The Role of Human Rights and Agroecology at the UN Food Systems Summit

A Study of Food Security Discourse in Global Food Governance

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International Relations
Dept. of Global political Studies Bachelor programme - IR103L
15 credits thesis
Thesis submitted: Spring 2022
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Abstract

The UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), held in September 2021, brought great expectations of a sustainable food systems transition in accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was, however, almost instantly criticised for failing to be transparent, implementing a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) and agroecological principles, and for not including the UN Committee of Food Security (CFS). The CFS has reached high credibility over the last decade due to its inclusive and transparent structure. The UNs partnership with the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the appointment of Agnes Kalibata as Secretary General Guterres’ Special Envoy to the UNFSS has further been the basis for arguing that corporate actors has gained power and influence over the UNFSS.

Following Friedmann and McMichael’s Food Regime Theory (FRT), the aim of this thesis is to use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the UNFSSs contributions to the food security discourse of the contemporary food regime within the frameworks of human rights and agroecology. The conceptualisation of food security bears political and economic implications and the UNFSSs contributions to its discourse could potentially influence global food governance and the future role of the CFS.

Wordcount: 13 558

Research question: What were the United Nations Food System Summit’s contributions to the food security discourse of the contemporary food regime?
List of abbreviations

CFS - United Nations Committee on Food Security
CDA - Critical Discourse Analysis
DA - Discourse Analysis
FAO - United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FRT - Food regime Theory
FSN - Food Security and Nutrition
HLEP - High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition
HRBA - Human Rights Based approach
LoC - Lever of Change
OHCHR - The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations
PDA - Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis
SDGs - United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SFS - Sustainable Food Systems
UNFSS - United Nations Food Systems Summit
WEF - World Economic Forum
# Table of contents

1. Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1

2. The evolution of food security discourse ............................................................................. 4

   2.1 Food Regimes .................................................................................................................... 4

   2.2 Food Security .................................................................................................................... 5

   2.3 UN Food Systems Summit 2021 ....................................................................................... 11

   2.4 Concluding remarks ........................................................................................................ 13

3. Research design ..................................................................................................................... 15

   3.1 Choice of method ............................................................................................................. 15

   3.2 Choice of data and how it was analysed ......................................................................... 16

       3.2.1 The Levers of Change (LoCs) ............................................................................. 16

       3.2.2 UNFSS senior officer interview ......................................................................... 17

   3.3 Shortcomings ................................................................................................................... 18

   3.4 Concluding remarks ........................................................................................................ 19

4. Findings & Analysis .............................................................................................................. 20

   4.1 Human Rights .................................................................................................................. 20

   4.2 Agroecology ..................................................................................................................... 25

   4.3 Concluding remarks ........................................................................................................ 30

5. Discussion ............................................................................................................................... 31

   5.1 Concluding remarks ........................................................................................................ 34

6. Conclusion .............................................................................................................................. 35

7. Bibliography .......................................................................................................................... 37

8. Appendices ............................................................................................................................. 41

   Appendix 1. The PANTHER principles ................................................................................. 41

   Appendix 2. Five levels of transition towards Sustainable Food Systems and related principles of Agroecology ............................................................. 43

   Appendix 3. The principles of agroecology ......................................................................... 44

   Appendix 4. Interview 1 - Interview guide ......................................................................... 46

   Appendix 5. The five core imperatives of the Food Finance Architecture Lever of Change ....... 48
1. Introduction

Since its restructuring in 2009 the UN Committee on Food Security (CFS) has become a broadly accepted and influential focal point for global food governance across the many sectors of the food system, including states, producers, civil society movements and indigenous peoples, corporations, and non-governmental organisations. When, however, the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) was announced by UN Secretary General Guterres in 2019 it was not to be hosted by the CFS, or even by the UN Food and Agriculture organisation (FAO).

Whilst influential, the CFS is not the only authority on global food governance. What makes it so fundamental to this thesis is its influence on global food security discourse while ensuring and adhering to local producers and the civil society.

The Summit and its organisers have received vast criticism for what, to some, appears to be a conscious act of distancing itself from the CFS under the influence of corporate actors such as Agnes Kalibata. She is the President of Alliance for a Green revolution in Africa (AGRA) and was announced the Special Envoy to the UNFSS by UN Secretary General Guterres (Sherpa, 2019; IPC, 2020; The Ad Hoc Committee on UNFSS Governance, 2021; Canfield et.al, 2021). Since the CFSs recent influence on global food governance comes from its widespread acceptance from a broad variety of actors, the UNFSS risks losing credibility and validity, especially among the indigenous and civil society actors, if the Summit was to distance itself from the CFS.

A 2021 report by FAO, UNDP and UNEP argues that the outcomes of forums such as the UNFSS will be essential to either hinder or support the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It further argues that “there is no bigger opportunity for countries to commit to repurposing of harmful support policies than at the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021.” (FAO et.al, 2021:xx). It is clear that the expectation for this Summit is to respond to the most pressing issues, not just of contemporary food production and governance, but the fight against climate change.

This thesis has identified the Summit outputs named Levers of Change (LoCs) as previously un-researched. Since they come directly from the organisation of the UNFSS, the discourse presented in these documents will expose the normative values and discourse of the Summit.

Friedmann and McMichael’s Food Regime Theory (FRT) constitutes the theoretical framework for this thesis. A food regime is a way of understanding and describing global
food governance and the system of food production, agricultural trade and food security during a given time or time period. FRT relates the global development of capitalism to agriculture and food (Friedmann and McMichael, 1989). They further describe the current food regime as the continuation of a system which has historically dominated the international relations between Europe and other continents through colonialism and historic trade patterns (Ibid).

Few things are as relevant in international relations as agricultural trade, especially in an internationalised system where food security has become reliant on said systems. Agricultural production and trade is the basis for many multi- and bi-lateral state relations, as well as the cornerstone for supranational organisations such as the European Union. For this reason the discourse on food security can heavily influence and dictate multi and bilateral relations between some of the world's biggest economic and political actors.

In the context of an asymmetric food regime and the Summit’s perceived renouncement of the CFS and its normative framework, this thesis is posing the following research question: What was the UN Food Systems Summit’s contribution to the food security discourse of the contemporary food regime? This question will be answered by looking at to what extent the Summit adhered to two fundamental principles of the CFS, the human rights-based approach (HRBA) to food governance and framework of agroecology.

McMichael (2009) describes a food regime as naturally asymmetric, and often characterised by a dichotomy of two perspectives. This means that no findings or conclusions presented by this thesis will suggest a paradigm shift and a new food regime. What it can suggest is whether the discourse of the UNFSS is more in line with the liberal and market driven view of food security or a Human Rights Based Approach and agroecology as promoted by the CFS. One could then draw further conclusions regarding whether the UNFSS is distancing itself from the values and principles of the CFS.

The following chapter outlines the evolution of global food governance, it introduces FRT as the theoretical framework and how it relates to contemporary food discourse. It further discusses food security, its implications and evolution, and how it relates to human rights and agroecology. Lastly it explores existing literature and arguments surrounding the UNFSS and provides a background on the critique aimed towards the Summit.

In chapter three the research design and methodology are outlined. To complete the analysis this thesis will perform a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the UNFSSs Levers of Change (LoCs) and the transcript of an original interview with a senior officer at the UNFSS organisation. It will do so based on the thirteen principles of agroecology and the
seven PANTHER principles which outlines the human rights-based approach to food security.

No research has thus far been looking specifically at the LoCs and they cover a broad variety of topics, namely Gender, Finance, Innovation, Human Rights and Governance. The interview further provides the perspective of a senior official from the Summit’s organisation who serves as an example of the type of values and expertise held by UNFSS staff.

In the fourth chapter the thesis aims to explore the research question by presenting the thesis’ findings and analysis based on the coding of the interview transcript and LoCs. It shows how, and to what extent, the texts relate to the frameworks of agroecology and human rights.

A discussion on these findings and how they relate to the broader field of global food governance is presented in chapter five. Based on this discussion the thesis is able to draw conclusions regarding the UNFSSs contribution to the food security discourse.

Finally, the concluding remarks of the thesis is presented in chapter six together with the broader implications of its findings.
2. The evolution of food security discourse

This chapter will present the evolution of food security leading up to the UNFSS and contextualise the role of human rights and agroecology in the food security discourse surrounding the Summit in order to analyse these frameworks in a later chapter. First it will cover the concept of food regimes and Food Regime Theory (FRT). FRT is also known as Food Regime Analysis or just simply Food Regimes, but this thesis will use the term Food Regime Theory. This theory outlines the fundamental mechanisms of global food governance, a system in which the UNFSS takes place. Secondly the chapter will cover key literature on food security, including the UN Committee on Food Security (CFS) and the role of agroecology and the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to agriculture. Lastly it will cover literature specific to the UNFSS, mainly the critique and response it has received by a wide range of organisations and scholars for its lack of transparency and its close cooperation with corporate actors. Together the following subchapters will lay a foundation on food security discourse in the contemporary food governance that this research aims to build on.

2.1 Food Regimes

Food Regime Theory was developed by Harriet Friedmann but brought to prominence through an article by Friedmann and McMichael in 1989. According to Otero et.al “[a] food regime is a temporally specific dynamic in the global political economy of food.”, which means a structure or dynamic limited to a specific timeframe (2013:269-270). Coming from a tradition of radical political economy and rooted in the Regulation School and World Systems Theory Friedmann and McMichael developed a theoretical concept aiming to “reconstruct a preliminary history of agriculture to shed light on its impact on the state system, and thereby offer a critique of the nationalist presuppositions that inform the literature on development and dependency.” (Friedmann and McMichael, 1989:93). This concept has, according to Tilzey (2019:230), been ‘foundational’ and ‘pivotal’ to the current conceptualization of the relation between agriculture, capitalism, and the state.

Friedmann and McMichael originally described the history of agriculture through two regimes. The first regime began in the 1870s, it was centred around European colonialism and the trade between European states and the colonised settler states. The second regime was characterised by US hegemony and began around the 1930s. During this time there was a shift towards agricultural intensification, specialisation and industrial production for
manufactured foods rather than final use (Ibid). This historical context is still relevant since the structures established during these times have contributed to the design of the contemporary food regime.

A food regime is grounded in relatively stable international trade relations, but these are often uneven or asymmetrical in nature (McMichael, 2009). What to call the contemporary food regime is heavily debated, often due to the uneven and asymmetrical features. McMichael (2009) describes the current regime as the third food regime, a neoliberal ‘corporate’ food regime. With influences of the second regime, the corporate regime is “organised around a politically constructed division of agricultural labour between Northern staple grains traded for Southern high-value products (meats, fruits and vegetables)” (McMichael, 2009:148).

This thesis acknowledges that McMichael is not uncontested. According to Otero et.al. McMichael’s definition of the third food regime is lacking. They argue that it successfully describes the consequences and beneficiaries of the food system but is missing a description of its “prime movers” (2013:271). Instead, Otero et.al wants to describe the contemporary regime as the neoliberal food regime. In their analysis they emphasize the large competitive differences between the various economic actors and what they call “neoregulation” instead of deregulation (Ibid:272). They write that neoregulation is favouring large agribusiness corporations and promoting the neoliberal agenda via national regulations and international agreements. As outlined in subchapter 2.3, this is exactly the type of framework that the UNFSS has been accused of promoting.

Friedmann (2005) has made yet another interpretation, namely that we are currently in the corporate-environmental food regime, assuming a system of green capitalism as a response to social pressure. She argues that the regime is led by private capital and has the ability to self-regulate but needs “a floor for their activities” (Friedmann, 2005:253) set by international organisations. It is thus clear that Friedmann is still grounded in the regulation school that formed the basis of FRT.

This thesis utilises FRT as the basis for understanding global food governance as ever changing, dynamic and asymmetrical. In the discussion on the discourse of food security in the following subchapter this dynamic nature of food regimes and food governance will be reflected.

2.2 Food Security
Food security is a concept that has meant different things at different times and what one chooses to include in the definition has economic and political applications (See table 1 for Sibindi’s conceptualisation of the historical evolution of food security). Multilateral organisations have been fundamental to the development of the food security concept. In fact, it was first established as a globally recognised and important concept at the first UN World Food Conference in 1974. At this conference FAO Director General Boerma famously said that the right to food was at the foundation of a human’s right to life (Canfield et.al, 2021:4). This saying set the agenda for FAO’s public vision on food as a human right, making it unlike any other tradable commodity according to Canfield et.al (2021). This also suggests that the principle of human rights formed the normative framework for the FAO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period:</th>
<th>Dimensions:</th>
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<tr>
<td>End of 19th century - early 20th century</td>
<td>State security</td>
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<td>Interwar period</td>
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<td>1950-1960s</td>
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<td>1970s</td>
<td>Food security, self-sufficiency</td>
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<td>1980s</td>
<td>Individual level and access</td>
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<td>1990s</td>
<td>Nutrition, culture and food sovereignty</td>
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<td>2000 - present</td>
<td>Food rights, availability, access, utilisation, stability and nutrition</td>
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**Table 1:** Historic Conceptualisation of Food Security (Sibindi, 2020:4).

The UN General Assembly in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966 have both recognized the normative framework of the human rights-based approach (HRBA). It was however not until the World Food Summit (WFS) in 1996 that political
leaders committed to realise this framework and simultaneously asked the UN to produce a better and more updated definition of the right to adequate food (Golay & Büschi, 2012).

In 1999 the ICESCR adopted its General Comment 12 of the right to adequate food, which Golay & Büschi summarises as: “[A]ll human beings have the right to food that is available in sufficient quantity, nutritionally and culturally adequate and physically and economically accessible.” (2012:11). The main improvement provided by this definition is the focus on human dignity and state obligation to respect, protect, fulfill and provide this right (Ibid.). The Maastricht Guidelines defined the obligation of state actors to protect the right to adequate food, which includes a protection against enterprises and private individuals (including transnational corporations) that threaten the individual’s access to adequate food (Golay & Büschi, 2012).

The 2014 FAO report “The Right to Food and the Responsible Governance of Tenure: A dialogue towards implementation” provides an excellent background on the PANTHER principles of human rights implementation. This report was published as a guide on how to utilise a HRBA in the implementation of the CFSS “Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.” (FAO, 2014). Please see figure 1 regarding the interplay between the PANTHER principles and food security. In appendix 1 a full list of the PANTHER principles and their description is provided. These principles are the foundation for this thesis’ understanding of the HRBA.

![Figure 1: FSN in a human rights-based framework.](Reconstructed figure from HLEP 2019:27)
The UN Committee on Food Security (CFS) was established during the 1974 World Food Conference. Following a food crisis in 2007-2008 the CFS underwent a reconstruction to improve global food governance and has since then been asserting itself “as the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all.” (Canfield at.al, 2021:5). During its reconstruction, the CFS adopted an innovative, human rights based and inclusive approach to global food governance, involving a variety of stakeholders. Member states hold the voting power and therefore also the accountability of any decision in the CFS.

A unique feature of this institution is that civil society organisations are not merely observers, as customary in the UN system, but recognised as full participants that can intervene throughout the debates. The civil society is separated from the private sector which is a separate constituency.

The High Level Panel of Experts for Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) was an essential part of the restructuring of CFS. It was created in 2009 and has since contributed to a level of legitimacy that has led the CFS to generate progressive normative guidance praised by small-scale farmers around the globe (McKeon, 2017).

It has been customary to organise parallel Summits for INGOs and social movements alongside the UN Summits, and this was also the case at the 1996 World Food Summit. Civil society organisations came together to denounce food dumping, often disguised as aid, and instead call for food sovereignty (Canfield et.al, 2021). The organisation La Vía Campesina was central to the evolution of food sovereignty. During the 1996 World Food Summit La Vía Campesina successfully politicised the corporate food regime (McMichael’s definition) by substituting security with sovereignty (McMichael & Schneider, 2011).

The concept of food sovereignty entails a revaluation of peasant food production and a democratisation of the food system. Once states have regained control of their own production food surpluses can be traded but it should never be seen as a tool for food security (Otero et.al, 2013).

According to Burdock & Ampt (2021), the food sovereignty movement is run on the principles of human sovereignty and the social values attached to food. It promotes local and rural participation in the entire production chain as well as the consumers’ right to influence their food and agriculture systems (Burdock and Ampt, 2021:2). The values of the food sovereignty movement are compatible with the principles of agroecology, specifically the
‘social principles’ (see appendix 3 and the discussion below). In fact, La Via Campesina has been loudly promoting the agroecological method.

According to Sibindi (2020), a general divide has emerged regarding the relation between food security and trade, one side advocating that extended international trade increases food security, and the other side, for example the food sovereignty movement, arguing that it decreases food security.

During the 20th century the emergence of an increasingly global food system has significantly changed the biological landscapes and varieties of crops that are consumed. Gonzales (2011) writes that 70 per cent of crop diversity was lost in the last century. Based on 2009 statistics from FAO, Gonzales states that only twelve crops account for 80 per cent of our plant based food crops, and out of these only four (rice, maize, potato and wheat) account for 60 cent of plant-derived calories and protein (Gonzales, 2011:496). With such low diversity in crops the system is constantly at severe risk of famines, much like the Irish potato famine. This is an example of why the environmental crisis and biodiversity crisis is closely linked to food security.

The agroecological approach to agriculture has gained more followers during the last few years. It gained much recognition in 2019 when the HLPE of the CFS published a report called *Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems That Enhance Food Security and Nutrition*. The report was an important statement by CFS that further legitimized the agroecological approach and simultaneously recognised a human rights-based framework in global food governance.

One of the main strengths of agroecology is that it allows and accounts for the local context, meaning local ecosystems and biodiversity as well as the social structures, traditions, and needs. Since it concerns food systems holistically, aquaculture and fishing is also included in agroecology. This couples well with the 17 SDGs which holistically accounts for the context-specific transitions needed for a more sustainable society, and which explicitly underpins the UNFSS and its aims (UNFSS, 2021). The HPLE explains agroecology in the following way:

> Agroecology embraces a science, a set of practices and a social movement and has evolved over recent decades to expand in scope from a focus on fields and farms to encompass whole agriculture and food systems. It now represents a transdisciplinary field that includes all the ecological, sociocultural, technological,
economic and political dimensions of food systems, from production to consumption. (HLEP, 2019:13).

Consequently, HPLE argues that agroecology is not one single replicable model, but rather a holistic approach to food systems. This is also why Canfield et.al raises concerns against corporate actors who are diminishing agroecology as “simply one technique or ‘one tool in the agricultural toolbox.’” (Canfield et.al, 2021:6). They view this rhetoric as a strategy to undermine FAO and CFS and their influence on more sustainable food systems, which explains why it is relevant to analyse the discourse of the UNFSS.

The boundaries of agroecology have not been formally agreed upon and there are no clear-cut definitions, making it a difficult although important concept to research. This thesis will use the thirteen agroecological principles, which are being used by the UN and provided in the HLEP report, as the framework for the analysis in chapter 4. Please see figure 2 in appendix 2 regarding the thirteen principles. A list of the principles and explanations provided by Agroecology Europe (2021) can be found in appendix 3.

Otero et.al writes that the neoliberal food regime is in a state of competitive advantage. In contrast to comparative advantage, which is supposed to be a positive-sum game, competitive advantage “entails the monopoly over profits derived from the monopoly over specific products in a given branch…” (Otero et.al, 2013:268). In the case of agriculture the corporate control of biotechnology (production) and the supermarkets (final sale), as well as the distribution chain between these two pools, makes up the competitive advantage of agribusiness (Ibid.). Morgan et.al (2008) argues that it is not only the agribusiness corporations but also the protectionist measures of high subsidies in developed countries that leads to a comparative access and competitive advantage rather than comparative advantage.

The South-North dependence, which was a key feature of McMichael’s corporate food regime and which Otero et.al further developed and called the neoliberal food regime, ties into this unequal balance. After looking at national-specific dependency Otero.et al concludes that developing nations that become incorporated in agricultural free trade will consequently import the so called “world price” on food commodities which leads to price inflation rates much higher than the advanced capitalist countries, and thereby a growing vulnerability to food insecurity (2013). They also showed that Mexico which wholeheartedly adopted the neoliberal model became basic-food dependent (Otero et.al, 2013:284).

Similar to Otero et.al, to McMichael and Schneider (2011) it is also clear that the neoliberal ideas of market based solutions to food security are harmful to food security. They
argue that principles that claim to equally benefit affected communities and investors will always be unequally skewed in the favour of the investor because local/national food security and social security will be undermined.

2.3 UN Food Systems Summit 2021

FAO et.al (2021) wrote that the UNFSS had the *opportunity* to contribute to a positive change and reform the global food system. An opportunity which, as outlined below, has not been ceased according to several critics (such as Canfield et.al, 2021 or Clapp et.al, 2021).

Just a few months before the UNFSS, Canfield et.al (2021) critiqued the Summit based on UNs close collaboration with corporations and profit-driven market forces, especially the close relation to the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). Agnes Kalibata, the president of AGRA, was appointed Special Envoy by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. The basis for the critique against AGRA is that it has, since founded in 2006 by the Rockerfeller and Gates Foundations, been a high-profile value-chain driven initiative which aims to reinforce the view of food crises as a productivity issue (instead of a systematic flaw) and food security as best achieved via international trade and economic integration. It has put thousands of African small-scale farmers into dependency on agro-inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides (Canfield et.al, 2021).

Clapp et.al (2021), McKeon (2021) and Fakhri et.al (2021) have also targeted the UNFSS with criticism regarding its failure to address corporate power. Clapp et.al (2021) identified three main ways in which the UNFSS failed to address corporate influence in global food systems: (1) failing to frequently mention the disproportionate corporate power; (2) a focus on technology and innovation-based solutions rather than system transformation and; (3) giving corporations influence over the framing and organisation of the Summit. This analysis was based on various documents related to the UNFSS process (2021:192). Clapp et.al state that the documents tend to use a vague language that fails to recognise corporate concentration of power and portrays corporations, small scale farmers and consumers as equals within the economic and political system (Ibid).

Corporate influence in the Summit is tied to the wider food security debate via what has previously been mentioned as Sibindi’s identification of a dichotomy between trade liberalisation or self sufficiency as means for food security. By involving corporate multilateral actors in the planning and organisation levels of the UNFSS it is argued by critics
that the Summit pre-positions itself as promoting food security via international trade (McKeon, 2021).

This lack of acknowledgement of corporate power further ties into the broader criticism of the UNFSSs lack of transparency. One example of this is the five Action Plans developed and published on the official website by the UNFSS. It is unclear how these Action Plans were developed and by whom exactly.

The concern about lacking transparency and corporate influence has engaged many member states and NGOs. In September 2019, before the announcement of the UNFSS, an open letter with over 400 signatories addressed to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres (Sherpa, 2019) was published to call for an end to the UNs Strategic Partnership, established in early 2019, with the World Economic Forum (WEF). This call is based on the argument that the partnership will result in an increased corporate power over the UN.

In 2020 a second letter was published with over 500 signatories (IPC, 2020) and as late as in July 2021, two months before the start of the Summit, yet another open letter was sent to Guterres and Kalibata (The Ad Hoc Committee on UNFSS Governance and 100+ signatories, 2021). These last two letters addressed weaknesses and concerns of the UNFSS, including the lack of CFS involvement. The 2021 letter included six proposed actions for improved transparency, and number one was titled “Explain who is helping to plan the Summit and why.” (The Ad Hoc Committee on UNFSS Governance 2021:3), and another proposal stated:

Describe what will happen post-Summit. How will Member States be held accountable for their commitments and what role will private bi- and multi-lateral donors and philanthropy play, such as Rockefeller’s “Food Systems Game Changers Lab”? Moreover, a guarantee in writing is needed to ensure that no entity formed for the UNFSS will supplant the CFS post-Summit, and that the CFS should also be given the opportunity to review, refine and monitor UNFSS “solutions” and commitments. (The Ad Hoc Committee on UNFSS Governance and signatories, 2021:4).

One of the major concerns in the second letter from 2020 was that the UN-WEF partnership, specifically in relation to the UNFSS, is seeking to undermine the role of the CFS which has reached a significant authority since it was transformed in 2009 to reach more democratic and inclusive standards. The appointment of Kalibata as Guterres’ Special Envoy is seen as confirming that the WEF has reached a large influence on the UNFSS. It is also
It has already been mentioned that both FAOs and CFSs normative frameworks were based on the HRBA. For this reason, and its advanced inclusion and transparency, civil organisations and movements, such as the food sovereignty movement, have protected and stood up for the CFS. In the letters of complaint mentioned earlier there is a frustration as to why the CFS could not have been the organiser of the UNFSS and if the strategic partnership with WEF and the close cooperation with AGRA hides an agenda to weaken the power of the CFS (Sherpa, 2019; IPC, 2020; The Ad Hoc Committee on UNFSS Governance, 2021).

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a statement during the Summit involving three Human Rights experts and current UN Special Rapporteurs which said that “the Summit claims to be inclusive, but it left many participants and over 500 organizations representing millions of people feeling ignored and disappointed” and “human rights were not properly woven throughout the Summit’s preparations. Tomorrow, the Summit may unfortunately present human rights to governments as an optional policy instead of a set of legal obligations.” (OHCHR, 2021).

Fakhri et.al (2021) (all current or former UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Food) put forward three areas in which the Summit must deliver:

- The right to food must be central to all aspects of the Summit, with attention on holding those with power accountable;
- Agroecology should be recognized as a paradigm (if not the paradigm) for transforming food systems, alongside actionable recommendations to support agroecological transition;
- The CFS should be designated as the home of the Summit outcomes, and the place where it is discussed and implemented, using its inclusive participation mechanisms.

The analysis in chapter 4, and discussion in chapter 5, will circle back to these areas and present to which degree they were implemented in the UNFSS.

2.4 Concluding remarks
This chapter has used Friedmann & McMichael’s Food Regime Theory to contextualise food security discourse and the context of UNFSS in global food governance. The struggle between internationalised and trade dependent food security and domestic self-sufficiency (currently reflected in the food sovereignty movement) has been an overarching asymmetrical feature of food regimes for a long time, shaping the structures of global food governance. This is for example reflected in Otero et.al’s competitive advantage, compared to the established term competitive. The various interpretations or definitions of the current food regime all emphasise the corporate neoliberal structures and lack of institutional regulation, an approach brought by the FRTs roots the regulation school. Otero et.al calls the existing international regulation neo-regulation due to the inherent bias towards the multilateral corporations.

The importance of an agroecological approach and a HRBA have both been emphasized by critical voices ahead of the Summit (Canfield et.al, 2021; Fakhri et.al, 2021; La Via Campesina, 2020; De Shutter & Yambi, 2020) as two of the most important aspects that the UNFSS must actively and meaningfully engage with in order to contribute to a truly sustainable food system transition. These are also concepts that have been adapted by the CFS and, as shown above, contributed to the discourse of the current food regime and informs the view on food security.

The CFS has become the most transparent and inclusive platform of its kind. Since restructuring in 2009 the CFS has successfully gained the trust of the civil society and the critique lifted in chapter 2.3 shows that the exclusion of the CFS in the UNFSS has been received as a set back for the inclusivity of global food governance. Several open letters signed by hundreds of civil society organisations and statements by UN Special Rapporteurs have criticised corporate influence in the UNFSS, the lack of a truly anchored HRBA and the lack of interest in, or emphasis on, agroecology and agroecological methods.

The grand expectations on the opportunities of the UNFSS to positively influence the future direction of food governance makes it relevant to analyse its food security discourse. Similar to Clapp et.al this thesis will look at official UNFSS documents and analyse the discourse in relation to the frameworks of Human Rights and Agroecology, but, as outlined in the following chapter, this research will be unique in its focus on the LoCs.
3. Research design

In order to answer the research question regarding the UNFSSs contributions to the food security discourse of the contemporary food regime, this thesis will rely on two complementary data collection methods in order to achieve a more reliable and valid conclusion. The first method is an analysis on the Levers of Change (LoCs) published in the official UNFSS compendium which will be analysed based on the concept of agroecology and the HRBA. The second method is an expert interview with a senior officer from the UNFSS organisation which is a primary set of data produced for this thesis.

The LoCs and the interview will be analysed using critical discourse analysis (CDA) which permits a broader analysis including the context in which the data was produced. This choice of method will be further explained in chapter 3.1.

The theoretical framework of this thesis is Food Regime Theory (FRT) which was outlined in chapter 2.1 and it offers a critical perspective on global food governance and puts it into a historical perspective which offers an additional dimension of the dynamic and changing nature of global food governance.

3.1 Choice of method

Discourse analysis (DA) is a detailed study of language based on a constructivist ontology. Compared to content analysis, DA provides a better framework for this thesis to draw conclusions on global food governance discourse. Content analysis is more restricted to the limitations of the text(s) at hand and does not account for the normative environment in which the text was produced. This same argument is also a critique of post-structuralist discourse analysis (PDA) which is why this thesis conducts a critical discourse analysis (CDA) that primarily focuses on exposing “connections between language, power, and ideology” (Halperin & Heath, 2017:338).

CDA was chosen because it takes into consideration the social and political reality in which the texts that will be analysed were produced (Dunn and Neumann, 2016). It also fits well with FRT which focuses on the interactions and dynamics between actors in global food governance. This is important because the LoCs will be analysed based on their content, but also based on how they were produced and what their positions say about the UNFSS and its broader position in contemporary global food governance.

CDA, and therefore this thesis, holds the ontological position that there is a distinction between discourse and social reality (Dunn & Neumann, 2016:35-36). CDA assumes the
existence of an extra-discursive realm or reality, largely controlled and formed by social systems. This does not mean that observations based on discursive analysis are not relevant, just that CDA acknowledges, based on Fairclough’s thinking, that discourse is created within an underlying material and social reality (Ibid). This ontological position provides a way of understanding why dissonance can occur between reality and written or spoken claims and statements.

3.2 Choice of data and how it was analysed

3.2.1 The Levers of Change (LoCs)

The UNFSS has produced an overwhelming number of documents. The Summit’s compendium is an interesting output of documents as it consists of carefully chosen and produced documents to represent the Summit and its outcomes. Therefore the first step of the selection process was to narrow down the selection to the compendium. Based on documents available in the compendium, and after careful consideration, the levers of change (LoCs) was selected as the foundation of this research for three reasons: (1) the LoCs are clearly communicating the UNFSSs approach to changing the food system; (2) they cover a broad area of policies, reaching several layers of the food system, and; (3) No previous academic research focuses specifically on the LoCs.

The research by Clapp et.al 2021 looked at various documents, especially the Action Tracks, but it did not pay attention to the LoCs. In other words this thesis will be able to fill a gap in existing UNFSS research and meaningfully contribute to the academic field and contemporary debate.

The UNFSS identified four LoCs, Gender, Human Rights, Finance and Innovation, which are all presented through individual policy briefs in the compendium. A fifth complementary policy brief on “Governance” has been produced as well and it will be analysed together with the four LoCs since it interacts with several of the levers and ties them together under the umbrella of governance. They are all posted together in the compendium in a way that assumes no hierarchy and that promotes the Governance policy paper in the same way as the four LoCs which justifies this thesis’ choice to treat this paper as a fifth LoC.

The UNFSSs LoCs have been deconstructed and analysed through the lens of CFSs framework on agroecology and the human rights-based approach (HRBA) to global food governance. Based on the principles of agroecology (see appendix 2 and 3) and the
PANTHER principles of the HRBA (see appendix 1) a coding system was created. Every paragraph of every LoC was coded by hand based on the principles it touched upon, explicitly or implicitly (for example: agroecology principle 1 was coded as A-1). By reading and re-reading every text several times, more implicit information emerged which were then coded based on the two sets of principles.

The themes coded for were pre-determined by the two sets of principles. Alternatively, one could have let themes emerge from the text upon analysis, but since the research is strictly focusing on human rights and agroecology the limitations did not allow coding of additional themes.

This method proved to successful in uncovering patterns such as identifying principles that were often coded together or principles that were not coded at all. It also became clear that the agroecological principles 1-6 were rarely coded at all and that principles 7-13 interacted very often with the PANTHER principles. Based on this observation, for the sake of the analysis, the agroecological principles have been divided into two groups: the “social” principles (7-13) and the “Environmental” principles (1-6) (see table in appendix 3).

3.2.2 UNFSS senior officer interview

Several interviews with global food governance professionals were planned but in the end only one was realised. The shortcomings of this will be discussed in chapter 3.3, but there is still a significant benefit to have this original primary data included in the research. An interview was held with a senior officer within the UNFSS who ended their mandate with the Summit in March 2022 and has an extensive knowledge regarding the planning, implementation and impact of the Summit. They also have insight in the creation process of the LoCs.

Even if the thesis had been able to conduct 3-4 interviews, as planned, it would not have been able to give a full picture of the organisation behind the UNFSS. This interview can however offer a unique insight into the individual experience of a person who has great and relevant professional knowledge in global food governance and who was specifically recruited for the Summit. This perspective cannot be acquired elsewhere, especially considering that the UNFSS took place less than a year ago and secondary sources are limited to only a smaller number of studies that have been published so far.
The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format in order to steer the conversation into relevant topics and to explicitly ask about themes relevant to the thesis. See appendix 4 for the interview guide used during the interview (this guide would have been developed and improved for a second and third interview but unfortunately that never materialised). The interviewee was also given the freedom to emphasise themes and topics that they themself found relevant. Since the interview was analysed based on CDA, this freedom was important in order to let the interviewee properly form and explain their viewpoint. If they for example chose to emphasise more on innovations than human rights, it could send a message about the priorities and focus of the officer and the UNFSS organisation.

The interview questions were contextualised with explanations and background information in order to show transparency towards the interviewee. This was useful because it exposed the officer’s level of knowledge, but it also limited their answer when they realised that some of the questions were based on the critique directed towards the Summit.

The interview was conducted over the online platform Zoom since the geographical location of the officer made an in-person meeting unviable. With the consent of the interviewee, the platform’s built-in tool was used to record the conversation’s video and audio. This in turn allowed for a detailed word-by-word transcription of the conversation which was later shared with the interviewee for final approval. By asking for the interviewees permission to record the conversation and by sharing the transcription afterwards the research upheld an ethical and transparent practice.

The transcript was then coded based on the same system as the LoCs (see chapter 3.2.1).

3.3 Shortcomings

In this subchapter the shortcomings of the methodology will be shortly discussed, firstly CDA and then the more specific challenges with the textual analysis of the LoCs and the interview.

According to Halperin & Heath (2017) CDA has been criticised for not staying as close to the material or data as other discursive methods. As previously discussed, this thesis views that approach as a strength rather than a weakness. By not being too limited to the material CDA allows the analysis to naturally include and contextualise the data in the social and political structures surrounding it. Another foundation of CDA is that it inherently focuses on power dynamics and relations between actors. This is not an overt theme of this
thesis since that would entail an additional theoretical framework which can not be fully
developed due to limitations of space. This does however not discourage further research to
be done regarding discursive and social power, based on the findings of this thesis.

The researcher realises that more than one interview would have increased the validity
of the analysis. An inherent flaw with original unpublished interviews is that the analysis and
arguments are based on material that only the researcher has access to, which makes the
research difficult to replicate. By being transparent with the interviewee and providing an
interview guide in the appendix the thesis has proved to the best of their ability that the
interview has been conducted and analysed ethically and correctly.

As mentioned earlier, more than one interview would have increased the reliability of
the findings. The Interviewee can only represent their own individual view and standpoint
and does not represent the view of the entire organisation. Out of the planned interviews the
one that took place was the most important due to the senior officer’s prominent role within
the UNFSS as well as their extensive professional background. The views expressed by this
person still represents that of someone who was specifically recruited for the implementation
of the UNFSS.

Finally, one might suggest that this thesis cannot draw informed conclusions about the
role of the CFS based solely on the role of human rights and agroecology. It is true that this
thesis cannot, nor does it aim to, present a definite answer to the role of the CFS during the
Summit. The thesis only aims to present findings regarding the UNFSSs discourse on food
security through human rights and agroecology, but the discussion in chapter 5 will review
the level of correlation between UNFSS discourse and the critical voices presented in chapter
2, which reflects the discourse developed by the CFS.

3.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter has outlined the thesis’ choice of method, empirical focus, scientific
process and methodological shortcomings. Using CDA, the principles of agroecology and the
human rights’ PANTHER principles have provided a framework for the analysis of the LoCs
and the original interview with a senior officer at the UNFSS.

Chapter 2 showed that many prominent scholars and experts have asked for an
explicit focus on agroecology and human rights during the UNFSS and that the CFS should
have a more prominent role. The thesis has picked up on this emphasis and applied the
principles to the LoCs and the interview to answer the research question regarding the
UNFSSs contributions to the food security discourse of the contemporary food regime.
4. Findings & Analysis

This chapter will present and analyse the findings that emerged from coding the data, LoCs and interview transcript, based on the PANTHER and agroecological principles. This will provide a foundation to answering the question of what the UNFSSs contribution to the food security discourse of the contemporary food regime is. The analysis will be further discussed and contextualised in chapter 5 and the final conclusion will be presented in chapter 6.

The human rights principles will first be discussed in subchapter 4.1 followed by the agroecological principles in chapter 4.2. The social agroecological principles often go hand in hand with the PANTHER principles, which makes the discussion in chapter 4.1 also relevant to the agroecological approach, especially for the concept of participation.

4.1 Human Rights

The policy brief on Human Rights is comprehensive and clearly interacts with all seven PANTHER principles but it is not as prominent in the other LoCs. The Human Rights LoC stated that the fact that human rights got its own LoC reflects the importance attached to it by the Summit leadership. Its alignment “should be intuitive as human rights are essential to the food system transformation envisioned by the UNFSS.” (UNFSS Human Rights Lever of Change, 2021:16).

Regarding the organisation behind the UNFSS, the interviewee stated that “Human rights are engraved in all levels” and that “It is part of every solution because any solution needs to be a rights-based solution.” (Interview 1, 2022). The interviewee argued that human rights had been “spoken about at every step”, meaning that it should have heavily influenced and underlined the entire organisation of the UNFSS. Despite these statements, and the elaborated approach of the Human Rights policy brief, many of the PANTHER principles are not reflected in all the levers of change (LoCs).

The senior officer agreed that in cases where human rights are not specifically mentioned in the LoCs, they were still under “the umbrella of the Summit that had a human rights foundation.” (Interview 1, 2022). This may suggest that the HRBA have been taken for granted and therefore not implemented properly in the LoCs. Properly executed, the HRBA must be explicitly and actively reflected at every level. As soon as one does not adhere to its principles, it is simply not a HRBA.
Discrimination (or non-discrimination) is only mentioned explicitly in four occasions outside of the Human Rights policy brief: three times in the Gender LoC and once in the Governance LoC. It is never mentioned in the Innovation or Finance policy briefs and generally not in discussions on participation or empowerment. Systemic underlying discrimination and inequality against marginalized peoples is identified in the Human Rights LoC with a special emphasis on gender based discrimination, discrimination of land rights, resource access and technological inventions, and discrimination against migrants and refugees. It also underlines that a non-discriminatory implementation of said rights is inherent in the HRBA.

Considering the importance of anti-discrimination in the Human Rights LoC, and to an extent the Gender LoC, the Governance policy brief would be expected to do more than just mention it in passing. It is not even mentioned in the section called “Human Rights Based Approach to Food Systems Transformation” (UNFSS Governance of Food Systems Transformation Lever of Change, 2021:2), despite discrimination being one of the principles of a HRBA identified in the Human Rights LoC.

The PANTHER principle participation was present to some degree in all of the LoCs, and it was also strongly emphasised by the senior officer during the interview who meant that the UNFSS has been successful becoming a “People’s Summit” where over 190 countries, and various other actors, contributed to the debate and the solutions (Interview 1, 2022). They meant that the organisation behind the Summit simply facilitated solutions proposed by participants during the Summit, Pre-Summit, and various dialogues. They expressed that this structure was successful in collecting inputs from the various dialogues that were both country and UN-led and spanning from a local to global level (Ibid). For participation to be meaningful however, its outcomes must be properly absorbed into the Summit.

One way to ensure meaningful participation is to also ensure accountability of what is put forward. The Finance policy brief writes that “there is an incredible global movement of food system entrepreneurs, activists, and citizens ready to take action. If we can change the menu, then they can change the world.” (UNFSS Food Finance Architecture Lever of Change, 2021:4) By saying that it is the entrepreneurs, activists, and citizens who must act is to put the responsibility on them, which confuses the issue of accountability.

In Interview 1 countries and states were repeatedly mentioned as the actor that needs to act on the Summit's outcomes and solutions, but when the senior officer was explicitly asked if states should be accountable for the implementation of the solutions the answer was
very flighty. They stated that accountability was not on states or countries *alone* and that there is a “recipient level of collaboration that is required.” (Interview 1, 2022). They gave the example of South-South cooperation but did not mention the larger international institutions or corporations.

There are several examples of statements during Interview 1 that related to accountability of the implementation of the UNFSS solutions: “There is no one solution, you have to pick a solution for your country.”; “We have brought everything to the table, now it is for the countries to take it away.” and; “We can’t say ‘do this, do that’, and that is why we have involvement of the governments, we have civil society, we have indigenous people.” (Interview 1, 2022). These statements make it clear that the Summit did not intend to present any binding solutions, as requested by the civil society and Special Rapporteurs.

The only policy brief in which *human dignity* was coded with relative frequency was in the Human Rights LoC. It is mainly discussed in relation to women, migrant workers, and indigenous populations. Human dignity is not emphasised on its own, but it seems to be implied whenever mentioning human rights in general, specifically in regard to vulnerability. Since human dignity is such a fundamental principle of a HRBA it would give the LoC more credibility to explicitly link it with the right to food or as an incentive to achieve a more just and equal food system, especially in Innovation and Finance.

As mentioned, the principle of human dignity was mainly visible in relation to vulnerable groups, women, migrant workers, and indigenous peoples. This is also the case for the Governance and Gender LoCs. In the Governance policy brief the principle of human dignity was never explicitly mentioned but still coded under ‘priority for action’ number six: “Leave no one behind, ensure access to safe and nutritious food, end poverty, hunger, and malnutrition in all their forms and dimensions with a focus in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable.” (UNFSS Governance of Food Systems Transformation Lever of Change, 2021:2). The motivation for coding this as human dignity is the emphasis on vulnerability at the end of the sentence, which is coherent with how it has been used explicitly in the Human Rights LoC.

The Gender LoC writes that “[the] vision for Gender Lever is to ensure a gender just, transformative and equitable food systems that guarantee a world without hunger for all [...] in a meaningful, *dignified* and equitable way.” [emphasis added] (UNFSS Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Lever of Change, 2021:2). This is one of few examples throughout the texts where dignity is explicitly mentioned.
Empowerment was one of the more frequently coded PANTHER principles and was especially evident in the Gender LoC (Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Lever of Change, 2021). It was explicitly mentioned throughout the policy brief which opened by stating that: “achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment in food systems can result in greater food security and better nutrition, and in more just, resilient, and sustainable food systems for all,” (UNFSS Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Lever of Change, 2021:1). Here empowerment of women is overtly connected to increased food security.

Like the Human Rights LoC, the Gender policy brief emphasises local level solutions. An example of this can be found in its second solution proposal: “Solution 2: Innovation hubs (e.g. regional- level incubators, challenge funds) to empower community level leaders of women's food system enterprises.” (UNFSS Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Lever of Change, 2021:3). This promotes regional level systems for empowerment that reaches local and community levels for improved diets, incomes and changing norms and mindsets. When looking at the Innovation LoC, which instinctively should accommodate this solution, the principle of empowerment is not approached in the same way.

The Innovation LoC has developed four ‘innovation areas’, national and regional ecosystems; societal and institutional innovation; knowledge and technology; data and digital. Outside of these four areas the policy brief presents seven principles that “can help meet the needs of various stakeholders within the food system.” (UNFSS Innovation Lever of Change, 2021:2). The first principle is:

1. **Innovate while also protecting and respecting the right of all stakeholders, particularly the most vulnerable and those on the cusp, to participate fairly in decision-making around food systems.** Innovation must feature inclusive and participatory decision-making, involving a diverse set of stakeholders - be they smallholder farmers, women, youth, indigenous communities, community-based organizations, consumers, entrepreneurs, or others - in partnerships, collaborations, and coalitions. Stakeholders should be able to engage in an equitable manner that will enable greater success in creating a robust and sustainable food system transformation. [original emphasis] (UNFSS Innovation Lever of Change, 2021:2).
This principle is more related to participation than empowerment. “Protecting and respecting the rights of all stakeholders” (Ibid) is not inherently the same as empowering which should be a more systematic approach of recognising and combating power imbalances in a longer term.

In contrast to the Gender LoC, the Innovation LoC seems to be focused on empowering systems rather than people. In the same list of Innovation LoC principles as mentioned above, principle three is called “Innovate to build a vibrant, agile, consumer-centric approach, to empower the development of a more just and inclusive innovation ecosystem at scale.” [emphasis added] (Ibid). It promotes collective action and knowledge sharing but does not mention local groups or communities. Instead, it tends to focus on country-level systems, further supporting the hypothesis that the LoCs seem to put accountability onto the states and countries.

Apart from ‘territorial partnerships’ the Governance policy brief only explicitly mentioned empowerment in relation to the rule of law. It writes about legal empowerment which refers to empowering rights holders to “claim effective implementation of laws and their rights.”(UNFSS Governance of Food Systems Transformation Lever of Change, 2021:6). It also writes:

Placing human rights, justice, and the rule of law at the center of food systems governance—i.e., adopting a human rights-based approach—ensures that governments and other policymakers design and implement inclusive legislative frameworks, build effective institutions, and allocate resources to account for underlying environmental, social, and cultural inequality across food systems.

(UNFSS Governance of Food Systems Transformation Lever of Change, 2021:2)

Like the PANTHER principle of human dignity, the Finance and Innovation LoCs were never coded for the rule of law principle. It is most visible in relation to land rights and state obligations to protect and respect human rights. This may be an explanation as to why accountability seems to fall back onto the states, even if the interviewee did not want to confirm that solely states or countries were to be held accountable for the implementation of the Summit’s outcomes and solutions.

Transparency is another concept which is lacking in the LoCs, but it is not completely invisible. The Human Rights LoC writes that partnerships in agrifood business and food governance can reinforce inequality and power asymmetries. They further state that
“the SDGs envision multi-stakeholder partnerships— but not with a lack of transparency” [emphasis added] (UNFSS Human Rights Lever of Change, 2021:9).

The Governance LoC talks about transparency in relation to the SDGs but also related to the multistakeholder approach that underlines both the SDGs and the UNFSS. Other policy briefs, like Finance, are on the same track. Issues with transparency and accountability seem to stem from the same root, namely how global food governance is organised. Dedicated and trusted institutions could coordinate and enforce standardized approaches, monitor unequal international partnerships as mentioned in the quote above, and hold actors accountable. This is also reflected in the Finance LoC which writes:

There lacks adequate regulation, transparency and international coordination to limit unsustainable and/or illegal practices and manage shifting dynamics across complex, global value-chains. (UNFSS Food Finance Architecture Lever of Change, 2021:13).

One of the core imperatives of the Finance LoC (see appendix 5) is an action area called “supply chain transparency & reporting”. In this policy brief transparency is seemingly limited to supply chains and not discussed in relation to global food governance.

Many of the PANTHER principles and the findings presented in this subchapter can be applied to the principles of agroecology too, especially participation which is an overlapping principle. The following subchapter will outline the agroecological analysis of the material.

4.2 Agroecology

The thirteen agroecological principles were divided into two themes, environmental and social (see chapter 3.2.1). Coding these principles revealed that the environmental theme was largely missing throughout the LoCs, with the exception of biodiversity which was mentioned at least once in four out of five policy briefs. The social principles alone cannot represent an agroecological approach since it needs to be anchored in natural processes (HLEP, 2019).

The one environmental principle which is more frequently occurring in the material is biodiversity. It is a well-established concept and highlighted in the SDGs but the way it is handled in the data is not always in line with the agro ecological perspective. According to the Finance LoC, the reason to protect biodiversity seems to be economic since it “supports
over half of the world GDP” (UNFSS Food Finance Architecture Lever of Change, 2021:1). From an agroecological point of view biodiversity has inherent value and not just economic value.

The interview exposed a knowledge gap within the senior leadership of the Summit. When the officer was asked if agroecology should have been more broadly featured during the Summit their answer revealed not just a lack of focus on agroecology throughout the UNFSS, but a lack of understanding and knowledge of the concept. They incorrectly grouped it together with other concepts: “there were a lot of processes on climate, agroecology, biodiversity, health and nutrition.” (Interview 1, 2022). If the officer had had more knowledge on the subject, they would not have separated agroecology from biodiversity or ‘climate’.

Regarding if agroecology should have been featured more broadly the officer replied: “A day and a half of Summit, how broadly would you expect?” (Ibid). The interviewee failed to give any concrete examples on processes in which they had explicitly or actively included agroecology. They also expressed themselves in a way which suggests a lack of understanding about agroecology and what it can be applied to:

Can you imagine people in desert areas talking about agroecology? It is not a priority for them maybe, or maybe it is, you know. Biodiversity may be a thing. Small island states where they cannot grow anything, they are fishing based, for them that area is more important. (Interview 1, 2022).

This statement exposes a striking lack of knowledge about the integration of agroecology in desert areas and aquaculture that attests to the fact that there is a large knowledge gap within the staff of the UNFSS organisation.

Agroecology was explicitly mentioned in only two LoCs, Governance and Human Rights. The Governance policy brief mentioned it only once in the main text but included it the appendix of proposed solutions under territorial governance (UNFSS Governance of Food Systems Transformation Lever of Change, 2021: Appendix: Governance-related UNFSS Solution Clusters & Propositions).

The three times it was mentioned in the Human Rights LoC, however, it was in very positive and encouraging terms. It writes that “agroecological methods that rely on traditional knowledge are better aligned with human rights and dignity.” It further states that “investments to restructure food systems around agroecology, regenerative agriculture, and
other climate adaptations and innovations are necessary to achieve the SDGs and realize human rights.” Lastly, it argues that “agroecology, for example, describes not just a scientific discipline that focuses on the ecology of agricultural environments, but serves as an important driver for strengthening social cohesion, reducing inequalities, and empowering local communities.” (UNFSS Human Rights Lever of Change, 2021:10,13). These statements are not reflected throughout the rest of the LoCs.

The environmental principles were largely left out of the LoCs but several of the social principles have been visible. Many of them have gone hand in hand with human rights, participation for example which is the only overlapping principle between the two themes. Because it is an overlapping principle it has already been analysed under subheading 4.1, however, as an agroecological principle it is interesting to see how it interacts with the other agroecological principles.

In the Innovation LoC participation was often coded together with co-creation of knowledge. Other policy papers did not follow this trend but the interviewee’s emphasis on participation did relate to the co-creation of solutions and knowledge sharing. Since the principle of land and natural resource governance focuses on family farmers and local governance it is also largely connected to the debate on participation.

Co-creation of knowledge has been one of the more frequently coded agroecological principles. Similar to the analysis on empowerment in chapter 4.1, co-creation of knowledge is often related to vulnerable or marginalized groups. The Human Rights lever talks about this principle in terms of “consultation in policy design” and “enough seats at the table that they can meaningfully influence decisions that determine their own food and agricultural systems.” (UNFSS Human Rights Lever of Change, 2021:9-10). This, of course, is also included in the land and natural resource governance principle.

A very interesting paragraph in the Finance LoC touches upon both knowledge and social value:

This will shift finance away from capital-intensive, environmentally damaging, high-input assets in linear value chains and towards knowledge-based, regenerative and circular business models that are driven by value rather than volume and are more resilient, human-scale, diversified and in balance with nature. It will move away from short-term investment practices that fail to price in climate, health, social and environmental risks and into long-term investment solutions that put a price on nature and account for the trillions of dollars of hidden costs relating to climate,

Putting a price on nature means that environmentally damaging practices will become more visible, and in general this statement could be in line with the agroecological approach. The issue, however, is that when one “puts a price on nature” it will enforce a system where enough money can buy anything, even environmental degradation. It was previously mentioned in this analysis that the same policy brief (Finance) stated that biodiversity was important to protect for its economical value. They write that they want to shift away from linear value chains towards (among others) knowledge-based business, but do not specify who’s knowledge.

Furthermore, it is not specified if “human scale” and “diversified” means local production. This could have been related to the agroecological principles of connectivity, land and natural resource governance or fairness which all emphasise short distribution networks and local economies, but that is not the case.

Connectivity and fairness are moreover not very visible in the LoCs. When local level participation or empowerment is mentioned, it is generally not connected with shorter production lines (connectivity) or dignity (fairness), with the exception of the Human Rights LoC.

Fairness also includes a fair treatment of intellectual property rights, which is only mentioned once in the Human Rights LoC and never in any of the other policy briefs:

Rebalancing power also requires dismantling the intellectual property rights regime that criminalizes those who save, reuse, exchange and sell farm-saved seeds, exempting local producers from these restrictions on access to innovation, technology, and food. (UNFSS Human Rights Lever of Change, 2021:10).

The agroecological principle of social values and diets was only visible in the Human Rights and Governance policy briefs. The Governance policy brief included “nutritionally and culturally appropriate diets” (2021:2) in their list of guiding principles. The Human Rights LoC writes about the human right to adequate food and that cultural preferences and dietary needs are inherent to the term “adequate food”. The Finance LoC wrote repeatedly about healthy or nutritious diets but never about the social values surrounding them.
**Economic diversification** is a principle that concerns the financial independence of small-scale farmers and the Finance LoC is naturally very interesting to look at. The financial discussion seems to follow the state-centric model of action and accountability that has been described above. One of the LoCs core imperatives is to “Reshape public support and incentives using subsidies and market mechanisms to redirect capital out of unhealthy, destructive assets to support public goods.” (UNFSS Food Finance Architecture Lever of Change, 2021:8). They do explicitly write about creating rural jobs and boosting local economies, but largely to unlock hidden costs and help the global economy.

The role of financial decision makers such as banks, businesses, or large investors is discussed in the Finance LoC but there is no explicit relation drawn to local production or small-scale farmers. Similarly, the Governance policy brief writes that “It is imperative that financial flows align with, and not undermine, collective food systems priorities” (UNFSS Governance of Food Systems Transformation Lever of Change, 2021:5). Depending on what “collective food systems priorities” are, this can relate to either food security as food sovereignty or as market or trade based.

The Finance LoC identifies a skewed power relation between actors in the food system, and emphasises accessible healthy food, but rarely brings the discussion further than the global or country level. When comparing how the Human Rights and Finance LoCs discuss the same issue the disconnect becomes visible. The Human Rights brief states that:

> Large agri-businesses are disproportionatelty benefiting from existing policy schemes that promote foreign direct investment, large-scale land acquisition, technical trade requirements and export-oriented, subsidy based agriculture. Economic reforms imposed by international financial institutions and financial speculation of commodity markets further privilege large-scale agribusinesses to the detriment of local producers, destabilizing food systems along the way. (UNFSS Human Rights Lever of Change, 2021:9)

The Finance LoC acknowledges that “the handful of people and institutions that benefit from an unsustainable system often have the most political and financial power.” (UNFSS Food Finance Architecture Lever of Change, 2021:2). Its solutions are presented in five core imperatives (see Appendix 5) which includes, for example, “improving access to finance & services for primary producers through new supply chain partnerships.” (Ibid). This is an example of how, when the Finance LoC does focus on primary producers or
the local level in general (as emphasised by the Human Rights LoC), it is still via the macro perspective of global value chains and with efficiency and productivity as the end goal.

There is no deeper analysis regarding the underlying structures behind the disproportionate power balance or how to avoid perpetuating it through the financial flows. There is also no discussion or mention of financial speculation throughout the entire Finance LoC.

4.3 Concluding remarks

The PANTHER principles and social agroecological principles could be found in the data to various degrees. They were not equally emphasised, and some LoCs did not engage at all with several principles. It is clear that the UNFSS has attempted to incorporate a HRBA but not to the extent needed to fulfill the PANTHER principles, which contradicts the interviewee’s statement saying that human rights were considered at all stages of the Summit. It is additionally clear that the UNFSS has not attempted to incorporate or promote an agroecological method in accordance with the agroecological principles.

The lack of engagement with the environmental agroecological principles makes it clear that agroecology was not a part of the framework for the LoCs or for the Summit itself. The interview exposed the senior officer’s lack of knowledge about agroecology which suggests that the organisation at large was undereducated on this area. Just like with human rights, although to a lesser extent, agroecology was lifted in the Governance and Human Rights policy briefs but not further implemented in the other LoCs. Considering the very positive attitude showcased in these two policy briefs it should have been embraced by the other LoCs if the Summit truly meant to promote and utilize the agroecological method.

Similarly, the very extensive HRBA in the Human Rights LoC was not reflected in the other LoCs. Had that been the case they would have explicitly mentioned it and coordinated it better between policy briefs. The interview revealed an attitude that could suggest that the implementation of human rights is taken for granted and therefore not properly coordinated and implemented throughout all of the processes and outputs. This became evident when the interviewee suggested that the UNFSSs underlying HRBA means that all of the LoCs are automatically included in a human rights-based framework.

These findings will be further discussed and contextualised in the following chapter.
5. Discussion

In this chapter, the findings and analysis of chapter 4 will be contextualised and presented in the light of previous academic work outlined in chapter 2. This includes a discussion on how the analysis in the previous chapter can be related to the UNFSS-CFS relations.

Coming from the regulation school, FRT embraces international regulation in global food governance. The open letters and other critics, like Canfield et.al, promoted the CFS as a primary regulatory institution, arguing that it should have been better included and featured at the Summit. In the previous chapter it was stated that some of the policy briefs also called for better regulation, the Finance LoC for example, although mainly in relation to the global value chains and not directly regarding global food governance.

The Human Rights LoC writes that the CFS is an example of a multilateral institution that provides practical guidance to different stakeholders. It particularly mentions the voluntary tools on global coordination and policy convergence provided by HLEP (UNFSS Human Rights Lever of Change, 2021:8). Yet, the Governance policy paper does not mention the CFS at all. Not even under the paragraph which starts with “Existing models can inform the design framework for a food systems Governance CoP.” (UNFSS Governance of Food Systems Transformation Lever of Change, 2021:6). The suggestion is to create a Conference of Parties (CoP) to address the issue of lacking international governance and regulation.

Drawing on the critique against the Summit, the issue is not a lack of platforms where governance can be executed, the Summit for example was an excellent such platform (as expressed by the 2021 report by FAO, UNDP and UNEP). The CFS, as a working, transparent and inclusive institution, is not promoted by the UNFSS. The CFSs ground-breaking structure is not even considered in the creation of a food systems CoP. Similarly, the Finance LoC suggests a Food System Stability Board similar to the Financial Stability Board (UNFSS Food Finance Architecture Lever of Change, 2021:4) without mentioning or considering the framework of the CFS.

The concept of neoregulation, as opposed to deregulation, was presented in chapter 2 (Otero et.al, 2013). The LoC did not express a will to deregulate, but perhaps what they do suggest could fit under the neoregulation term. Otero et.al expressed that neoregulation is the consolidation of a legal framework which favours large multinational agribusiness corporations, including intellectual property rights. The previous chapter showed how the value of biodiversity and other agroecological or PANTHER principles were presented as
economic, often related to the improvement of global value chains and to uncover hidden costs in the system. There is a prominent risk that this economic gain will favour the corporations to a larger extent than local producers or consumers due to the unfavourable power imbalance, much due to the implications of Otero et.al’s other concept, competitive advantage (of the corporations).

We have previously seen that the food sovereignty movement has embraced agroecology and the HRBA. La Via Campesina, which helped to create the movement, has been criticising the UNFSS for the lack of these frameworks. By not answering or responding to the critics, either by responding to the open letters or by including these frameworks in the outputs, the UNFSS cannot be the “people’s Summit” that it claims to be.

A similarity between the food sovereignty movement and agroecology is the focus on the social values around food. As presented in chapter 4 the agroecological principle of social values and diets was only visible in two of the policy briefs, Governance and Human rights, but not particularly emphasised or highlighted.

During the interview, the senior officer expressed that the Summit succeeded in being a people’s Summit thanks to the large amount of input during the Summit dialogues leading up to the main event. But when the Summit fails to fully incorporate a HRBA or an agroecological method, as requested by hundreds of civil society organisations and the UNs own special rapporteurs, the term people’s Summit loses its meaning. The ontological position of the thesis, through its use of CDA, views this contradiction as an example of the dissonance that occur between discourse and social reality.

Without explicitly bringing human rights up in every policy paper, or at least referring to the Human Rights LoC, the risk is that the core principles of a HRBA are forgotten or buried. When they are not included in priority actions and just mentioned once or twice, it is clear that these principles are not a priority for the UNFSS.

In response to interview questions based on the critique against UNFSS, the senior officer answered that they appreciated the criticism because it meant that people were engaging with the Summit and with the food system transformation. The interviewee was clearly uninformed about the critique put forward since they stated that the critique was not directed towards the content of the Summit, only the organisation.

My personal opinion on this one is the very fact that there is criticism means the people are engaged. They are thinking about it, they are talking about it. And for you to criticize about an important thing means that you are engaged. And that kind of
engagement of individuals, I think a lot of them agree in their personal capacity on what the food systems were doing. (Interview 1, 2022).

The previous chapter also made it clear that there is a knowledge gap regarding agroecology based on the senior officer’s answers during the interview. They did, as stated in chapter 4.2, exactly what Canfield et.al (2021) had previously criticised the UNFSS for, namely mentioning agroecology within a list of other areas or concepts as if it was merely one agricultural technique or tool among many others.

It is impossible to say if the way that the principle of biodiversity was approached is due to a lack of knowledge or a conscious position in line with the liberal corporate view of large-scale agricultural production. It was not only related to economic gain, but it was also not properly related to the great security risk posed by only utilizing a small number of crops. In chapter 2 Gonzales (2011) accounted for the danger of low crop diversity. An event like the Irish potato famine is much more likely to occur when the diversity of farmed crops is too low.

When it comes to accountability of the Summit’s solutions or outputs it is very natural that, from a human rights-based perspective, states are held accountable. According to human rights law, states are legally obliged to follow and implement human rights, which includes the right to food and food security. It is therefore reasonable that states are mostly emphasised throughout the LoCs and in the interview as the actor that needs to act on the Summit’s solutions. The issue with the UNFSSs approach to accountability is that there is no mechanism to ensure it, instead every country, corporation or organisation can look at the large number of solutions provided and cherry pick solutions. This is something else than creating and adapting local solutions through the agroecological method.

When the LoCs suggest a food governance CoP or Food System Stability Board as a solution to the unregulated system, accountability is yet again not accounted for. The CFS has managed to implement a system where states are held accountable at the same time as civil society organisations can participate meaningfully, but this is not at all acknowledged in the LoCs.

Throughout the LoCs, and the interview, a lot of statements are made that could suggest an alignment with the normative framework of human rights and agroecology. But as outlined in the previous chapter there are a lot of statements, arguments and perspectives that are not in line with these frameworks. However trivial or relatively small these statements may seem, the fact that they are there is evidence for a discourse which is not in line with that
of the CFS. The matter of fact is that statements such as putting an economic value to nature or preserving biodiversity for its economic value would simply not have been published if the Summit’s outputs had been properly anchored in the agroecological or human rights-based frameworks.

The UNFSSs contribution to food security discourse is double-edge and un-coherent. They claim to follow a human rights-based approach but do not fully implement it in its outcomes. They emphasise participation and a “people’s Summit” but fail to recognise the requests of hundreds of civil society organisations. They adopt the holistic “food systems” approach but do not account for holistic methods of a sustainable food system transformation such as agroecology. Their primary foundation is the 17 SDGs, but they fail to recognise the inherent value of nature and instead view it in economic terms.

5.1 Concluding remarks

This chapter has tied the findings and analysis in chapter 4 to the broader academic context. It has discussed the concepts of neoregulation and competitive advantage (Otero et.al, 2013) and it has provided an overview of the UNFSSs interaction with human rights and agroecology.

The interview uncovered a knowledge gap regarding agroecology and the nature of the critique aimed at the UNFSS. Critique seems to have been encouraged but not managed or dealt with at all, which devalues the concept of a “people’s Summit”.

It has furthermore become clear that there is no mechanism for accountability regarding the outcomes and solutions of the Summit, nor is there an awareness or explicit debate about it when it comes to their proposals on global food governance regulation.

The discussion ended by circling back to the research question and describing the UNFSSs contributions to the food security discourse. The following, and final, chapter will pick up on this topic and present the conclusion of this thesis.
6. Conclusion

This last chapter will summarise the thesis, discuss how its findings should be interpreted and state how they contribute to the larger field of International Relations in general, and global food governance specifically.

The importance of an agroecological approach and a HRBA have both been emphasized by critical voices ahead of the UNFSS (Canfield et.al, 2021; Fakhri et.al, 2021; La Via Campesina, 2020; De Shutter & Yambi, 2020) as two of the most important aspects that the UNFSS must actively and meaningfully engage with in order to contribute to a truly sustainable food system transition. These are also concepts that have been adapted by the CFS and have consequently contributed to the discourse of the current food regime and the view of food security.

Using Critical Discourse Analysis, the principles of agroecology and the PANTHER principles have provided a framework for the analysis of the LoCs and the original interview with a senior officer at the UNFSS. The data was coded based on these principles and thoroughly analysed in chapter 4 and discussed in chapter 5. Based on this analysis the thesis has found that the UNFSS has attempted to incorporate a HRBA but not to the extent needed to fulfill the PANTHER principles. It is additionally clear that the UNFSS has not attempted to incorporate or promote an agroecological method in accordance with the agroecological principles.

A food regime is naturally asymmetrical and often characterised by a dichotomy of two perspectives, such as conceptualizing food security as liberal trade and market mechanisms, or as national and local self-sufficiency. This means that no findings or conclusions presented by this thesis should be interpreted as a paradigm shift towards a new food regime. What it does suggest is that the discourse of the UNFSS is more in line with the liberal view of food security and that it does not adhere to the values and principles of a HRBA or agroecology as promoted by the CFS.

The UNFSSs contribution to the food security discourse of the contemporary food regime is to further implement the ideas of international trade as food security. It suggests that there needs to be more international regulation of global value chains, but that the states are responsible for their own implementation of “solutions” to a sustainable food systems transition. The intended international regulation has not been found to primarily be interest of local producers or based on a normative framework of agroecology or human rights. If that
was the case, the PANTHER and agroecological principles would have been better implemented in the UNFSSs outputs.

Summits like this one have previously been highly influential for the global food security discourse (see the discussion on the 1974 and 1996 food summits in chapter 2) and high expectations were put on UNFSS by FAO, UNDP and UNEP (2021). The fact that UN Secretary General Guterres himself announced this Summit in 2019 indicates that the UN has attached a high level of priority to global food governance.

The frameworks of agroecology and human rights also exemplifies the diversity of factors affected by global food production, from environmental protection to fulfilling basic human needs. As outlined in the discussion on FRT in chapter 2, the current food regime is the continuation of a system which has historically dominated the international relations between Europe and other continents through colonialism and historic trade patterns. Few things are as relevant in international relations as agricultural trade, especially in an internationalised system where food security has become reliant on said systems.
7. Bibliography


La via Campesina (2020) “A Summit Under Siege: A Position Paper on UN Food Systems Summit 2021”, Online:


world-economic-forum-partnership-agreement-is-a-dangerous-threat-to-system (Accessed 11/05/2022).


8. Appendices

Appendix 1. The PANTHER principles

The description is based on FAO (2014:7-13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Rights principles</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Participation</td>
<td>Direct control, ownership and management by the people of public decision-making. Participation requires efforts to reach out to those most affected by public decisions and the inclusion of the less privileged, vulnerable and affected population in decision-making. It mandates the incorporation of people’s views in all public decisions and actions and it must be voluntary, recognized by law, free or not subject to sanction or threat, and active.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Accountability</td>
<td>Duty bearers are responsible towards those most affected by public decisions, actions and performance, especially those most vulnerable or most at risk of exclusion and discrimination. It is fairness in conduct, treatment and actions. It is the achievement of human rights objectives and outcomes. It is responsibility, not only for policies, decisions, actions, services, goods and associated performance, but also for their consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Non-discrimination</td>
<td>The entitlement to all human rights without distinction of any kind, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, ethnic origin, sex, gender stereotypes, prejudices and expected roles, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, descent, inherited social status, property, birth, disability, age, nationality, marital and family status, sexual orientation and gender identity, health status, place of residency, economic and social situation and membership in</td>
</tr>
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41
Moreover, it recognizes that certain conditions in society sometimes result in (or maintain) inequality; hence, governments must take temporary special measures to remove those conditions that cause or perpetuate inequality.

4. **Transparency**

All public actions and decisions are visible, free from obscurity, unknown, clear and distinct. Transparency requires that public documents, decisions, rules, regulations and processes are readily and freely accessible, contain complete information, are released on a timely basis, are written in easily understandable language and presented in people friendly forms and media. Transparency allows right holders and other actors to see openly into all activities of duty bearers.

5. **Human Dignity**

Recognizing the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable human rights of all individuals. It is the basis of all human rights and rests on the intrinsic value or worth of the human person. Human dignity is immutable: it is the same at all places and at all times. Human dignity is non-negotiable and irreversible.

6. **Empowerment**

Acknowledges and respects the people’s capacity to think and act freely for and on their behalf, to create solutions to address their problems, to control their own destinies and fulfil their potential. It emphasizes people’s efforts to realize their human rights and bring about the necessary changes to address their situation. It encourages people to exercise choice in the face of power relations and structures in society. Empowerment builds the capacity of people to engage in the decision-making process.

7. **Rule of Law**

The application of laws and rules with equity, fairness, justice and impartiality in determining conflicting claims. It is a fair and just legal framework coupled with impartial and effective implementation.
Appendix 2. Five levels of transition towards Sustainable Food Systems and related principles of Agroecology

Figure 2: Five levels of transition towards SFSs and related principles of Agroecology (HLEP, 2019:51).
Appendix 3. The principles of agroecology

This description is based on Agroecology Europe (2021).
Principles 1-6 are categorized as “environmental principles” and principles 7-13 (marked in gray) are categorized as social principles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles of Agroecology</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Recycling</td>
<td>Preferentially use local renewable resources and close as far as possible resource cycles of nutrients and biomass.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Input reduction</td>
<td>Reduce or eliminate dependency on purchased inputs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Soil Health</td>
<td>Secure and enhance soil health and functioning for improved plant growth, particularly by managing organic matter and by enhancing soil biological activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Animal Health</td>
<td>Ensure animal health and welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Biodiversity</td>
<td>Maintain and enhance diversity of species, functional diversity and genetic resources and maintain biodiversity in the agroecosystem over time and space at field, farm and landscape scales.</td>
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<td>6. Synergy</td>
<td>Enhance positive ecological interaction, synergy, integration, and complementarity amongst the elements of agroecosystems (plants, animals, trees, soil, water).</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Economic diversification</td>
<td>Diversify on-farm incomes by ensuring small-scale farmers have greater financial independence and value addition opportunities while enabling them to respond to demand from consumers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Co-creation of knowledge</td>
<td>Enhance co-creation and horizontal sharing of knowledge including local and scientific innovation, especially through farmer-to-farmer exchange.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social values and diets</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Fairness</td>
<td>Support dignified and robust livelihoods for all actors engaged in food systems, especially small-scale food producers, based on fair trade, fair employment and fair treatment of intellectual property rights.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Connectivity</td>
<td>Ensure proximity and confidence between producers and consumers through promotion of fair and short distribution networks and by re-embedding food systems into local economies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Participation</td>
<td>Recognize and support the needs and interests of family farmers, smallholders and peasant food producers as sustainable managers and guardians of natural and genetic resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Land and natural resource governance</td>
<td>Encourage social organization and greater participation in decision-making by food producers and consumers to support decentralized governance and local adaptive management of agricultural and food systems.</td>
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Appendix 4. Interview 1 - Interview guide

**Interview with a Senior Officer at UN Food Systems Summit**
April 20, 2022 at 11:30-12:00 CET
Interviewer: Erica Karlsson - Bachelor student at Malmö University
Purpose: Bachelor's Thesis in International Relations at Malmö University

**Background:**
Can you tell me about your role at the Summit?
- Have you been involved in a similar Summit before? (World Summit on Food Security 2008).
- What would you say were the major accomplishments of this summit that stand out from previous similar events?

**Critique:**

**UN Committee on Food Security**
What role would you say that the CFS played during the summit?

**Human Rights**
I am looking at what the summit calls Levers of Change. There is a very comprehensive policy brief on Human Rights but my initial research shows that there is a lack of human rights perspectives in the two policy papers on Innovation and Finance, despite the fact that the HR policy brief specifically emphasizes the need of a Human rights based perspective in both Innovation and Finance. Why do you think this is?
- Do I understand correctly that the policy briefs that do not explicitly mention Human Rights, are still under the umbrella of human rights through the fact that the Summit had a human rights foundation?

**Agroecology**
The last three UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Food wrote together in an article in March 2021 that “Agroecology should be recognized as a paradigm (if not the paradigm) for transforming food systems, alongside actionable recommendations to support agroecological
The concept of agroecology is only sporadically mentioned throughout the various Summit documents. It is only very shortly mentioned in two of the five briefs, namely the one on Human Rights and the one on Governance. Considering the emphasis that for example the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and also the UN Committee on Food Security has put on agroecology, do you think it should have been more broadly featured at the Summit?

- The reason why I have been interested in this is that during the critique that came out ahead of the Summit, the criticism was that agroecology should be featured more and it should be emphasized more. I am specifically looking at the Levers for Change and agroecology is never explicitly mentioned in any of their priority actions. I understand from you that it is one of the many puzzle pieces but it has not been one of the major themes or features.

**Perception about the event:**

To sum up the discussion we have had so far, I wonder if you think that the Summit was successful in achieving its aims? (Being a People's Summit and Respond to SDGs).

- From what you say I understand that the issue of accountability has a strong state focus, that states have been able to pledge what they want to do and that therefore essentially accountability will come to the states.

Thank you. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about?
Appendix 5. The five core imperatives of the Food Finance Architecture Lever of Change

Figure 3: The five core imperatives of the Food Finance Architecture Lever of Change (UNFSS Food Finance Architecture Lever of Change, 2021:3).