in many ways have exacerbated global hunger and poverty.

Chapter three offers an alternative to food security by introducing the concept of food sovereignty. As both a concept and a social movement, food sovereignty challenges current trends in economic, political, and cultural

globalization. Focusing on organizations such as *La Via Campesina* and movements such as the *Campesino a Campesino* (Farmer to Farmer) movement, this chapter investigates critical issues and practices of food sovereignty, including themes of biodiversity, agroecology, and sustainable development. The food sovereignty movement is, on many levels, radically different than the food security approach and its attending understanding of globalization. Officially established in 1993, the movement is composed of peasants, farmers, small and medium-scale farmers, rural women, and indigenous peoples. At its core, the food sovereignty movement fights for the human right to food and the right of peoples, countries, and states to define their agricultural and food policies. Alongside control over how food is produced, distributed, and consumed, the idea of sovereignty ultimately centers on local, state, and regional control over natural resources such as land and water. While these demands are not unproblematic, at its core, food sovereignty represents an alternative framework to global governance imposed by multilateral organizations. Food sovereignty contends that food security denigrates the cultural importance of food by considering food simply on the level of the caloric intake needed for human survival. Instead, according to food sovereignty, food represents a cultural commodity that much of the world regards in terms of its nutritive value, taste, and tradition; namely, a fundamental element of farmer and community livelihoods. Food sovereignty activists highlight the failures of multilateral economic policies and argue, for example, that the WTO should be banned from agriculture.

While this chapter introduces food sovereignty as an alternative to food security and its attending vision of globalization, what is ultimately illuminating is the contrasting vision of human relations embodied by food sovereignty. In contrast to themes of competition, efficiency, unfettered growth and consumption, autonomy, and profiteering, food sovereignty emphasizes themes of sustainable development, environmental conservation, genuine agricultural reform, mutual dependence, and local, small-scale community prosperity. By juxtaposing both neoliberal and developmental notions of food security, we begin to see a different understanding of the global food regime and how it plays a role in conceiving of and curbing global poverty. Although food sovereignty is its own social movement with its own specific demands, case studies on Brazil's Landless Workers Movement (MST), the Zapatista movement in southern Mexico, and the emerging international demand for biofuels provide context to some of these critical issues and practices. Ultimately, the food sovereignty movement argues that healthy, nutritious, and culturally important food is a *human right*, a right that obligates multilateral and state institutions to ensure its protection through more equitable land distribution and local production for local consumption.

Chapter four analyzes the ethical implications of food security and food sovereignty. It delineates the differences between food security and food sovereignty and highlights how food sovereignty presents an alternative

to current, economic perspectives of globalization. Food sovereignty's emphasis on community, cooperation, sustainable development, and local knowledge is contrasted to corresponding neoliberal and developmental notions of individualism, competition, excessive consumption, and hierarchical, managerial knowledge. This chapter takes a detailed look at the issue of rights generally, and human rights specifically, and evaluates the United Nation's and food sovereignty's idea of food as a human right. One of the major debates within human rights discourse pertains to whether we can ethically justify a set of universal human rights. Criticisms of the concept of human rights often come from a cultural relativism perspective that argues that rights are based on particular human values. Because human values differ according to culture, location, and historical perspective, it is impossible to determine a universal standard of rights that applies to all peoples at all times. In an effort to address these criticisms, the UN has made progressive inroads into a more inclusionary understanding of cultural difference. As such, an examination of particular UN documents such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is offered as a working example that serves to promote further dialogue regarding the debates between universalism and relativism with respect to human rights.

Within this discussion on human rights, this chapter also analyzes problems associated with the fulfillment of human rights. Traditionally, the language of rights centers on concepts of positive and negative rights and duties. After determining if and what sorts of rights people have, we must also identify who has a responsibility to fulfill them. Generally speaking, a positive rights/duties approach argues that people possess certain *a priori* rights and that it is up to individuals and governments to provide these rights. Alternatively, a negative rights/duties approach argues that people have rights that are limited to noninterference. Namely, people have the right to demand that individuals and governments do not interfere with respect to personal liberty, private property, and so on. This debate poses special problems for discussions on human rights and specifically rights associated with discussions on global poverty. The work of Thomas Pogge is offered as a fruitful perspective for understanding the status of human rights with respect to global poverty. Pogge orients a discussion on human rights around negative duties and argues that if we can demonstrate that affluent countries, and the global conditions they have helped to create and sustain, are infringing on people's negative rights, then those who implement and support these policies are involved in a massive violation of human rights. By conceiving of human rights in terms of negative rights and duties, Pogge presents a more rigorous and theoretically substantive foundation for the fight against global poverty.

This chapter concludes with some prescriptive ethical and policy suggestions by evaluating the work of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. Specifically, their respective versions of the capabilities approach are

offered as a fertile theoretical ground from which to formulate policy for curbing global poverty and envisioning a more just world. The capabilities approach circumvents many of the problems associated with rights language and offers concrete examples of what it means to live a life of dignity. By utilizing concepts of human flourishing and human well-being, the capabilities approach may aid us in reconceptualizing how we approach human relationships generally, and global poverty specifically. Capabilities have a special role to play with respect to development because they outline basic human necessities as well as the conditions that are necessary for humans to flourish. Basing future policy on the capabilities approach aids developmental models by focusing attention on human values and desires beyond basic necessities.

Chapter five applies the ethical discussion of chapter four specifically to the food sovereignty movement. The values food sovereignty embodies both on a theoretical level and in its demands for new policy provides a substantive example of many of the ethical themes addressed in chapter four. However, food sovereignty also compels organizations such as the UN and state governments to rigorously formulate policy directly focused on providing the right to food. Although food sovereignty focuses on the specific issues of food and agriculture, its demands transcend this aspect of poverty and challenge us to re-envision how we conceive of the global poor. Additionally, the notion of human rights specifically presented by Pogge can aid food sovereignty in terms of making the demand for food more forceful. By demonstrating that current neoliberal models of food security, which fall under the general umbrella of neoliberal economic policy, constitute a violation of human rights, food sovereignty can, at least rhetorically, make its demand for the right to food more meaningful.

This chapter also provides some brief remarks on challenges the food sovereignty movement faces in the future. Recent analyses show that food sovereignty advocates need to clarify the differences between food security, food sovereignty, and food as a human right. In part, this project aims to aid in this effort, albeit through an examination of food security as it can be teased from the theory and policy of multilateral organizations. From an ethical perspective, Pogge's understanding of negative duties and human rights provides a helpful way in which food sovereignty might distinguish itself from food security. Namely, if it can be demonstrated that current food security models are complicit in a global order that fails to vigorously resolve problems of hunger and malnutrition, then it too constitutes a violation of human rights. Admittedly, this may only have force on a rhetorical level, but it still provides more content to food sovereignty's call for food as a human right.

Ultimately, contrasting themes of mutual well-being, a respect for the natural environment, and the sustainability of local, traditional forms of knowledge to a purely economic understanding of human relations presents an avenue of research that transcends the juxtaposition of food secu-

rity and food sovereignty. In line with many of the ethical imperatives presented by food sovereignty, the ethic I propose shows that a sober assessment of current trends in economic globalization does not relegate social justice to the confines of idealism. Rather, reinvigorating a dedication to community, cooperation, and sustainable development, along with a concomitant struggle for political and economic justice, can potentially create new and creative ways in which to curb global hunger and poverty.

Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	vii
1 Globalization, Development, Food Security, and the Emergence of a Global Food Regime	1
2 The Underside of Development	25
3 Food Sovereignty as an Alternative	53
4 Human Rights, Human Responsibilities, and the Capabilities Approach	77
5 Ethical Analysis of Food Sovereignty and the Ethics of Globalization	97
<i>Notes</i>	121
<i>Bibliography</i>	135
<i>Index</i>	145

CHAPTER 1

Globalization, Development, Food Security, and the Emergence of a Global Food Regime

INTRODUCTION: GLOBALIZATION AND FOOD SECURITY

According to the report of the former Special Rapporteur on the right to food to the United Nations, Jean Ziegler noted that in 2004 the number of undernourished people across the world had increased to 840 million.¹ Moreover, the recent global financial crisis has resulted in a global food crisis that includes volatile food prices, which risks increasing this number.² Given this astonishing figure, part of the global project to eliminate hunger and curb poverty involves disentangling the myriad forces that contribute to this alarming trend. Within discussions pertaining to global hunger and malnutrition, the theme of *food security* has emerged as a common concern for diverse groups of international financial and trade institutions, food rights activists, nongovernmental organizations, and national governments. As mentioned in the introduction to this manuscript, the role of food production, consumption, and distribution falls somewhere within broader narratives on globalization and poverty. To the extent that food security is located within complex social, economic, political, and cultural contexts, it is difficult, if not impossible, to detach the role of food security from themes such as trade, agricultural reform, rural and economic development, and global poverty.

One way to begin sifting through these complex factors is to examine how organizations such as the United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) influence, whether directly or indirectly, both the way food is conceived