

Food Security and Food Sovereignty

Richard Lee

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Summary

This discussion paper explores conceptualisations of food security produced by the World Trade Organisation and the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations and examines a responsive policy framework - food sovereignty – championed by the farming and peasant movement Via Campesina. Conflict over the use and appropriation of plant genetic resources is examined to highlight tensions between food security and food sovereignty. The paper argues that the concepts of food security and food sovereignty co-produce a discourse of global agricultural change.

Introduction

Over recent decades the growth in international agricultural trade has led to increasing interest in the notion of food security. In the post-war developed nations, agricultural productivist frameworks prioritised national self-sufficiency – against a background of war time supply disruption - but these have been eclipsed with the construction of more highly integrated and international food supply chains. In states which are home to high levels of under-nutrition and hunger, food security strategies are also being shaped by trade considerations. As a response to new, trade-driven notions of food security, an international social movement is emerging to promote food sovereignty rather than security. The food sovereignty movement, comprising a network of NGOs, demands the removal of agriculture from the international trade system and rejects agricultural biotechnology and industrial agriculture in favour of localised food production and the protection of rural livelihoods across all nation-states. In this discussion paper I explore varying conceptualisations of food security and food sovereignty produced by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and NGOs and social movements who advocate food sovereignty.

Food and International Trade

The current international trade system has its origins in the Bretton Woods meetings of July 1944, in which three organisations were proposed in order to assist and structure economic relationships between states: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)¹ and the International Trade Organisation (ITO). The IMF was intended to regulate the international financial system through control of exchange rates and balances of payment. The IBRD would provide loans to governments through the issuing of bonds and was primarily intended to help finance reconstruction work in Europe and Japan. It was envisaged that the ITO would govern the rules and regulations for liberalised trade. However, whilst the IMF and the IBRD were established, only one element of the ITO emerged – the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Scammell (1992) argues that the failure of the ITO was a result of disagreement over the method of reducing tariffs between the US and the UK. The UK wished to retain the 'Imperial Preference' tariff system – a system of free trade agreements within the British Commonwealth - whilst the US sought non-discrimination in trade.

The GATT has developed through a series of negotiating rounds, the first being the Geneva Round of 1947, and the most recent the Doha 'Development' Round suspended in July 2006. The initial objectives of the GATT were to instigate "...reciprocal and mutually advantageous arrangements

¹ The IBRD would be superseded by the World Bank, comprising the IBRD and the International Development Association (IDA). The former organisational component focuses upon 'credit-worthy' middle-income states e.g. Turkey, whilst the latter is concerned with the financially-poorest states e.g. Senegal, Tajikistan.

directed to the substantial reduction of tariffs and other barriers to trade and to the elimination of discriminatory treatment in international commerce..." (GATT, 1947). Whilst the articles of the 1947 GATT were relevant to agriculture, two sector-specific exceptions allowed the continuation of quantitative import restrictions and export subsidies on agricultural products. Amongst many developed nations protectionist agricultural policies were entrenched, and in 1958 the Common Agricultural Policy was adopted by some European states. Agricultural trade became a central focus of the Dillon Round (1960-61) and the Kennedy Round (1963-1967), with the limited reduction of some tariffs being agreed in the latter negotiations. In subsequent decades, crises in agricultural policy focused attention upon scarcity and supply rather than trade liberalisation. It was not until the launch of the Uruguay Round (1986-1994) that international agricultural trade liberalisation began to proceed, albeit tentatively. The Round also gave rise to an international organisation dedicated to administering the rules of world trade – the WTO – which superseded the GATT.

During the Uruguay Round, agriculture became progressively incorporated into the international trading system. The Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) were important elements of this new international framework for agricultural commodity production and exchange. The AoA was agreed with the intention of reducing domestic state support for agriculture, improving market access for agricultural imports and reducing subsidies provided to agricultural exports. Correspondingly, the AoA comprises three 'pillars': domestic support, market access and export subsidies. The *domestic support* pillar is divided into a green box for fixed environmental payments decoupled from production, blue box for 'unlimited' subsidies linked to production limits and amber box for reduced subsidies. The AoA required that domestic support be reduced by 20% (13% for developing countries) from a 1986-88 reference level. The *market access* pillar is concerned with tariff reduction, including non-tariff 'barriers' to trade, such as national safety standards and anti-dumping protection. Non-tariff barriers must be made subject to 'tariffication' in order to include them in a calculation of tariff values. Tariff-rate quotas are significant components of the market access pillar and establish a minimum level of import access. The *export subsidy* pillar requires the reduction of expenditure on export subsidies, at the rate of 36% by developed countries and 24% by developing countries, against an average level derived from the period 1986-90. The TRIPS agreement deals with the protection of intellectual property and allows patents to be taken out on microorganisms and on biological and microbiological processes for the production of plants or animals and on plant varieties in the absence of an appropriate *sui generis* alternative. It has provoked strong reactions from those constituencies opposed to the expansion of private rights over living organisms. The SPS agreement covers food safety and plant and animal health, whilst the TBT agreement covers technical standards and certification.

The recently suspended Doha Round, which began in 2001, was making tentative steps towards

the further liberalisation of agricultural trade, including the contentious reduction of non-tariff protections in the EU and the US. The liberalisation of international trade has become a significant source of tension in contemporary agricultural change with the incorporation of agriculture into the world trading system. Arguments in favour of fundamental trade liberalisation, often described as 'free-trade', are founded upon the concept of comparative advantage proposed by David Ricardo (1973). Comparative advantage holds that it may not be necessary for one state to hold absolute advantage over another state in any goods for trade to be worthwhile. Comparative advantage is calculated by determining the opportunity cost, which is the production lost on some goods by concentrating production on other goods. Although comparative advantage provides a rationale for specialisation in production, it does not address why comparative costs differ between states. The factor proportions model (Heckscher-Ohlin theorem) proposes that comparative advantage depends upon relative amounts of the factors of production (land, labour and capital) held by a state. Therefore states with an abundance of labour should specialise in the production of goods which are labour intensive, whilst capital abundant states should specialise in the production of goods which are capital intensive. The factor proportions model and the theory of comparative advantage presume the *theoretical* existence of perfect competition – comprised of atomicity, homogeneity, perfect information, equal access and free entry - which maintains an equilibrium on price. Advocacy of free-trade also suggests a belief in a distinctly economic realm of life determined by the maximisation of self-interest. This abstraction is now a central component of Western economic thought (Carrier, 1998).

Food Security

Food security has been defined in at least 200 ways (Smith et al, 1992). The term is frequently differentiated by reference to scale – from the food security of households, to regional, national and global food security. The scope of food security is also differentiated. It may involve a pre-occupation with aggregate imports and exports or be implicated in the maintenance of rural livelihoods. Food security considered at the level of the household necessarily incorporates a wide-range of factors including demographics, land, production, consumption, reproduction, entitlements, kinship and customs. The household as unit of analysis and intervention connects food security to a complex network of social activity. Security, whether concerning food, energy or terrorism, is most often associated with the national level. Ritson (1980) explored the relationship between food security and national food self-sufficiency in the UK. He suggests that three elements of food supply policy (policies that influence the proportion of imported food consumption) configure the degree of national self-sufficiency: foresight, stability and security. Foresight is the forecasting of future food import prices whilst stability is the concern to reduce the instability of food commodity prices. In terms of security, he suggests that an efficient system for the international trading of food is a vital component of world food security and that absolute national

self-sufficiency is not commensurate with this. A preoccupation with food security on the national-scale has implications within and beyond a state, yet, global food security is relatively seldom discussed. Dyson (2001) suggests that the future demand for food will be driven by increased population in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. He predicts that increases in cereal yield will be crucial to meeting this demand due to the limited amount of cultivatable land. In addition, whilst North America, Australia, Argentina and perhaps Western Europe will be significant exporters of grain, and the former Soviet states also have considerable potential for grain exports, he acknowledges that the majority of the world's hungry and poor have little to offer in exchange.

The current international political economy of food security is one in which the regulation of agricultural commodity prices has assumed increasing significance. This is due to the reduction in domestic support and export subsidy and development of market access as prescribed by the AoA. In the EU and US, domestic support has begun to shift away from production payments and towards direct payments and payments for public good provision, though agriculture in these two powerful trade blocs remains highly protected. The objective of these adjustments is to move towards a more liberalised trading environment for agricultural commodities, often referred to as free-trade. One commentator has asserted that a new regime of food has been established comprising private control of food security and a public response in the form of food sovereignty (McMichael, 2005).

Food security is usually categorised as a 'non-trade concern' within trade policy as it incorporates factors other than those directly relevant to the operation of an international market system for the production and exchange of agricultural goods. Nevertheless, it clearly occupies the thoughts of those engaged in international agricultural trade policy. In 2002, Miguel Rodríguez Mendoza, then Deputy Director-General of WTO, suggested that national food security strategies should be premised upon international trade as regulated by the WTO:

“History has shown that food security does not equal self-sufficiency of a country. It has more to do with international trade in food products that makes them available at competitive prices and sets the right incentives for those countries where they can be produced most efficiently. Food shortages have to do with poverty rather than with being a net food importer. Food security nowadays lies not only in the local production of food, but in a country's ability to finance imports of food through exports of other goods.”

(WTO, 2002)

Food security is a direct concern of the FAO. In 1996 the World Food Summit, convened at the FAO headquarters in Rome, it was emphasised that in order to achieve food security:

“Each nation must adopt a strategy consistent with its resources and capacities to achieve

its individual goals and, at the same time, cooperate regionally and internationally in order to organize collective solutions to global issues of food security. In a world of increasingly interlinked institutions, societies and economies, coordinated efforts and shared responsibilities are essential.”

(FAO, 1996)

FAO staff have expressed doubts about the efficacy of widespread agricultural trade liberalisation. An FAO report published in 2003 on 'Trade Reforms and Food Security' suggests that:

“...the potential gains from trade liberalisation are not guaranteed and will not necessarily be reflected in improved food security status of all groups within society. In particular, there are likely to be significant differences between the impacts on small scale and commercial farmers, rural non-farm producers and urban consumers both within and across countries. These need to be considered in identifying the food security implications of trade liberalization.”

(FAO, 2003: 16-17)

The same report also stresses that the major WTO negotiating rounds such as Doha are not the only form of agricultural trade liberalisation and that the multiplicity of trade agreements in combination with partial multilateral liberalisation will produce unpredictable outcomes. Bilateral agreements such as the Economic Partnership Agreements currently being negotiated between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) will replace preferential and non-reciprocal trade relations with open and reciprocal trade. These negotiations are a response to WTO rules prohibiting unilateral preferences.

Food Sovereignty

According to Windfuhr and Jonsen (2005: 15), “While food security is more of technical concept, and the right to food a legal one, food sovereignty is essentially a political concept.” Food sovereignty first emerged as a policy framework and discourse in 1996, principally as a response to the inclusion of agriculture within the world trading system through the AoA. Its creation is often attributed to the self-styled international farming and peasant movement Via Campesina, an organisation created in 1992 at the Congress of the National Union of Farmers and Livestock Owners (UNAG) and which coordinates member groups from Africa, North, Central and South America, Asia, the Caribbean and Europe. Member groups of Via Campesina include the Family Farmers' Association (UK), Confederation Paysanne (France), Bharatiya Kisan Union (India), Landless Workers' Movement (Brazil), National Family Farm Coalition (USA) and the Landless Peoples' Movement (South Africa). In April 1996 the Second International Conference of Via

Campesina was held in Tlaxcala, Mexico. In Tlaxcala the first definition of food sovereignty was agreed, with a view to mobilising the concept within negotiations over the ITPGRFA and at the FAO World Food Summit. In their position statement, 'Food Sovereignty: A Future without Hunger', Via Campesina stated that:

"Food sovereignty is the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productive diversity. We have the right to produce our own food in our own territory. Food sovereignty is a precondition to genuine food security."

(Via Campesina, 1996: 1)

From 1996 onwards a series of publications, statements and declarations have elaborated and refined the food sovereignty framework (see Table 1).

The coalescing of various NGOs and social movements around a common framework of food sovereignty is best illustrated by the formation of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC). The IPC was mobilised in advance of the 2002 'World Food Summit: *five years later*', and has emerged as the focal point for this coalition, though it describes itself as:

"...a facilitation mechanism for diffusion of information on, and capacity building for, food sovereignty and food security issues. It is not a centralised structure and does not claim to represent its members and the wider movement. Instead, it is a regionally-based Network with constituency and thematic representation in its membership."

(International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, 2006)

The IPC have suggested that food sovereignty comprises four priority areas, or pillars: the right to food; access to productive resources; mainstreaming of agroecological production; trade and local markets. In line with the four pillars, the IPC assigns organisations as 'thematic focal points' for each pillar (see table 2) and assigns organisations as 'constituency focal points' to represent various social interests (see table 3). The *right to food* pillar is concerned with developing a human rights approach to individual entitlement to safe, nutritious and culturally acceptable food. The *access to productive resources* pillar deals with the promotion of access to land, water, genetic

Table 1: Chronology of the Emergence of the Food Sovereignty Framework

Date	Publication/Statement/Declaration	Authors/Location
1996	'Food Sovereignty: A Future Without Hunger'	Via Campesina
1996	'Statement by the NGO Forum to the World Food Summit'	NGO Forum to the World Food Summit
2001	'Our World is Not For Sale. WTO: Shrink or Sink'	Our World is Not for Sale Network
2001	'Final Declaration of the World Forum on Food Sovereignty'	Havana, Cuba
2001	'Priority to Peoples' Food Sovereignty'	Via Campesina
2001	'Sale of the Century? Peoples Food Sovereignty. Part 1 – the Implications of Trade Negotiations'	Friends of the Earth International
2001	'Sale of the Century? Peoples Food Sovereignty. Part 2 – a New Multilateral Framework for Food and Agriculture'	Friends of the Earth International
2001	'Food Sovereignty in the Era of Trade Liberalisation: Are Multilateral Means Feasible?'	Steve Suppan, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
2002	'Food Sovereignty: A Right for All. Political Statement of the NGO/CSO Forum for Food Sovereignty'	Rome, Italy
2002	'Statement on People's Food Sovereignty: Our World is Not for Sale.'	Cancun, Mexico
2002	'Sustaining Agricultural Biodiversity and the Integrity and Free Flow of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture'	ITDG/GRAIN/ETC Group
2003	'What is Food Sovereignty?'	Via Campesina
2003	'Towards Food Sovereignty: Constructing an Alternative to the WTO's AoA'	Geneva, Switzerland
2003	'Trade and People's Food Sovereignty'	Friends of the Earth
2003	'How TRIPS Threatens Biodiversity and Food Sovereignty'	Hyderabad, India
2003	'Statement on People's Food Sovereignty: Our World is Not for Sale.'	Cancun, Mexico
2005	'Food Sovereignty: Towards Democracy in Localised Food Systems'	Michael Windfuhr and Jennie Jonsen, FIAN International
2006	'Agrarian Reform and Food Sovereignty: Alternative Model for the Rural World'	Peter Rosset, Univ California at Berkeley / Globalalternatives

(adapted from Windfuhr and Jonson, 2005: 47-48)

and other natural resources and with the distribution of benefits which are derived from their use. Genetic resource ownership and use is an important issue within this pillar. The pillar dealing with *agricultural production models* advocates the mainstreaming of agroecological production, which is defined as the application of ecological principles to the design and management of agroecological systems. The final pillar, *trade and food*, aims to promote policies which tackle the effects of subsidised exports, food dumping, artificially low agricultural prices and other negative elements of the agricultural trade model.

Table 2: IPC Thematic Focal Points

Thematic Focal Points				
<i>Right to Food</i>	<i>Access to Productive / Genetic Resources</i>	<i>Agricultural Models</i>	<i>Production</i>	<i>Trade and Food</i>
FoodFirst Information and Action Network	The Erosion, Technology and Concentration Group Practical Action Genetic Resources Action International	Assessoria e Serviços a Projetos em Agricultura Alternativa		Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Table 3: IPC Constituency Focal Points

Constituency Focal Points				
<i>Farmers</i>	<i>Fisherfolk</i>	<i>Indigenous Peoples</i>	<i>Youth Organisations</i>	<i>Trade Unions</i>
International Federation of Agricultural Producers Via Campesina	International Collective in Support of Fish Workers World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers World Forum of Fisher Peoples	International Indian Treaty Council	International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth	IUF

(both adapted from IPC, 2006)

Concern over the 'mutation of the meaning' of food security around agricultural trade liberalisation is an important element of food sovereignty (see IUF, 2002). In a paper on food sovereignty and trade liberalisation, Steve Suppan of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy points out that the configuration of agricultural policy and commodity prices is disproportionately determined by international trade, given that only 10% of world food production is traded internationally (Suppan, 2003). Although this apparent contradiction is an important concept in the food sovereignty framework, focus upon international trade is not considered sufficient. Advocates of food

sovereignty stress that the framework is a 'total package'; that the four pillars of the framework can not be isolated from each other and that reform of food and agricultural requires fundamental change. In a speech to the World Congress of Young Farmers in 2003, Jacques Chirac aligned food sovereignty to the argument for increased national self-sufficiency and the development of local farming. This has attracted criticism from the food sovereignty movement – underpinned by a rejection of potential political alignments with the leaders of Western nations – by failing to combine the protection of national markets (under the trade and food pillar) with a change to production models, improved access to productive resources and the implementation a human right to food.

From 23rd-27th February 2007 the 'World Forum for Food Sovereignty' convened in Mali. This meeting sought to clarify the objectives and actions of the Food Sovereignty movement. Seven themes were discussed: trade policies and local markets, local knowledge and technology, access to and control over natural resources, sharing territories between sectors, conflict and disaster response, migration and production models. In terms of trade policies, the demand is for "...a radical change in the rules that govern food and agriculture at the international level, removing these from the WTO and challenging bilateral and regional trade agreements and policies, based on the neoliberal model of economic development which reduces farmers, fishers, food and farming to focus on tradeable commodities." (World Forum for Food Sovereignty, 2007). In terms of production methods, the objective is to "...promote the use of locally-controlled, diverse, small-scale agroecological production methods and artisanal fisheries in all regions of the world." (World Forum for Food Sovereignty, 2007). At the time of writing coherent outputs from the meeting are unavailable, but it is expected that new proposals for the framework of food sovereignty will have been agreed.

Access to Productive Resources: Plant Genetic Material

Access to plant genetic resources used in food production is subject to conflict between food security and food sovereignty perspectives. Whilst the FAO is the main global institution addressing access and conservation of plant genetic resources, they are also connected to the international trade system. The main FAO Treaty covering plant genetic resources, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), exists in tension with explicit agreements on rights over genetic resources and 'innovations' such as TRIPS. This must be considered alongside the reliance of the ITPGRFA upon a confused notion of food security, arising through uncertainty on the part of the FAO over the opportunities and threats posed by the liberalisation of agricultural trade.

The TRIPS agreement has been a particularly contentious aspect of the formal connection

between agriculture and international trade due to the obligation it places upon member states to uphold patent protection over microorganisms, microbiological processes and non-biological processes used for the production of plant and animals, and plant varieties (though a *sui generis*² system is acceptable for plant varieties). This contention is compounded by the fact that the TRIPS agreement is not primarily an agreement about food and agriculture, and therefore does not refer to any notion of food security. It also connects two other previously unrelated domains, intellectual property and international trade. With reference to the TRIPS agreement, the FAO have stated that the ITPGRFA "...includes a number of issues where cooperation, complementarity and synergy with the WTO in general and TRIPS in particular would be essential." (FAO, undated)

The language of 'cooperation, complementarity and synergy' between TRIPS and the ITPGRFA is significant, particularly in recalling the assertion of McMichael (2005) that the TRIPS agreement is a key to the production of a 'world agriculture'. The ITPGRFA emerged as a revision to the 1983 International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources (IUPGR). According to Lettington (2003: 66), "The basic principles underlying the revision were agreed to be the interdependence of the world's regions for the germplasm that guarantees their major crops and the urgent need to achieve and maintain food security for all." Lettington (2003) identifies five major areas within the ITPGRFA which are in tension with WTO negotiations and agreements, including TRIPS: farmers' rights, the multilateral system, facilitated access, benefit sharing and international agricultural research institutions (especially the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)). The multilateral system is intended to allow for the free-flow of germplasm, though this argument may hold little weight within an international agricultural trade system which promotes strong private property rights.

The role of large, transnational firms – such as BASF, Monsanto and Syngenta - with business interests in many related agro-industrial sectors – such as green biotechnology, herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and seeds – in the co-production of agricultural technologies and political-economic frameworks is a major concern of food sovereignty advocates. In order to undermine the increasingly influential role of firms in a context of liberalised agricultural trade and strengthened private property rights, they suggest that international agreements are potentially useful sites of action. ITDG *et al* (2002: 4) suggest that "...the free flow of seeds could be enhanced by the FAO International Seed Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), so long as it unambiguously implements the clause that prohibits claims of intellectual property rights on, and outlaws biopiracy of, these resources – including their genes – and ensures rights and rewards to farmers." Faith in the possibility for negotiation within the ITPGRFA demonstrates that the advocates of food sovereignty do have some confidence in the FAO as an institution and negotiating fora.

² *Sui generis* is a Latin expression meaning of its own kind/genus or unique in its characteristics. In intellectual property there are rights which are known as being *sui generis* to owners of a small class of works, such as pant species and databases (Wikipedia, 2006). *Sui generis* systems for plant variety protection gives a degree of autonomy to nation-states, allowing them, in theory, to devise alternative systems to the UPOV system.

But this faith is not unqualified, and GRAIN (2005) suggest that the ITPGRFA has allowed seed companies open access to public seedbanks without a requirement to share their privately owned material.

Conclusion

The concepts of food security and food sovereignty both have a global dimension despite having their origins in political notions associated with nation-states. The growth in international agricultural trade has led to increasing interest in the notion of food security and as a result the concept is becoming used in both developed and developing country contexts. Further, approaches to food security which regard states as distinct containers have been undermined by integrated food supply chains. The food sovereignty movement has a clear international focus and devotes much of its campaigning activities towards the international institutions and organisations which influence food security. The belief that international organisations, such as the WTO and the FAO, and the institutions of international agricultural trade – the norms and conventions of international trade liberalisation - are the *principal* sites for producing change is at odds with Grant (2003: 66), who asserts that:

“...the WTO remains one of the weaker global governance agencies despite the way in which its opponents often characterise it. It remains more a 'Water Treading Organisation' than a 'World Terror Organisation'. Its secretariat can seek to facilitate agreement, but much still depends on bilateral mutual accommodations between the EU and the USA. Their stance in turn is driven to a large extent by their domestic politics. There is a stated intention to make the Doha Round 'a development round', but the underlying asymmetries of power that favour the developed world are unlikely to be easily changed.”

The argument offered by Grant is that agriculture remains a highly protected sector in the United States and in Europe and the so-called 'global' institutions concerned with food and agriculture can do little to change this situation. The disintegration of the Doha 'Development' Round into vehement discord between US and EU negotiators would seem to lend credence this reasoning. Yet leaders of the food sovereignty movement suggest that:

“The collapse of the WTO opens new prospects for social movements. With its partners, La Via Campesina will organize in Mali, in February 2007, the World Forum for Food Sovereignty. The objective of this ambitious meeting is on one hand to clarify some elements of the food sovereignty concept, and on the other hand to develop a global action to push forward this new people's right at government level as well as in international institutions.”

Through polarisation of debate and the attention paid to international organisations it is possible that the relational aspects of food security – the subtle influences that are produced between multilateral international trade agreements, bilateral regional trade agreements and national food security policies – may be underemphasised. The polarisation which exists between the notions of food security and food sovereignty is represented in the following table:

Table 1: Main Elements of Food Security and Food Sovereignty

	Food Security	Food Sovereignty
Model of Agricultural Production	Productivist/Industrial	Agro-Ecological
Model of Agricultural Trade	Liberalised	Protectionist
Lead Organisation	WTO	Via Campesina
Instruments	AoA, TRIPS, SPS	IPC
Approach to Plant Genetic Resources	Private Property Rights	Anti-Patent, Communal
Environmental Discourse	Economic Rationalism	Green Rationalism

The final element, the environmental discourse of the concepts, follows the work of Dryzek (1997). Food security closely resembles an environmental discourse of 'economic rationalism' given its basic entities are economic actors (WTO regulates international trade undertaken by private firms), it assumes natural relationships are competitive (market relations), actors are motivated by rational self-interest and its key metaphors are mechanistic (recall the statement of Miguel Rodríguez Mendoza in relation to the efficient production of food). In contrast, the environmental discourse of the food sovereignty framework could be described as green rationalism given its notions of the complexity of food production, the interrelationship of farmers and nature and the use of organic metaphors such as agro-ecological food production. However, unlike most green rationalist discourses the food sovereignty framework contains little reference to formal politics. This is more curious given the assertion by Windfuhr and Jonsen (2005) that food sovereignty is 'essentially a political concept'. The identification of food security as an economic rationalist discourse and food sovereignty as a green rationalist discourse echoes earlier polarisations of agricultural discourses into productivist and ecological perspectives. The productivist discourse describes the large productivity gains which have been produced by post-war industrial agriculture, whilst the ecological discourse draws attention to the negative environmental impact of agricultural intensification (Morgan et al, 2006).

Food security and food sovereignty are represented as opposing paradigms of food production,

yet there is nothing fixed or stable about either of these concepts. I argue that in fact they 'co-produce' each other through a shared discourse. This is not to say, for instance, that Via Campesina and the WTO are in agreement with each other over most aspects of international trade liberalisation and plant genetic resources: clearly they are not. I do not dispute the distinctions between food security and food sovereignty *per se*, but suggest that, taken together, contention between institutions and groups as articulated through statements and practices structures a mutual language. These actors choose to represent themselves against one another and in doing so 'produce' each other, though this may not happen in a symmetrical fashion. For instance, the WTO may be much less concerned with defining and redefining food security against Via Campesina than Via Campesina are with constructing the food sovereignty approach to trade against the Agreement on Agriculture. Both food security and food sovereignty are concepts concerned with how agricultural production ought to be configured in order to best address the plight of 800 million people who are classified as undernourished (FAO, 2006).

What remains unclear is how to characterise the FAO. The FAO conceptualises food security in a similar way to that advocated by the WTO. This conceptualisation of food security is not accepted unequivocally by the FAO, which has voiced concern over the impact of agricultural trade liberalisation. With regard to plant genetic resources, the FAO gives primacy to private property rights in line with the WTO. The relationship between the FAO and advocates of food sovereignty could best be described as one of dependency on the part of the latter and ambivalence on the part of the former. The food sovereignty framework is constructed around a global agricultural change discourse and therefore places faith in the abilities of sympathetic global institutions, such as the FAO, to enact change. That said, the FAO is currently viewed by some food sovereignty advocates as a 'weak' organisation with a declining influence. The difficulty of neatly mapping the FAO onto a food security or food sovereignty may be related to the strict ideology of food sovereignty. In the case of plant genetic resources, interdependence is a crucial idea in the food sovereignty approach encapsulated by the notion of 'the free flow of seeds'. The FAO's Leipzig Declaration on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (FAO, 1996) argues for an enhancement of world food security through the application of traditional knowledge *and* modern technologies and in doing so navigates a middle ground between so-called industrial agriculture and agro-ecological production. But in the food sovereignty framework the assignment of private rights over genetic resources in the form of patents is not permissible. In arguing for access to plant genetic resources *protected* by private intellectual property rights, the FAO is taken as operating within a food security paradigm.

In conclusion it should be emphasised that food security is a concept which can be mobilised for different purposes. In the UK, a discourse of food security is re-emerging which draws attention to the falling national self-sufficiency ratio and decline of agricultural production. In contrast, senior representatives of the WTO argue that in order to achieve food security nations should encourage

international trade in food. The food sovereignty movement identifies the changing dimensions of food security discourse at the global scale, and posits a strictly defined, though embryonic, alternative policy framework. Whether emerging discourses of food security will be influenced, or replaced, by the food sovereignty proposition remains to be seen.

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