Introduction

The Problem of Hunger & Food Insecurity in the 21st Century

In the aftermath of the 2007-2008 food price crisis the topics of food, agriculture and hunger were once again in the spotlight. Reports of food riots and the doubling and sometimes tripling of food commodity prices made headlines around the world. In developing countries and countries with high food import bills, the rise in food prices meant that the poorest people were unable to afford basic staples.[1] In 2009, for the first time in history, the global figure of undernourished people is estimated to have exceeded one billion.[2] This number amounts to one sixth of humanity.

Following the events of 2007-2008, large amounts of public and private funds were set aside for additional research and investment into food and agriculture.[3] In some ways, however, the ad hoc response by international governments to the food price crisis was surprising because less than forty years earlier a very similar event had taken place, known as the 1972-1973 world food crisis.[4] This crisis also comprised of a series of price rises resulting from a combination of economic, political and environmental factors. After the event, analysts highlighted the adverse impact of food price fluctuations and Dale Hathaway, Director of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), called for 'immediate policy decisions to alter the current international food marketing system', which were to include non-market incentives to encourage grain storage so as to 'reduce substantial year-to-year fluctuations in grain prices'.[5] In the following decades, the potential negative impacts of commodity price

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[1] Adam, "Food Price Rises Threaten Global Security - Un," *The Guardian*, 9 April 2008.
[2] FAO. "Press Release: More People Than Ever Are Victims of Hunger," (Rome: 2009).
[3] The total amount of funds pledged to the goals of the G8's *L'Aquila Food Security Initiative* reached 1.1 billion dollars, while total commitments and disbursements, including funds dedicated outside AFSI, amounted to 3.5 billion dollars. United States Department of State, 'Tracking the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative Pledge and Related Funding, 2012 Update, Commitments and Disbursements'. Available at: http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/202955.pdf [Last accessed 14 September 2016].
[4] Timmer, "Reflections on Food Crises Past," *Food Policy* 35, no. 1 (2010).
[5] Hathaway. "The World Food Crisis – Periodic or Perpetual?," (Washington D.C.: 1975).

volatility were documented extensively. A report by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) issued in 2006 sums up the effects as follows:

> 'Price volatility makes sound fiscal planning extremely difficult for both countries and producers. Price booms and busts also drive social inequalities, livelihood insecurity and corruption. In extreme cases, price swings cause conflict over valuable land and resources which can ignite underlying social tensions'.[6]

Reflecting upon the state of knowledge about global commodity price fluctuation and the systemic nature of recurring food price increases, Tim Lang reasserted the basic Marxist insight that economic crises are integral to the functioning of capitalism by asking 'Crisis, what crisis?'. As Lang makes clear, rather than being represented as abnormal, the regular occurrence of food price spikes can be understood as 'creeping normality'.[7]

Similar to the analysis of food price volatility, discussions about the problem of hunger are not new either. In the 1980s, Amartya Sen wrote in his landmark volume on food and entitlements that 'No social or economic problem facing the world today is more urgent than that of hunger'.[8] Five years later the world's most famous pop artists sang that 'We can't go on pretending day by day that someone, somehow will soon make a change'.[9] Twenty-five years later, the leaders of the G8 countries stated that 'There is an urgent need for decisive action to free humankind from hunger and poverty'.[10] Thus, the problem of hunger – which today is often described in terms of food insecurity – has featured consistently on the world political agenda, but evidently, efforts to systematically eradicate the problem have consistently failed too.

Since food price increases made world headlines again in 2007-2008 and the problem of hunger was once again labelled as 'urgent', the term 'food security' has become a buzz word.

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[6] Brown and Gibson. "Boom or Bust: Developing Countries' Rough Ride on the Commodity Price Rollercoaster," (International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD): 2006).
[7] Lang, "Crisis? What Crisis? The Normality of the Current Food Crisis," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 10, no. 1 (2010).
[8] Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).
[9] Lyrics pop song 'We Are the World', BandAid, 1985. Available at: http://www.springsteenlyrics.com/lyrics.php?song=wearetheworld [Last accessed 10 September 2016].
[10] "L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security," ed. L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) (G8 Summit 'From La Maddalena to L'Aquila', 2009).

A Google search on the term results in 354 million hits.[11] The meaning of the term 'food security', however, remains unstable and contested.[12] Academics and observers have noted the shift in emphasis to the meanings that international organisations, such as the Food & Agricultural Organisation, attribute to the term.[13] In addition to epistemological concerns over how food security has been defined over time, the validity of the meanings attributed to the term food security has also been contested in more direct ways by activists and academics alike. The World Food Summit of 1996 was one such site of direct protest and contestation through debate, public protests, and counter-declarations.[14]

In 1996, official representatives from 185 countries had gathered to discuss the possibilities for the eradication of hunger and adopted a new definition of food security: 'Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'.[15] At the same time, however, a counter-forum on food security had taken place and its participants – primarily representatives from civil society and action groups – argued that the official definition of food security was too narrow, void of a political dimension, and it enabled the continuation of the very policies that had contributed to the ongoing inequitable distribution of food resources.[16] The members of the NGO forum to the World Food Summit

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[11] Google search, 5 September 2016.

[12] Carolan, *Reclaiming Food Security*, Earthscan Food and Agriculture Series (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Jarosz, "Defining World Hunger: Scale and Neoliberal Ideology in International Food Security Policy Discourse," *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 14, no. 1 (2011); Pritchard, "Trading into Hunger? Trading out of Hunger? International Food Trade and the Debate on Food Security," in *Food Systems Failure: The Global Food Crisis and the Future of Agriculture*, ed. Rosin, Stock, and Campbell (Routledge, 2013).

[13] In Chapter Three, I discuss in more detail how specific economic and political concerns are reflected in particular definitions of food security.

[14] CNN World News, "First Day of Food Summit Highlighted by Papal Plea and Naked Protesters ", 13 November 1996; La Via Campesina. "The International Peasant's Voice." (2011). Available at: https://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/organisation-mainmenu-44 [Last accessed 1 September 2016]; Shaw, *World Food Security: A History since 1945* (London: Springer, 1945), p.351.

[15] United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation, World Food Summit Declaration, Rome, 1996. Available at: http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w3613e/w3613e00.HTM [Last accessed 1 September 2016].

[16] Statement by the NGO Forum to the World Food Summit, Rome, 1996. Available at: http://www.fao.org/wfs/begin/paral/cngo-E.htm [Last accessed 1 September 2016]; 'The Right to Produce and Access to Land', La Via Campesina Declaration on Food Sovereignty presented at the World Food Summit, Rome, 1996. Available at: http://www.acordinternational.org/silo/files/decfoodsov1996.pdf [Last accessed 1 September 2016].

concluded that 'hunger and malnutrition are fundamentally a question of justice. Unless we agree that the right of every human being to the sustenance of life comes before the quest for profit, the scourge of hunger and malnutrition will continue'.[17] In order to address the endurance of inequitable relations within food systems, the NGOs' statement called for a broader understanding of food security, which incorporated the notion of food sovereignty.

> 'We propose a new model for achieving food security […] in which international law must guarantee the right to food, ensuring that food sovereignty takes precedence over macro-economic policies and trade liberalization. Food cannot be considered as a commodity, because of its social and cultural dimension. Each nation must have the right to food sovereignty to achieve the level of food sufficiency and nutritional quality it considers appropriate without suffering retaliation of any kind'.[18]

In this way, the forum challenged the liberalization of food trade and regulations promoted by international institutions of global governance. Following 1996, and especially after the 2007-2008 food price crisis, the criticisms voiced by the NGO forum – which prior to the forum had been expressed by the international peasants' social movement *La Via Campesina* – have gained widespread currency.[19]

La Via Campesina and the NGO forum called for a bottom-up formulation of the meaning of the food sovereignty concept. As a result, the present meaning of the notion of food sovereignty has been defined in different ways and arguably suffers from a lack of clarity.[20] Representatives of the food sovereignty movement have argued that such open-endedness is deliberate and strategic, because it prompts all actors to define for themselves what food sovereignty means to them.

> 'There is no single path or prescription for achieving food sovereignty. It is the task of individual regions, nations, and communities to determine what food sovereignty means to them based on their own unique set of circumstances'.[21]

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[17] Statement by the NGO Forum to the World Food Summit.
[18] Statement by the NGO Forum to the World Food Summit, point 6.
[19] See Andrée et al., *Globalization and Food Sovereignty: Global and Local Change in the New Politics of Food* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).
[20] Jarosz, "Comparing Food Security and Food Sovereignty Discourses," *Dialogues in Human Geography* 4, no. 2 (2014). Forum Discussion in *Dialogues in Human Geography* 4, no. 2.
[21] Wittman, "Food Sovereignty: A New Rights Framework for Food and Nature?," *Environment and Society: Advances in Research* 2, no. 1 (2011): p.97 quoting Schiavoni (2009)..

Nonetheless, the extent to which such conceptual elasticity is viable and desirable has been debated.[22] In practice, however, calls for food sovereignty which demanded the establishment of increased control over food and agricultural policy, have often been accompanied by a drive to reinforce local food production.[23] With reference to the Basque country, for example, Nicholson writes that 'food sovereignty permits local production and productive agro-ecology models that can solve the climate problem and feed the world at the same time […] The new agriculturalists need to be in the most productive regions'.[24] Others are critical of the central dimension of local production in the discourse of food sovereignty, although they do not regard it as unimportant. McMahon, for example, is especially clear when she argues that

> 'Food sovereignty is not about feel-good politics for farmers, or about recapturing a lost past through a turn to the local. It is about confronting globally interconnected relations of power in the present, opening space for new (and old) agro-ecological practices and new just forms of agri-food governance.[25]

If the meaning of food sovereignty goes beyond the re-localisation of (agro-ecological) production, a number of complex questions come to the surface. How, for example, are market relations and long-distance trade addressed within a food sovereignty framework? What conditions would allow food sovereignty to be exercised? Agarwal and Louis have asked piercing questions in this regard, showing that the question of food sovereignty and trade does not simply pertain to different economic models, but contains crucial questions of democratic choice and social justice.[26] Reflecting upon the contradictions within the food

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[22] Carolan, "Getting to the Core of Food Security and Food Sovereignty Relationality with Limits?," *Dialogues in Human Geography* 4, no. 2 (2014); McMichael, "The Food Sovereignty Lens," in *Globalization and Food Sovereignty: Global and Local Change in the New Politics of Food*, ed. Andrée, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), p.345.

[23] Altieri, "Scaling up Agro-Ecological Approaches for Food Sovereignty in Latin America," in *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community*, ed. Wittman, Desmarais, and Wiebe (Oxford: Pambazuka Press, 2010); Nicholson, "Food Sovereignty: Alliances and Transformation," in *Food Movements Unite! Strategies to Transform Our Food System*, ed. Holt Gimenez (Oakland: Food First Books, 2011); Robbins, "Exploring the 'Localisation'dimension of Food Sovereignty," *Third World Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (2015).

[24] Nicholson, "Food Sovereignty: Alliances and Transformation," pp.18-19.

[25] McMahon, "Local Food: Food Sovereignty or Myth of Alternative Consumer Sovereignty?," in *Globalization and Food Sovereignty: Global and Local Change in the New Politics of Food*, ed. Andrée, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), p.133.

[26] Agarwal, "Food Sovereignty, Food Security and Democratic Choice: Critical Contradictions, Difficult Conciliations," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 41, no. 6 (2014); Louis, "'We Plant Only Cotton to Maximize Our Earnings": The Paradox of Food Sovereignty in Rural Telengana, India," *The Professional Geographer* 67, no. 4 (2015).

sovereignty narrative (e.g. re-localisation and trade relations), Alonso-Fradejas et al. call upon academics to directly confront such dilemmas; 'scholars cannot afford to avoid the food sovereignty issue, or heckle it from afar without fully appreciating [its] messy contradictions and complexities'.[27]

The Arab region is particularly vulnerable to food price fluctuations as Arab countries are amongst the most food import-dependent countries in the world and import on average over 50% of their food needs.[28] Such reliance renders them particularly dependent on the smooth functioning of market-based mechanisms. In this sense, the Arab region is a particularly valuable case study because conventional approaches to food security have failed whilst a narrow food sovereignty approach is problematic because of present-day constraints in the region's agricultural sectors.[29] Taking the Arab region as a case study thus serves as a geographic intervention that complicates the claims of both conventional food security *and* global food sovereignty discourses. In particular, a focus on the Arab region and its heavy reliance on food imports engages some of the food sovereignty narrative's more complex questions and provides insights into the complex interdependencies of 21st century relations of food, agriculture and politics.

The Politics of Food and Agriculture in the Arab region

At least three Arab countries, Egypt, Lebanon, and Sudan, have at some stage been referred to as 'regional breadbaskets'. In case of the former two, this label dates back to Roman times whilst Sudan continues to be considered such, in spite of the social and political turmoil which serves to prevent the realisation of such an idea.[30] Furthermore, the central Arab region, comprising parts of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, and Iraq, are known as the 'Fertile

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[27] Alonso-Fradejas et al., "Food Sovereignty: Convergence and Contradictions, Conditions and Challenges," *Third World Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (2015): p.445.

[28] IFAD, FAO, and The World Bank. "Improving Food Security in Arab Countries," (Washington D.C.: 2009), xi. For many countries, however, this figure is above 80%. See Taha, "Kingdom Imports 80% of Food Products " *Arab News*, 20 April 2014.

[29] Saddy, "Food Security in the Arab World: Theory and Practice " in *The Arab World and Latin America: Economic and Political Relations in the Twenty-First Century* (London: IB Tauris, 2016).

[30] O'Brien, "Sudan: An Arab Breadbasket?," *MERIP Reports*, no. 99 (1981); Verhoeven, "Sudan and Its Agricultural Revival: A Regional Breadbasket at Last or Another Mirage in the Desert?," in *Handbook of Land and Water Grabs in Africa: Foreign Direct Investment and Food and Water Security*, ed. Allan, et al. (London: Routledge, 2012).

Crescent', in reference to the fertility of the land in the area where the cultivation of wheat began over 14,000 years ago. The agricultural history of the Middle Eastern region is thus rich. As indicated above, however, Arab countries have become increasingly dependent on global market mechanisms so as to secure their societies' vital needs. As food crisis events have showed, however, the flawless functioning of international food markets cannot be guaranteed and the quest for food security became a top priority on Arab political agendas.[31]

Resorting to regional production as a means to mitigate exposure to international markets is not necessarily a straight-forward option, however. The Arab Organisation of Agricultural Development (AOAD) has described the region's agricultural outlook as follows:

> 'The Arab region is considered one of the most arid areas in the world and the per capita share of the water wealth is among the lowest as it has remained much below the global water poverty level of 1,000 cubic metres per year. In some countries, this level is even below 500 cubic metres … As for arable land, it is estimated at nearly 550 million hectares, but only around 12% is exploited. Even in that 12% part, farming efficiency does not exceed 60% of the world level. This means the Arab World is facing a real problem of not only low exploitation of arable areas but low efficiency in cultivated land and its productivity'.[32]

The existence of these constraints and the lack of direction of funds towards regional agricultural organisations, such as the AOAD, means that increasing food security and establishing food sovereignty through a strategy of re-localisation of agricultural production is not a straight-forward option, due to a multiplicity of factors that comprise both social and material elements. Nonetheless, an incipient Arab movement for food sovereignty has emerged in this context.

Some of the earliest calls for food sovereignty were made by organisations based in Palestine. The Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, for example, wrote about food sovereignty in 2006 and 2009[33] and the Palestine-based Union of Agricultural Work

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[31] Press release, 'Arab Countries Take a New Direction for National Food Security', International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), 19 November, Kuwait, 2014.
[32] Saddy, "Food Security in the Arab World: Theory and Practice ".
[33] "Defending Palestinian Food Sovereignty against Occupation and Expulsion." Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (2006). Available online: www.stopthewall.org/downloads/pdf/FoodFull.pdf; Kleiner and Green, "The Contributions of Dr. William Heffernan and the Missouri School of Agrifood Studies," *Southern Rural Sociology* 24, no. 2 (2009).

Committees (UAWC) was the first Arab organisation to become a full member of *La Via Campesina* in 2013.[34] The foundations for a regional movement, however, were established in 2012 when the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty was registered in Beirut.[35] As a result of the region's deep implication in networks of international trade and its specific agricultural situation, the experience of the Arab region has the potential to enrich and strengthen the development of the concept of alternative approaches to food security especially because regional actors would need to deal with import-dependency as a factor. As a result of the region's heavy reliance on food imports it would seem that questions of market relations are central in considering any possible alternatives. Moreover, as the re-localisation of agricultural production is not necessarily a straight-forward option in the current historical conjuncture, it is important to examine whether, and if so how, the alternative conceptualisation of food sovereignty can develop beyond 'its agricultural base'[36] and in what other ways conventional food system relations are being re-imagined by local actors. In other words, how are alternative[37] food and agricultural relations conceived of in the Arab region?

Furthering such questions, this thesis will interrogate the notions of food security and food sovereignty in the context of Jordan, a small country at the heart of the Arab region which imports over 85% of its food needs. In responding to ongoing debates on food security and food sovereignty, and especially paying heed to calls for sensitivity to the role of power in doing so, the thesis develops a deeper understanding of the possibilities for constructing counter-hegemonic relations of food and agriculture in the Arab region. In order to do so, the thesis answers the following central research question:

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[34] United Agricultural Workers Committee. "Via Campesina - Palestine Is Announced as a Full Member in the Via Campesina." (2013). Available at: http://www.uawc-pal.org/articleen.aspx?ano=776 [Last accessed 10 September 2016] ; 'Land Appeal', electronic distribution issued by the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, 31 March 2016. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7MZGOTnu-sAaDAyejRrY0lBTTg/view?pref=2&pli=1 [Last accessed 9 September 2016].

[35] Arab Group for the Protection of Nature, 'Declaration of Registration of the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty' [اعلان تسجيل الشبكة العربية للسيادة على الغذاء]. Available at: http://apnature.org/en/node/754. [Last accessed 15 September 2016].

[36] McMichael, "The Food Sovereignty Lens," p.345.

[37] The author is aware of the substantive debates over the meaning of 'alternative' within food studies more broadly. This thesis will use the term 'counter-hegemonic', which will be further explained in Chapter Two.

"How do counter-hegemonic discourses of 'food security' and 'food sovereignty' in Jordan inform the possibilities for food system transformation?"

Responding to existing food scholars' calls to pay heed to the dimension of power in the study of food, I open the thesis with an explicit consideration of approaches which have connected the study of food to a theory of power. I argue that a Gramscian approach to the study of food and power is especially fruitful, because it addresses some of the lacunae in existing approaches (see Chapter Two).

The remaining chapters engage with empirical case material on the organisation of food system relations in Jordan. Throughout, I use Gramscian theoretical concepts to interpret their significance. Accordingly, I have structured the thesis around five sub-questions, each corresponding to a thesis chapter:

1. How have existing academic approaches conceptualised the relationship between food and power? (Chapter Two)
2. How are food and agricultural relations underpinning conventional 'food security' reproduced? (Chapter Three)
3. What is the role of power in the organisation of food and agricultural relations and food provisioning more widely in Jordan? (Chapter Four)
4. How are conventional approaches to food security contested in Jordan? (Chapter Five)
5. What is the role of capital in the conditioning of food system relations? (Chapter Six)

Prior to commencing the analysis itself, I will briefly sketch out the arguments of each chapter (except for the Methodology, Chapter One).

Chapter Outline

The opening section of this introduction established that many scholarly works on food, agriculture and the food price crisis do not explicitly consider the role of power. I argued that in order to understand how food system relations may be transformed, it is necessary to

approach the concept of power systematically. To this end Chapter Two of the thesis opens with an exploration of three existing approaches to the study of food and power: geopolitics; post-structuralism; and the food regime perspective. The chapter positions all three historically and highlights their conceptual emphases. Having explored such existing approaches, the chapter argues that a Gramscian framework is particularly suitable for the analysis of food and agricultural relations because it overcomes a number of the weaknesses of existing approaches. For example, a Gramscian framework presents a richer understanding of the notion of power than traditional geopolitical approaches do.[38] Furthermore, in contrast to mainstream post-structuralist approaches, a Gramscian approach is sensitive to *both* 'capillary forms'[39] of power *and* concepts in political economy. In other words, it integrates a focus on micro-processes with the established analytical categories of political economy, rather than rejecting these. As a result, it is in a position to exploit the strengths of each approach. In this way, using a Gramscian conceptual framework is one possible approach to achieving the 'ontological rapprochement between more dialectical approaches to political economy, cultural studies, and political ecology', that Guthman and DuPuis recently called for with regards to the study of food politics.[40] Moreover, Gramsci is known as a theorist of the transformation of social orders.[41] Given this thesis' objective to develop a deeper understanding of the possibilities for transformation in the domain of food, Gramsci's work contains theoretical guidance in this regard. As the topic of food has not previously been systematically explored through a Gramscian lens, this thesis seeks to establish its relevance to the study of food system relations. Having introduced alternative theoretical approaches and presented an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses, the final section of the chapter offers a detailed outline of Gramsci's theoretical concepts and begins to connect these to contemporary topics in the analysis of food and agriculture.

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[38] Such approaches have been reinvigorated after the 2007-2008 food price crisis and advocates include Lester Brown and Simon Abis. See Abis, "Geopolitique Du Blé En Méditerranée," *Futuribles* Juillet-Aout, no. No. 387 (2012); Brown, "The New Geopolitics of Food," *Foreign Policy*, 25 April 2011.

[39] Foucault and Gordon, *Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Press, 1980), p.96.

[40] Guthman and DuPuis, "Embodying Neoliberalism: Economy, Culture, and the Politics of Fat," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24, no. 3 (2006): p.427. The approach used in this thesis particularly draws on the former two fields that Guthman and DuPuis highlight.

[41] McNally, *Antonio Gramsci*, Critical Explorations in Contemporary Political Thought (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Chapter Three presents an overview of the contemporary food system relations which support the conventional notion of 'food security'. Using Gramsci's concept of the historical bloc, I draw attention to what facilitates the reproduction of dominant relations in the food system. As such, a Gramscian understanding of power and its reproduction advances an argument for why inequitable relations that permit the continuation of hunger and food insecurity (see Introduction, above) endure. The chapter shows how, in the wake of the 2007-2008 food price crisis, the notion of 'global food security' comprises a project that seeks to reinforce a specific constellation of relations of food and agriculture. Following Gramsci's emphasis on the role of organic intellectuals, I highlight the role of corporate actors in promoting this particular worldview. In this way, the chapter directs attention to a range of factors that may work against the establishment of counter-hegemonic relations of food provisioning. The chapter ends with the introduction of the Arab region, for which the project of global food security presents solutions that are contested by Arab actors themselves.

Chapter Four focuses on the political dimension of food by showing how the management of food insecurity is integral to the maintenance and reproduction of power in Jordan. The chapter shows that the reproduction of relations of market-based food security occurs through mechanisms in civil society and serves to underpin globally dominant market relations. Within Jordan, however, support for these relations is anchored within the social fabric because it is mediated by charitable organisations of food provisioning, which draw upon religious practices so as to secure public support and donations. Country-wide food aid is made possible through the financial contributions from the population at large, which ensures that, as per neoliberal ideological doctrine, the state does not formally intervene in public welfare. In this way, civil society activity – supported by the political authorities – is a key field through which global market-based food relations are reproduced. This finding reiterates the importance of state actors in reproducing global food system relations as well as in the cultivation of public support for specific constellations of economic relations.

Chapter Five addresses existing Jordanian critiques to the conventional model of market-based relations of food provisioning. It explores three different rationales based upon which critique to conventional food system relations is articulated and seeks to assess whether these different rationales may converge into the construction of a counter-hegemonic project.

Drawing upon a range of Gramscian concepts the chapter argues that the construction of a counter-hegemonic project, according to a Gramscian view, is difficult because of the absence of democratic strategies in both the Jordanian political system and global institutions of food governance. The non-existence of democratic channels in which leaders and led interact upon the basis of equal power, obstructs – but does not make impossible – the process of political organisation, which Gramsci viewed as essential to building counter-hegemony. As such, the chapter highlights the significance of the broader political arena and the need for democratisation therein as a crucial element of a counter-hegemonic politics of food. This in turn highlights once more the impossibility of separating questions of food provisioning from politics at large.

Having highlighted the lack of adequate mechanisms for working towards the transformation of conventional food system relations through political channels, the final chapter of the thesis turns towards a consideration of the role of international capital in the construction of Jordanian food-economic relations. The chapter's objective in doing so is two-fold: first, it provides an empirical overview of an important recent development in the domain of food and capitalism: the deepening of financialisation. This assessment is important for the purposes of answering the thesis' central research question even though the nature of these economic relations has not been dealt with explicitly by Jordanian counter-hegemonic actors. As such, the chapter draws attention to a crucial factor that needs to be taken into consideration in building counter-hegemony, even if Jordanian actors have not explicitly assessed this thus far.

In order to highlight the urgency of assessing the role of international capital in the construction of Jordanian economic relations in the domain of food, Chapter Six unpacks a proposal for a financialised notion of food security. Having explained the limitations of the Gramscian conceptual framework in Chapter Two with respect to understanding international capitalism, the analysis in this chapter draws upon David Harvey's concept of 'accumulation by dispossession'. The Jordanian proposal for a financialised approach to food security, under discussion in Chapter Six, combines Western capital, international sovereign debt and financial instruments in order to construct a financialised notion of food security that blurs the boundaries between national and global food security as well as public and private

actors, in ways that are obscure and difficult to trace. The existence of such constructions of food security, emerging out of the continuation of food insecurity that results from exclusive dependence on global markets, points to the relevance of uneven and combined development in studying global food security and sovereignty. The continuation of food insecurity, emerging from market dependence in Jordan and other parts in the Arab region, encourages Arab actors to invest in financial measures for the improvement of their countries' food 'security'. The investment in financial instruments, such as derivatives and options, in turn drives investment in agricultural land world-wide, which has led to new forms of enclosure, including land grabs. In other words, the conditioning of Jordanian discourses and practices that draw upon a market-based interpretation of food security do not only reproduce existing relations, but drive new forms of primitive accumulation in places outside the Arab region. As such, Chapter Six reasserts one of the points made in Chapter Five: it is important to critically assess counter-hegemonic discourse of food system organisation, as they may not necessarily be progressive and their overall implications may be obscured, if solely approached from a national (as opposed to global) perspective. In this way, the chapter highlights the significance of obscured spatial relations of uneven and combined development in the context of the production of 'global food security'.

In view of the findings of the individual chapters, the thesis argues that counter-hegemonic discourses of food system relations in Jordan highlight the significance of the role of the state in reproducing dominant food relations as well as the importance of the elaboration of democratic frameworks through which normative questions regarding the organisation of food system relations can be debated and addressed. In addition to these two points (e.g. the role of the state and the need for democratic mechanisms of governance), the thesis also provides insights into the complex interdependencies of 21st century relations of food and agriculture. Accordingly, the thesis' third argument is that in spite of the ongoing significance of state actors as facilitators of specific forms of economic relations, the contradictions inherent in different counter-hegemonic discourses that concern food security point to the impossibility of addressing questions of food and agriculture meaningfully in an exclusively national context. From this argument, it follows that forms of regional cooperation as well as mechanisms of global food governance are especially important in efforts to address questions of food security and food sovereignty. In the case of the Arab region this means that forms of

regional cooperation ought to be supported and developed. In addition, in view of the significance of relations of global governance for addressing questions of food security, it is important that mechanisms of governance are organised democratically lest such bodies become irrelevant to those who seek change.

Prior to assessing such 'big picture' implications of questions of food security in the Arab region in detail, however, it is necessary to establish the foundations upon which this thesis was built. It is to this task that the following chapter on methodology will now turn.