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The Russia-Ukraine war: Impacts on International Food Security

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Abstract

The morning of 24 February 2022, the world awoke to war on the European continent between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. This thesis sheds light on the R-U war and its impacts on international food security, with particular emphasis on the Global South. I adapt a scalar approach where food security impacts are examined with attention to local, national, and international scales. I apply the local scale when examining specific events, for example Russian attacks on Ukrainian farmland and grain storage. To explore impacts in the Global South, the national scale informs the analysis on the empirical examples of Tunisia, Lebanon and Zimbabwe. Each of the three countries illustrates varying impacts of the food security-conflict link of the R-U war. The international scale examines food price variations and trade restrictions which became apparent following the conflict outbreak. My findings indicates that increasing food market pressure, in the form of price variations and limited Ukrainian Black Sea exports resulted in the launch of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI). Through a detailed analysis of the BSGI, I find that the initiative represents a form of food security governance, which emphasizes short-term solutions to reduce the pressure in international food markets. The findings further suggest that food security has undergone weaponization and politicization processes. In the R-U case, food security was used as a deliberate weapon of war and as political leverage to obtain support from other political actors.

The thesis applied a triangulation of methods, which included semi-structured interviews, document analysis and rhetorical analysis. The interviews were conducted with people working in Norwegian politics, bureaucracy, research, journalism and maritime industry. The aim of the interviews was to obtain knowledge about the R-U war and the food security-conflict connection in this given case. A systematic document analysis was completed to examine the views of the international stakeholders the UN, FAO, WB, WFP, WTO and UNCTAD. Each of these stakeholders represent varying interests and agendas, but all of them share a common connection to working on food security and conflict in diverse ways. I also completed a rhetorical analysis of the two warring countries' Foreign Ministry Affairs statements on the BSGI. I conclude that the R-U war illustrates the scalar links between food security and conflict and how impacts propagate across different scales. The case of the R-U war sheds light on the importance of continuous attention to long-term food security to build resilience towards shocks.

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Abbreviations

BSGI	Black Sea Grain Initiative
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFPI	FAO Food Price Index
GCT	Global Conflict Tracker
GRFC	Global Report on Food Crisis
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JCC	Joint Coordination Centre
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MT	Metric tons
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PRIO	The Peace Research Institute Oslo
R-U	Russia-Ukraine
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data program
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Program
WTO	World Trade Organization

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1 Introduction

The morning of 24 February 2022, the world awoke to war on the European continent. The Russian Federation had launched a military offensive in Ukraine, that the United Nations (UN) characterize as a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine (UN, 2022a). The ongoing war is causing disruptions in international relations, development, and cooperation. This is the second time Russia has invaded Ukraine in modern time, the last time being the annexation of Crimea in 2014. On 24 February 2022, Russian forces invaded an unprepared Ukrainian country after Russian President Vladimir Putin authorized a "special military operation" (Global Conflict Tracker (GCT), 2023). The attack saw the beginning of a full-scale land, sea and air invasion of Ukraine which have impacted millions of people and are still raging to this day, as of 27 November 2023. Ukrainian port cities have suffered great losses, and the country was subjected to a blockade of food exports following the war outbreak. Ukraine is an important international provider of agricultural products, such as wheat, corn and vegetable oil. Therefore, food security became an international concern from the early stages of the conflict. Prior to the conflict, Ukraine had been the largest supplier of commodities to the World Food Program (WFP), which provides food assistance to vulnerable populations (GCT, 2023; WFP, 2022a). Ukraine itself receives food assistance from WFP as a result of the war with Russia. Simultaneously, the international stakeholder community has worked to free grains from the Black Sea ports to keep Ukrainian grain shipments out on the international markets.

Situating food security and food insecurity in a world that is facing numerous challenges at the same time is a thought-provoking task. In a globalized world, the challenges travel across borders and impacts are experienced differently. Low-income countries are often put forward as experiencing higher levels of insecurity and vulnerability than high-income countries when it comes to food (in)security. The Russia-Ukraine (R-U) war has contributed to spotlighting issues relating to conflict and its implications for food insecurity. Scholarships on conflict induced food insecurity tend to examine impacts in the local or national areas where the conflict unfolds (See Olanrewaju & Balana, 2023; D'Souza & Jolliffe, 2013; Brück et al. 2019.) There is also research connecting conflict-impacts on food security for countries located in other places, see for example Muriuki et al. (2023) who explores the spill over effects of violent conflicts on neighbouring countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The objective of this thesis is to contribute to the discussion on conflict induced food insecurity, exploring the impacts of the R-U war on food security internationally, and for countries in the Global South particularly. In this thesis the term "Global South" is used as a relational category of countries, to analyse hierarchical effects of inequality resulting from colonial, economic and political processes (Berger, 2021). I examine the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) as a response to conflict induced hinders to food trade and its implications for food security. Lastly, the notion of weaponization and politicization of food security in the R-U war is examined. Weaponization refers to the process of food becoming weapons of war. Politicization refers to a subject or matter, which in this thesis is food security, takes on a political character or political characteristics.

1.1 Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to shed light on how the war between Russia and Ukraine affects international food security, focusing on the Global South. By applying the geographical concept of scale, I build an analysis which addresses different scales of interaction in relation to food security and conflict. The aim is to mainly examine impacts *from* conflict *to* food security. In exploring the impacts of the R-U war, the launch of the BSGI and the politicization processes of food security, the thesis addresses the following research questions.

- *Research question one: How did the outbreak of the R-U war affect the international markets of food?*

The first research question tackles the effects of the R-U war outbreak which led to immediate stop in exports of grain and other agricultural commodities from the Ukrainian Black Sea ports. This is examined using a scalar approach where international food price variations, particularly on grains are explored. Through research question one, I address vulnerability to price variations and export stop with emphasis on countries with high wheat import-dependency, either from Ukraine or Russia. In addition, I address trade restrictions as a result of the unexpected shock of the R-U war to the trade system. Furthermore, the WFP and the provisional role of Ukraine for food aid are examined, asking how these operations were impacted by the R-U conflict.

- *Research question two: What role has the Black Sea Grain Initiative played for food security?*

The second research question sightsee the BSGI, which was launched in response to increasing pressure in international food markets, caused by the acute export stop from Ukrainian seaports. This is answered by surveying the negotiations rounds of the initiative and how the interests of Ukraine and Russia, combined with other relevant international stakeholders affected the nature of the initiative. The stakeholders in focus besides Ukraine and Russia are the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank (WB), and the World Food Program (WFP). Turkey is also considered in relation to the BSGI as the country that together with Ukraine, Russia and the UN were one of the founders of the initiative.

- *Research question three: How has food security been subjected to weaponization and politicization processes in the R-U war and what can this tell us about food security and conflict?*

Research question three will examine how food security has undergone processes of weaponization and politicization in the R-U war. Firstly, I examine how food has been used as a weapon in war in this conflict. This is done by looking at the physical destruction of food supplies in Ukraine with damage to grain storage, port attacks, infrastructure, and railway demolition. Secondly, I examine the rhetorical use of food security by Russia and Ukraine and discuss how food is being used in politics to gain support by both nations at war.

1.2 Scope and limitations

The war between Ukraine and Russia happens when the world is facing numerous challenges simultaneously. Climate change, Covid-19 and additional crisis of hunger, conflicts and poverty are testing the capacity of individual nations as well as the world community and its ability to work together. Food security is something that is fundamental for all individuals' lives, independent from a country experiencing conflict or not. Using the case of the R-U war, I examine how this conflict, has contributed to repercussions for food security for countries far from the frontlines of the war. I adapt a scalar approach to examine the R-U war and its impacts with attention to local, national and international scales. I use the local scale when

examining specific events, for example Russian attacks on Ukrainian farmland and grain storage. When studying impacts in the Global South, the national scale informs the analysis through the empirical examples of Tunisia, Lebanon and Zimbabwe. The international scale refers to aspects which relates to two or more countries. The global scale focuses on the characteristics of the food production and distribution system. A portion of the documents used for document analysis, operates with "global" impacts of the R-U war. Furthermore, I focus on weaponization and politicization processes of food security in the R-U war. It is worth mentioning that food security and conflict are both complex issues that can cause impacts, as well as be impacted by numerous factors that amplify challenges in different ways. Given the scope of this thesis, I have limited impacts connected to the R-U war, but they are seen as accompanied by other challenges, for example Covid-19 repercussions and climate change.

1.3 Thesis structure

Chapter 2 presents the analytical framework by engaging with the theoretical concepts of food security, food insecurity, food trade and food governance. I link these concepts to conflict and war through the food-war nexus, food-wars, weaponization and politicization. Politicization processes are contemplated in relation to rhetorical and political use of food security in the R-U war. **Chapter 3** describes the methods and methodological choices made in the thesis. The triangulation of methods is presented, along with the analytical tools which have been used and the ethical considerations. **Chapter 4** addresses the first research question focusing on the impacts of the R-U war on international food markets. **Chapter 5** sightsees the second research question which considers the role of the BSGI for food security. Then **Chapter 6,** examines the last research question on weaponization of food and politicization of food security in the R-U war. The discussion focuses on weaponization, rhetorical and political use of food security in the R-U war and what this can tell us about the food security in an on-going conflict. **Chapter 7** presents concluding remarks, main findings and suggestions for further research on food security and conflict.

2 Analytical framework

In the following chapter I engage with the analytical framework of this thesis. The chapter review and discuss theoretical concepts and analytical perspectives relating to food (in)security, food trade, politicization, and food governance. Food security is considered as a dynamic concept, developed based on contested knowledge and varying contexts (Duncan & Claeys, 2018, p. 1411). Additionally, food security is understood through processes of social, economic, rhetorical and political interactions of various actors. I reflect on changes to the food security perspectives which challenge the traditional understandings limited to availability and access, calling for comprehensive analytical concepts and theories which pay attention to processes of justice and sovereignty. Furthermore, I connect food security to conflict by examining the diverse links between the two which are found in the academic debate. The aim of this thesis is to make the link from conflict to food (in)security using a scalar approach where the impacts of the R-U war are examined with attention to food security impacts on local, national and international scales.

2.1 Food security

A widely used definition of food security has been put forward by The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) which defines food security as a situation where all people, all places have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their needs and preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO et al. 2022a). According to the WFP, the world is in a global food crisis caused by a combination of factors. The biggest driver of hunger is conflict and 70% of the worlds hungry lives in areas affected by war and conflict (WFP, 2023a). The term food security was traditionally used to describe whether a country had access to enough food to meet dietary energy requirements at the national scale (Pinstrup-Andersen, 2009, p. 5). In other words, food security was considered in terms of national self-sufficiency in productional needs and population demands. Self-sufficiency did not translate into food availability for all citizens, neither did the availability of enough calories mean a healthy and nutritional diet. In the years following the World Food Conference of 1974, the concept of food security has been applied, developed, and diversified in numerous ways (Maxwell, 1996, p. 155). For example, the Millennium Goals (MDGs) sought to reduce the number of undernourished people by 50% by 2015. Launch of the MDGs also entailed up-scaling of the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS), a flagship initiative from FAO on hunger reduction. The National Programme for Food Security (NPFS), involved programmes in over 100 countries, promoting effective solutions towards

elimination of hunger, undernourishment and poverty. Promotion of national ownership and local empowerment, especially in countries south of Sahara were central (UN, 2007). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2015 aims for "no hunger" worldwide in SDG number 2 (McDonald, 2010; UN, 2023a). With the launch of SDGs, there was a certain unity about the requirement for transformative food systems by 2030.

Production and distribution in the food economy have undergone restructuring, driven by global demand and internationalization of the agro-food industry (Dicken, 2006, p. 347). The technologies of agro-food production have been transformed by industrialization. During the 1960s and 1970s, the so called "Green Revolution" combined the objectives of solving food problems in poor countries together with the development of new varieties of basic crops such as wheat, rice and corn (Dicken, 2006, p. 361). Agricultural products have increasingly been implemented into advanced transportation and communication systems. The development of global value chains led to food travelling long-distances before ending up at the dinner table (Dicken, 2006, p. 360). Food production remains a local process, enclosed to specific climatic, soil and socio-cultural conditions. However, the distribution and consumption of food is characterized by a global scale (Dicken, 2006, p. 348). This thesis understands the world food systems as increasingly composed by transnational actors and global components of production, transportation, and distribution. This further constructs a complicated web of interests and power. Food security is therefore situated as a core issue for 21th-century policymakers and is closely connected to the existing global challenges such as war, diseases and climate change. The next chapter elaborates on the four food security dimensions availability, access, utilization and stability.

2.1.1 Food security and the four dimensions; Availability, access, utilization and stability

The FAO definition of food security consists of four sub-dimensions: availability, access, utilization and stability. The focus of the thesis is on the dimensions of availability, access and stability. The first dimension, availability, became apparent following the famine and hunger crisis during the 1970s. During this time, food security issues were mostly concerned with adequate world food supplies to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption (UN, 1975). To secure availability, increased food production was emphasized due to protein-energy deficiency affecting 25% of the global population at the time (Peng & Berry, 2019). The major contributions to food availability are found in agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and forest products. Over the last two decades the level of food supplies have grown faster than

the population worldwide, resulting in higher levels of food availability per person (FAO et al. 2013, p. 18). Even though the dimension has seen great progress, there is elements of inequality and uneven advancement across regions over time.

As the world food systems evolved into longer and more complex supply chains, it became more evident that even with adequate national or international levels of food supply, widespread hunger could coexist due to lack of access. The work of Amaratya Sen relating to food access and entitlement has been credited for initiating a paradigm shift where access to food was put center stage (Maxwell, 1996). Whereas the earlier focus was on international and national availability of food, there was a shift down to regional and individual scales that previously received little attention. The access dimension considers economic access which is determined by disposable income, food prices and the provision of and access to social support (FAO et al. 2013). Physical access relates to presence and quality of infrastructure, such as ports, roads, railways, communication and food storage facilities that operates the food markets (FAO et al. 2013). Progress in the access dimension is often interpreted by reduction in poverty rates, but it is also determined by food prices and people's purchasing power (PPP).

The third dimension, utilization is linked to the individual ability to consume adequate amounts of food, both in quantity and quality to live a healthy life and to realize his or hers potential (Peng & Berry, 2019). To secure this dimension of food security, food and water must be safe and clean which is further linked to sanitation and adequate water sources. Food utilization is therefore closely linked to how food is handled, prepared and stored (FAO et al. 2013). The fourth and last dimension of food security is linked to the notion of stability and the ability to withstand shocks to the food system. Stability can be analysed by looking at different scales and how the ability of the nation, community, household or person handles a shock such as a natural disaster, war or economic crisis (Peng & Berry, 2019). Related to this dimension, the concept of risk is put forward as an analytical starting point. Risks or shocks with direct effects on food security, can occur unexpected in the form of price variations and events linked to political stability which thus creates a situation characterized by uncertainty. The three chosen dimensions of availability, access and stability each illustrates paradigm shifts in the food security discussion. Each of the dimensions came as an answer to weaknesses in the previous understandings. The addition of Amartya Sen's perspectives on food access and entitlement showed to the weaknesses of the singular focus on international

and national food availability which could be solved through increased food production. The inclusion of the individual scale of food security was further developed with the utilization concept. Utilization goes beyond quantity of available and accessible food and pronounces knowledge about consumer safety. Food and steady consumption are fundamental for survival, which encourage the stability dimension. This dimension does not only consider the food security situation at one specific time but can inform long-term situations. Nevertheless, impacts on food security can happen to one or more of these dimensions at the same time. Examining food security primarily on these dimensions would overlook essential aspects relating to insecurity and vulnerability. This brings me to the next theoretical concepts of vulnerability and food insecurity.

2.2 Food insecurity and vulnerability

According to the Global Report on food crisis (GRFC), food insecurity can be defined as *"a lack of secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal human growth and an active and healthy life* (WFP, 2022b, p. 229). For food to be secure, it must both be consistently available and accessible in sufficient quantities and diversity. Households must be able to utilize the food, which refers to storage, cocking, preparations and sharing the food in a way that results in a positive nutritional impact. Food insecurity can further be divided into acute food insecurity, food crisis, chronic food insecurity and moderate food insecurity. In this thesis, the focus is on food insecurity in the form of temporary food insecurity and food crisis, which is limited to a relative short period and shocks to the food system.

Acute food or temporary food insecurity refers to food insecurity at a specific point in time with a severity degree that threatens lives, livelihoods or both, regardless of the causes, context and duration (WFP, 2022b). This type of food insecurity manifest in a population within a short amount of time, because of sudden changes or shocks that impact determinants of food insecurity and malnutrition (Sassi, 2018). Temporary food insecurity can be the result of natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods and earthquakes, or other short-term shocks that cause fluctuations in food availability and food access due to variations in domestic food production, disruptions of food imports, food prices and household incomes (Sassi, 2018).

A food crisis occurs when rates of acute food insecurity and malnutrition rise sharply at local or national levels, which further can raise the need for emergency food assistance (WFP, 2022b). A food crisis is usually triggered by a shock or combination of shocks that affects one or several of the pillars of food security: food availability, access, utilization or stability. To analytically address food insecurity across scales, from the international to the individual scale, the role of vulnerability and resilience is central. Hart (2009, p. 376) argues for a framework based on local complexity and the multidimensional nature of stressors which further is linked to the diversity of household sensitivity and resilience.

Vulnerability can be defined as exposure to contingencies and stress with difficulty in coping with them (Chambers, 1989, p. 1). Vulnerability has an external side of risks, which is connected to shocks and stress. External vulnerability refers to structural elements that determine sensitivity and risk to exposure (Brück & d'Errico, 2019; Hart, 2009). Conflicts, economic globalization, spread of diseases, political changes and environmental changes are some factors that can impact the external vulnerability. These processes can hold a global, national or local nature to them, but the impacts can be at the household level (Hart, 2009). Building on this, the resilience concept connects the capacity to adverse stressors and shocks, to avoid long-lasting development consequences (Brück & d'Errico, 2019, p. 147). The internal side of vulnerability is connected to defencelessness, where the individual or household lack the means to cope (Hart, 2009, p. 368). This dimension of vulnerability is complex as it is especially context-specific and dynamic. For this thesis, the vulnerability aspect is used in connection to food insecurity and the associated element of resilience, meaning the ability to manage risk over time. These understandings build upon attention to different social, political and economic systems and how they are involved and generate diverse impacts in distinctive contexts and at different scales (Hart, 2009, p. 375). I build the analysis by applying the understandings raised by Hart (2009) to examine food insecurity impacts by conflict with attention to the connected concepts of vulnerability and resilience.

The concepts of food insecurity, food crisis, vulnerability and resilience provide useful analytical starting points. The call for reduction in food insecurity, have established itself as an international priority, for example seen in the MDGs and SDGs agenda. Policies, initiatives and goals have been launched in an attempt to reduce food insecurity globally, through improvement in socioeconomic conditions and sustainable use of resources for the future generations (Johnson, 2018). The R-U war impacts on food insecurity are connected to

food price variations and acute food export stop, relevant for the short-term food insecurity perspective. Additionally, are the inclusion of long-term characteristics of the food system important to understand the situation pre-war, especially relating to different levels of insecurity and vulnerability to shocks. Examining long-term perspectives and strategies for food security provide helpful positions on how to handle shocks to the food system both in the short-term and long-term perspectives.

2.3 Food trade

The role trade and distribution of food have an extensive history of research connected to it. Thomas Malthus (1798) argued that the population growth was happening at a faster pace than the food production, and famines and mass starvation were a result of this process which in turn were seen as a balance between man and nature (Pilcher, 2012; Rubin, 2016). The Malthusian theories which claim that the underlying problems of food security is linked to underproduction have been criticized for overlooking other fundaments for food security than the "material" about food supply (Lang & Barling, 2012, p. 316). Discourses on food security have for example called for greater attention to changed consumer habits (Aubert, 2008), energy and land use (Nellemann et al. 2009), shifts from top down-government driven policy to market-driven ones (Barling et al. 2009) and power and control over food systems (Lawrence et al. 2009).

However, Malthusian analysis was influential in studies of famines and is still used to some degree in certain areas of studies (Caldwell, 1998; Lang & Barling, 2012; Watkins & Menken, 1985). Late in the twentieth century, a new perspective was impelled in the work of Amartya Sen, see Chapter 2.1.1. This period was characterized by great technological advances and the emerging perspective challenged the previous deterministic scenarios in which population growth surpassed food production (Rubin, 2016). The underlying factors leading to famine and hunger were described differently and the role of the state became more apparent for ensuring adequate flow of food. There was a shift from thinking there was deficient food to now acknowledging the problems relating to distribution and access. Illustrated through the independence of India, the country succeeded in eradicating hunger without a dramatic increase in food production (Pilcher, 2012). Sen utilized a more rights-based approach to food distribution and how its connected to the juridical aspects of society, relating to land, social security, and employment opportunities. As time has progressed, the shifts from singular

emphasize on food security measured by food availability and access, have evolved into discussions on utilization, stabilization and the links to trade, political stability and conflict (D'Odorico et al. 2014, p. 465).

In the late 1970s, early 1980s, the global food system underwent greater trade liberalization, where state intervention became less prominent and new actors took center stage. Liberalization of the food system included deregulation of markets and the introduction of "free trade" principles, promoted by organizations such as the WTO. Free trade refers to trade where goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders with little or no government tariffs, quotas, subsidies or prohibitions to the exchange (Claes et al. 2019, p. 172; Nagy, 2020, p. 2). The arguments for food trade are rooted theories which focuses on deregulations and industrial policy to promote economic growth (Greenaway & Milner, 2014). They believe the economy will blossom with the use of free markets and free trade where nations do not discriminate between each other when it comes to trade (Claes et al. 2019; Payne & Phillips, 2010). Traverso and Schiavo (2020, p. 1) suggest that participation in international food trade has positive effects on low-income countries as the two pillars of food security, availability and access are strengthened. The argument by D'Odorico (2014, p. 465) supports this by showing to positive attributes to food security through trade, in the Sahel region. Trade is reinforcing, rather than eroding of food security and they argue that in the last two decades, the increasing number of trade-dependent countries have reached a higher sufficiency level through their reliance on trade.

Counter arguments to food trade liberalization and principles of free trade have become evident, even as the world trade is more open and complex than ever (Nagy, 2020). Intensification of food trade globally have resulted in around 23% of food being traded (D'Odorico et al. 2014). Linking back to the stability dimension and vulnerability, the associated risks for food security concerns are linked to climate extremes, price volatility and changes in markets (D'Odorico et al. 2014, pp. 465-467). The vulnerability to these shocks is argued to be particularly high for countries which rely strongly on food trade (Otero et al, 2013; Pilcher, 2012), see Chapter 2.31. The free market-oriented policies are argued to have created "winners" and "losers" in the world market and the inequalities both within countries but also between countries have grown (Pilcher, 2012). I apply the concepts of stability and vulnerability, considering a trade regime which have undergone liberalization. This liberalization has facilitated a food trade system where availability and access have been

strengthened (D'Odorico et al. 2014; Traverso & Schiavo, 2020). However, these inter-dependencies have resulted in rising inequalities and dependencies to food trade, which will be elaborated in the next chapter.

2.3.1 Food trade dependency

Otero et al. (2013) raises a critique towards the notion of food security through trade which they argue are promoted by supra state organizations like the UN, FAO, WB and WTO. The argument grew out of the development theories of dependency. Dependency theory arose around the 1950s and aims to explain the cause and result of the dependent status of countries in the Global South to economic and political systems (Agbebi & Virtanen, 2017). Haq (1976) identifies the roots of inequality between developed and developing countries to the historical past of colonialism where the disparities between the rich and the poor countries and their respective production of goods. Countries in the south became producers of raw materials while the north produced the industrialized goods. The profit levels from exported varied significantly between the two, resulting in the Global North increasing their wealth in greater heights than the Global South.

Looking back to the period before the implementation of liberalization policies and free trade principles since the 1980s, the food regime was more concerned with the national agricultural sector and self-sufficiency. With the neoliberal political and economic policies, the agricultural sectors became more liberalized. This was partly done in the name of food security as increased trade were considered to strengthen food security (Otero et al. 2013, p. 264). The argument for this can be found in the policies promoted by the WTO, which underlines stronger food security through liberal global trade relations (McMichael, 2009). National food reserves have been privatized and are now run by transnational companies (McMichael, 2009, p. 288). These actors act as speculators instead of protectors of farmers and consumers. Neoliberal policies were implemented to create mutual dependence, between both the Global North and the Global South. The article by Otero et al. (2013) criticizes this perspective, arguing that the system does not create mutual dependency between North and South but rather puts South in a position of dependency to the North for basic foods, whilst the North only are dependent on what they call "luxury foods". The luxury foods are high-value and high-quality foods whilst the basic foods for example can be corn and vegetable oils. Otero et al. (2013, p. 265) also points to the increasing trend of large multinational agribusiness corporations in the international food system and how these companies often

operate in the United States. The liberalization of the food trade system influenced production and distribution processes of food. On one hand, liberalization policies can have positive attributes to food security by increasing food availability and access. Nevertheless, the emergence of perspectives which pay attention to the role of food trade dependency shines light on unevenness of this system. To grasp the challenges of food security, there have been calls for food governance which aims at a more comprehensive governing of the food systems.

2.4 Politicization and food governance

Politicization refers to transforming as a matter or subject into having political characteristics (Feindt et al. 2021). De-politicization means the opposite, taking away political character of a subject. (De)politicization can be understood as a mode of statecraft, which for example can involve crisis management and prevention efforts by public policymakers. It can also be understood more broadly, as rhetorical strategies employed by various social actors to either open or close the appearance of issues being political (Feindt et al. 2021, p. 512). Both these understandings, the former focusing on statecraft and the latter on rhetorical strategies by various social actors, is applied in this thesis in relation to the BSGI. The process of politicization is further linked food security governance processes.

The role of food security governance has gotten increasing attention due to the call for solutions and approaches that considers the environmental, social, economic and political aspects of food security. There has been calls for food security governance, but the clarity of the concept can be difficult to grasp. Policy-making processes reflect, orient, and include diverse experiences, knowledge and values (Duncan & Claeys, 2018, p. 1412). The concept of governance entails a plurality of definitions and applications across various disciplines. One way to define the concept is *"the interactions between public and/or private entities ultimately aiming at the realization of collective goals"* (Candel, 2014, p. 586). The interactions between the public and/or private actors may take place both within and outside food systems, and can cover aspects relating to food prices, agricultural trade, poverty reduction, infrastructure, and crisis management (Candel, 2014). Applying the governance perspective, food security represents a policy problem, which there is no neutral solution. The international food system has gone through drastic changes following globalization processes. Changes of diets, trade relations, processing of food and distribution are some of the

components that make up the food governance system today (Woertz, 2022). International companies have led a change of diets and dominate trade, processing, distribution and supply of input to the food system (Woertz, 2022). Following the 2007-08 food price inflation, food security issues gained a renewed interest from politicians and policymakers who recognized food security as a matter of national, regional and global urgency (Maye & Kirwan, 2013). The FAO Rome Summit on World Food Security in 2008, symbolized food security's renewed geopolitical status and was initiated as a direct response to the food price inflation and the striking fact that over 1 billion people worldwide were thought to be "food insecure" or "undernourished" (Maye & Kirwan, 2013).

These developments, growing insecurity and vulnerability both between countries, but also within countries, gave rise to resistance movements. These have been led by non-governmental organizations, farmers and landowners which organized bottom-up movements. Another, more national, political resistance was also apparent in countries such as Australia, Brazil and Thailand where the governments discussed and implemented controlling measures in agriculture. Following the global rise in food prices during 2007/08, significant food exporting countries such as Argentina, India and Russia implemented export restrictions to protect their own food security. This process undermined trust in the global food markets and supply chains (Woertz, 2022). When crisis hit, they span over into trade, investments and politics relating to food. Globalization processes have created mutual dependence in trade, but as this thesis will explore further, there are differences between countries and their ability to handle food shocks. Candel (2014) indicated that the food security governance debate had been dominated by an optimistic viewpoint where governing was seen as a problem-solving mechanism in food security issues. In this thesis, this is discussed using the example of the BSGI as an example of food governance. The next chapter presents supplementary and contrasting perspectives to the concepts and theories presented thus far.

2.5 Food sovereignty and food justice movements

The food (in)security debate has been dominated by definitions linked to under-consumption and hunger, which saw the core answer as raising production to produce enough food for the worlds hungry (Lang & Barling, 2012). The productionist policy paradigm believed the Malthusian problem of population growth could be kept under control through better management of land, agriculture, technology and aid efficiency (Lang & Barling, 2012). As time progressed, the production-oriented approach has been questioned by emerging

paradigms which underline complexity and a multi-focused approach. The call for more comprehensive perspectives has appeared to include key concerns regarding food security that previously were overlooked. As a response, many scholars and activists have introduced new perspectives based on local diversity and global complexity as a way of understanding the connections between the production of food and human needs (Huish, 2008). The rights-based frameworks encompass the humanitarian access and food as a human right for food security.

The "food sovereignty" and "food justice" movements are two examples of approaches that tries to tackle the challenge of inequality in the global food system. The food sovereignty movement's objective is to remove neo-colonial practices in the global food system. The demand for food sovereignty, for people within states, and for states within the world food system are an important part of this perspective. Food sovereignty is concerned with alternative agro-ecological models, as opposed to high-input industrial agricultural models. The former, favour small-scale farmers and local control over food systems and reduced dependency on seeds and related technologies (Messer & Cohen, 2023, p. 329). The push towards increased production in the name of improvement in the availability and access dimensions, led to a system where countries in the Global South became producers of products bound to sell to the Global North, rather than to ensure their own food security systems. The needs of the local and national population were put aside in favour of international interests of global trade arrangements. The food sovereignty movement rejects the positions of the organizations, such as the World Trade Organization and the role it has played related to promotion of free trade and other market initiatives (Huish, 2008, p. 1392).

The food justice movement is a closely related approach that argues for food as a right, rather than a commodity (Huish, 2008, p. 1393). Challenges of starvation, famine or hunger is described with reference to lack of political will and inequality within distribution. This approach has gathered momentum as the world produces more than enough food, the challenges lie in the distribution of this food. In this thesis, I use the food justice and food sovereignty perspectives to explore the relation between food insecurity, dependencies and vulnerabilities to shocks, such as war. Applying the food justice and sovereignty perspectives analytically inform the discussion further by seeing food as a human right.

2.6 War and conflict

The Uppsala Conflict Data program (UCDP) define an armed conflict as a deep incompatibility that concerns government and territory using armed forces between two parties which results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year (Themnér & Wallensteen, 2011). War can be defined as an organized and deliberate political act by an established political authority that causes 1000 or more death in a 12-month period and involves at least two actors (Mingst et al. 2019, p. 191). There is commonly used two types of war, intra-state and interstate wars. Intrastate wars refer to wars that take place within states. A war between sovereign states is termed interstate war. Wars and conflicts are characterized by multiplicity regarding the outbreak of violence. The realist interpretation of the causes of war, perceive wars as an inevitable feature of interstate politics due to the lack of a hierarchically superior authority which can create laws, resolve disputes and enforce law and order (Mingst et al. 2019). The realist understandings highlight balance of power as the best mechanism to prevent war and conflicts.

Power balance is built on the logic that if power is unbalanced in the international system, stronger states will take advantage of the situation and go to war against a less powerful state. To keep the balance in the system, realists see alliances as the most important institutional tool for enhancing a state and its security. A limitation to the realist understandings is that the power-balance argument is challenged in times of power shifts, as the alliances and "friendships" between states should follow to even out the balances, but this was for example not the case when the bipolar world order collapsed after the cold war (Mingst et al. 2019). Then the international system went into a period with the US as the leading power with long-standing allies by their side.

The liberal approach to conflict and war outbreak is more concerned with the characteristics of states and their institutions. An element in the liberal approach is commercial peace theory. The theory is based upon interdependence between states, particularly linked to trade and investment. The mutual dependence and the prospect of continued economic benefits will make it less likely for states to go to war (Mingst et al. 2019). In this view, the role of international institutions can be argued to promote peace as a way for states to build connections. This can for example be in the form of the World Trade Organization which is a facilitator for international trade. It can also be found in treaties relating to arms control and disarmament which aims at reduction of nuclear threats. The realist and liberal perspectives

underscore varying elements as contributors for peace and conflict. The role of international institutions and dependency is regarded differently, which further provide different sets of strategies. The focus of this thesis is not on the explanations of the conflict. However, it is useful to outline theoretical contributions of war and conflicts to identify these elements and how they relate to food security in the R-U war.

2.7 The food-war nexus

Situating food security in conflict is highly complex and can be investigated from diverse perspectives. The impacts of conflict on food security are context specific and dependent on vulnerability of livelihoods and the nature of the conflict (Holleman et al. 2017, p. 27). Conflicts can emerge as a type of shock that affects livelihoods and well-being of populations. The intensity and type of armed conflict will create varied outcomes across local, national, regional and international scales that are impacted by the conflict (Martin-Shields & Stojetz, 2019, p. 154). Academic literature concerned with conflict induced food insecurity, have examined the linkage of price variations being a driver for violent conflict. Hendrix and Brinkman (2013, p. 13) addresses feedback between food insecurity and conflict. Higher consumer prices, particularly for food and fuel, are associated with increases in urban protest and rioting, which in turn can affect institutions and influence policy decisions that affect the whole country (Hendrix & Brinkman, 2013, p. 13). Additionally, evidence from the work of Van Wezeel (2016) presents the impacts of international food prices on the occurrence of civil unrest. Higher international food prices on basic staples, such as wheat and cereals, are seen as the main drivers for social unrest (Van Wezeel, 2016, p. 778).

The academic contributions over are concerned about how food insecurity can affect conflict. This thesis operates with a similar connection when examining civil unrest due to increasing expenditures on food and fuel in Tunisia. However, the main connection is made from conflict to food insecurity. Conflict is considered a source of food insecurity, as it disrupts productions and distribution networks (Hendrix & Brinkman, 2013, p. 13). Furthermore, is the connection examined with attention to acute food exports stop, impacts on international food markets and the use of food as a weapon of war. Conversely, the relationship between conflict and food security must be understood in the given context of collective action, political institutions, and market structures that can mitigate or amplify the effects of food insecurity and conflict. Therefore, the connection between food insecurity and conflict is studied using a rounded perspective where independent contexts are impacted and shaped by

varying effects relating to social, political and economic processes. Also central to this point is the application of the vulnerability and resilience concepts and how these contribute to food insecurity and conflict situations, as well as the connection between the two.

Breisinger et al. (2015) argues for the need to build resilience to shocks in conflict-affected countries. This resilience is further linked to economic, environmental and health shocks and is exemplified by riots following the 2007-2008 global food price crisis. Here the external food price shock was seen as fuel to civil conflict in for example Nigeria (Breisinger et al. 2015). The food price variations often result from limited market activity and reduced trade flows. For governments to deal with such food price shocks, the argument shows short- and long-term solutions to help against global food price volatility. In the short term, the need for public reserves and diversified sources of food, especially for countries with high food-import dependency are considered to help safeguard a food price shock. Empirical evidence from India, Kenya and Zambia indicate that national reserves can be effective for stabilizing prices over time (Breisinger et al. 2015).

This argument is also put forward by McDonald (2016, p. 196) as food reserves can be utilized in the event of regional, national or international need and would help provide resilience against unexpected shocks or negative events. The complex terrain of global political, social and economic problems has an unfortunate tendency to "forget" food security in the normal situation, and when crisis hit, the attention is renewed. In the more long-term perspective, the need for transformative policies that improve households' and communities' capacity to include structural, economic and social policies and infrastructural investments are underscored. Furthermore, the role of governments to foster agricultural growth by increasing productivity and income of smallholder farmers is seen as a potential way toward building long-term resilience (Breisinger et al. 2015).

Levels of hunger and undernutrition are worse in countries experiencing the consequences of conflict, and whilst most countries have achieved significant gains in reducing hunger and undernutrition, this progress has stagnated in many countries affected by conflict (FAO et al. 2017; Holleman et al. 2017). This is highly dependent on contextual factors, such as climate, economic systems, social protection and other aspects which impacts conflict and food insecurity. Conflict and food insecurity falls squarely at the intersection of at least three SDGs, Zero hunger (SDG 2), Good health and well-being (SDG 3) and Peace, justice and

strong institutions (SDG 16) (Shemyakina, 2022). In 2020, the "Zero-hunger" SDG2, appeared distressingly out of reach, leading the UN-Secretary General to launch a UN Food Systems Summit to encourage innovations, information and technology sharing among international agencies, nations governments, civil-society delegations, non-governmental organizations and grassroots groups (Messer & Cohen, 2023, p. 330). The call for a triple nexus approach were put forward, with emphasize on policies of food as a human right, food security as a dimension in humanitarian aid and peace operations and the inclusion of local understandings. The analytical attributes put forward thus far has focused on how food security can impact conflict and vice versa. In the next chapter, the aim is to position food security and vulnerability in on-going conflicts by exploring the concepts of food-wars and weaponization of food.

2.8 Food-wars and the weaponization of food

Food wars encompass the deliberate use of food or hunger as a weapon of war (Messer & Cohen, 2023, p. 289). Food wars describes situations where conflict causes food shortage by reduction in food production or food market availability which can impact individuals and households (Messer & Cohen, 2023, pp. 288-289). Destroying farmland and crops are among the oldest uses of food as a weapon (Cohen & Pinstrup-Andersen, 1999; Lee et al. 2003). Prevention of food security can happen through destruction of food stocks, livestock and other assets that are crucial for food-producing regions. Furthermore, resilience of individuals and households are undermined, and their coping strategies gets limited in relation to food security and nutrition. In conflicts, the emergence of frontlines, battlefields and war zones is an inevitable effect, often causing physical destruction. The agrarian sector often suffers proportionally more destruction than other economic sectors, due to battles and fighting taking place in rural areas. The destruction of infrastructure such as roads, bridges and ports, together with less cultivation of fields and land can weaken a country's abilities to produce and distribute food. The reconstruction of war-torn countries, systems for food production and food supply chains can take decades to rebuild (Kemmerling et al. 2022).

The use of blockades, economic sanctions and donor policies can selectively withhold food and food aid. This can lead to a vicious circle of violence and hunger (Kemmerling et al. 2022). Food supply can be of strategic economic importance to any armed groups, resulting in plundering of food storage and looting of civilian households and markets (Kemmerling et al. 2022, p. 4).

War and conflict can also cause impacts far from the frontlines. This is particularly relevant with attention to globalization of food systems and the emergence of complex supply chains were food travel great distances from production to consumption. The notion of food paths, refers to the route of food from the production to consumption. The longer the food path is, the greater vulnerability for food to become food weapons (Lee et al. 2003). Additionally, the concepts of "food power" or "agri-power" have been applied used to describe when a country or prominent actor is the dominant supplier of fundamental food commodities and how this can be used as a form of weapon (Hillman, 1978). The "hard-liners" of food power argued that a country being a dominant supplier of for example grain to the world markets, could be used as political leverage against developed and developing countries. I use food power analytically by connecting it to politicization processes of food security. Politicization is applied to weaponization, rhetorical and political use of food and food security in conflict, meaning that it gets implemented and shaped by political processes.

2.9 Summary of my analytical framework

The theoretical chapter started by presenting the overreaching, dominating understandings of food security. The FAO food security framework with the dimensions availability, access, utilization and stabilization has emerged and developed as results of weaknesses and limitations to the former understandings. These dimensions have not occurred in a vacuum but is a part of a long historical debate and processes of food trade, dependency and vulnerability. The starting point of my food security analysis is built upon the ideas from Dicken (2006) which consider the food systems of production and distribution as a result of global demand and internationalization of agro-food industry. Food travel great distances from production to consumption through complex global value chains where production is a local process, whereas distribution and consumption happen at the global scale (Dicken, 2006, p. 348). Applying the ideas from Dicken opens for a scalar-approach where interactions at different scales are considered. The food security dimensions are concerned with relative specific aspects of food and food security, such as availability and access. To move past these limitations, I apply the food insecurity concept and vulnerability from Chambers (1989), Hart (2009) and Brück and d'Errico (2019). Inclusion of food insecurity and relating sub-concepts of food crisis and temporary food insecurity is especially relevant as food insecurity is

explored in relation to conflict. Examining food security in this matter will open up for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of food insecurity issues connected to conflict.

Furthermore, food justice and food sovereignty (Huish, 2008) are the basis for analysing the international food system which is characterised by liberalization (Claes et al. 2019; Greenaway & Milner, 2014; Nagy, 2020) and trade (McMichael, 2009; Otero et al. 2013; Traverso & Schiavo, 2020). I analytically apply the justice and sovereignty concepts to food security impacts of the R-U war by critically assessing the world food production and trade system. This analysis is informed by scholarships which consider unevenness and dependencies in the production and trade system for countries in the Global South (Agebebi & Virtanen, 2017; Haq, 1976; Huish, 2008; Messer & Cohen, 2023). Food governance is used to explore the definite actions and interactions of stakeholders in the international food system (Candel, 2014). I do not rely solely on seeing the world food system as a result of liberalization and trade, but rather as being influenced by governing processes with clear aims from different international stakeholders, for example the WTO. Food security is basis for human survival; therefore, it should not be considered in a passive form resulting from processes which "govern" themselves, but rather as a continued processes of intended interactions across numerous scales.

The second part of the analytical framework explores theoretical concepts of war, conflict and the connection between food security and war. I choose to use the two contrasting views of realist and liberal approaches to war and conflicts. The realist understanding highlights conflict as a result of no superior authority in the world order that apply laws, resolve disputes and secure law and order. To even out the balance of power, the use of alliances is underscored to keep countries from going to war against each other. The contrasting liberal perspective is more concerned about characteristics of states and their institutions, as well as the commercial peace theory. The theory states that interdependence between states, through trade and investments will create a continued economic benefit, making it less likely for interstate war (Mingst et al, 2019). International organizations and institutions are considered actors who promote peace, by contributing to promoting interdependence. This is especially relevant in relation to the role of organizations such as the WTO and their role in food trade. Even though the aim of this thesis is not concerned with explaining the causes of the R-U war, it is still insightful to include explanatory theories of conflict as these spans over into food security systems through trade, dependency and vulnerability. I consider the world system

today to have characteristics from both the perspectives. Building on the realist understanding, the presence of the NATO alliance can function as a balance of power between states. The liberal characteristics are found in the existence of international organizations like the WTO which creates interlinks between countries through trade.

As the chapter outlined, academic literature has tended to explore the linkages of food security in conflict by looking at how food insecurity has driven conflicts (see Hendrix & Brinkman, 2013; Van Wezeel, 2016). Moreover, the examination of conflict induced food insecurity has traditionally been explored on local scales, where conflicts are happening. I explore similar connections between food insecurity and conflict when I apply the politicization concept to the R-U war. I consider food insecurity in the R-U war to be characterised by politicization processes, related to weaponization, rhetorical and political use of food and food security (Feindt et al. 2021). Politicization as weaponization is understood as deliberate use of food supplies and physical destruction as weapons of war which is done using statecraft (Cohen & Pinstrup-Andersen, 1999; Lee et al. 2003; Messer & Cohen, 2013). These attributes are important for the food-insecurity conflict research field. However, this thesis goes further in the food-war debate and examine how the R-U conflict impacts other countries, which are located far away from the frontlines of the war. The aim is to contribute to research gaps on food security vulnerability either caused or weakened by conflict. To do this, I build on ideas of "food paths" and resilience to shocks caused by conflict (Breisinger et al. 2015; Kemmerling et al. 2022). Lastly, I connect the analysis to the notion of "food power" or "agri-power" where dominant food suppliers, hereunder Russia and Ukraine, can use food and food security as a form of political weapon to gain support from other countries (Hillman, 1978).

3 Methods and methodology

This chapter discuss the methodological choices that have informed the project. I begin with a discussion on the research design and the scalar approach which is applied in the project. Using qualitative methods, the distinctive features of the U-R conflict and how it impacts international food security is explored in a holistic way (Dalland, 2012). Then I proceed to the data collection, which included semi-structured interviews, document sampling and use of graphic elements. The research builds on semi-structured interviews, document analysis and rhetorical analysis. I discuss the triangular methods of data analysis. Lastly, I review ethical considerations of data and privacy, critical reflexivity and rigour of the research.

3.1 Research design

This study is based upon qualitative research methodology where the aim is to explore the research questions in a profound matter and investigate the characteristics of the chosen research topic. The thesis is based upon an idiographic research design, where the focus is on understanding a particular phenomenon (Baxter, 2021, p. 113). An intensive, holistic research approach allows for contextual research, combined with the exploration of local, national, regional and global influences on the case. The inclusion of the documents in the document analysis as well as the rhetorical analysis explore the views of international stakeholders and the use of food security in the conflict. The study also includes quantitative data to present graphs, numbers and figures relating to food prices and the Black Sea Grain Initiative and other data connected to the study. I have used triangulation of methods, which means multiple or mixed methods. This is done by drawing from multiple respondents, researchers, and data to confirm or validate results (Hay & Cope, 2021, p. 436).

3.1.1 Case study

A case study involves the study of a single instance or small number of instances of a phenomenon to explore in-depth nuances of the phenomenon and the contextual influences on and explanations of that phenomenon (Baxter, 2021, p. 109). Some instances of case studies may study a specific event. The case study can be characterized as a methodology, which refers to an approach to research design, rather than a method. A case study will provide a detailed analysis of why theoretical concepts or explanations inhere in the context of the case. It can also be useful for developing new explanatory concepts (Baxter, 2021, p. 110). This type of research often combines several methods of qualitative research as well as analytical strategies (Baxter, 2021, p. 123). A case study is considered transferable in the analytical

sense, rather than in a statistical sense. The chosen case in this thesis is the Russia-Ukraine war. During my studies at the University of Oslo, I have been interested in international challenges and how impacts can strike differently across scales. The issues relating to food security and food insecurity is of an international character where countries and regions can be severely impacted of events that are happening far from their territories. Therefore, I wanted to explore the R-U war and its impacts on international food security, with particular focus on countries in the Global South. I have included empirical examples from the Global South to illustrate different impacts of the war on food security processes relating to price variations, dependencies, trade and trade restrictions together with vulnerability and sovereignty. Inclusion of these examples were done to investigate food security impacts across different scales, without limiting the study to one specific place. A possible weakness of this approach is that the data can be more superficial than if I had chosen to study impacts in one specific country in the Global South. To reduce this weakness, I choose to go more in depth in certain countries, being Tunisia, Lebanon and Zimbabwe. The aim of the study is to investigate the broader impacts of the R-U war on food security. Choosing a scalar approach allowed for different levels of analysis where several empirical examples were put forward.

3.1.2 Scale

The geographical concept of scale, understood here as levels in a hierarchical organization is used to explore the case study through different analytical levels or scales. The basis of the scalar understanding builds on the work of Andrew Herod (2003) which sightsee scales as something socially constructed. The epistemological debate of scale has been concerned with varying understandings. The idealist understandings of scale suggests that the concept is used for ordering of the world (Herod, 2003, p. 218). Materialist understandings on the other hand argues that scales are real social products. This debate has contributed to shaping the varying understandings, especially relating to the "global" and "local". Some scholars argue that the global and local are not actual things, but ways of framing situations. Others understand global and local as different viewpoints for social networks (Herod, 2003, pp. 230-231). Globalization processes have been discussed in relation to scale, where the different levels, such as the global and local, interfere with each other. The ways in which we understand and apply the concepts of scale, shape how we see social and natural processes.

In this study, I apply the scalar approach to examine local, national, and international scales. The influences on food security from international organizations and institutions make up the

international scale. The use of the global scale is concerned with characteristics of the food production and distribution system, as well as international stakeholders referencing "global impacts" in their respective documents. I use the local scale when discussing specific events, for example attacks, in Ukraine. I apply the national scale to other empirical examples, such as Tunisia, Lebanon and Zimbabwe. By applying scale as an analytical concept, the thesis takes on an examining character which sightsee various levels of interactions. As argued by Jonas (2006), can a scalar ontology help combine knowledge of the economic and the political in study of regions. The structured of local, national and international scales are interconnected through configurations of fiscal flows, social movements, agencies, power relation and political practices (Jonas, 2006). These scales are understood as socially constructed, referring to a scale as a result of social processes. They are also not seen as "given", separated places, but rather as an analytical entry to complex processes of interaction. The scales that are applied are understood as a construction based on political and economic processes, which can be changed (Jordhus-Lier & Stokke, 2017).

3.2 Data collection

The data collection in this thesis consists of semi-structured interviews, documents and illustrative elements. The sampled documents contain reports, briefs, statements, and articles published after the conflict outbreak. Furthermore, I use two statements for rhetorical analysis and graphic elements and figures to inform the research. The thesis operates with triangulation of methodological attributes. The following chapter discuss the methodological choices connected to the interview process, document sampling for document analysis and rhetorical analysis, together with the use of graphic elements.

3.2.1 Interview and purposive sampling of informants

By using interviews as a methodological tool, the researcher can access information about places, events, opinions and experiences (Dunn, 2021, p. 149). The purpose of a qualitative interview is to obtain the informants' insights, experiences and knowledge about a case or situation (Dalland, 2012). I did semi-structured interviews which have a predetermined order of questions and themes, but with flexibility regarding how the informants choose to address the questions and what they want to emphasize. By conducting in-depth interviews with several informants, this provided significant insights into the research issue (see Stratford & Bradshaw, 2021, p. 99).

In the initial stages of research, I took notes of possible organizations, institutions and individuals that were either working with food security, conflict or other relevant aspects to my thesis. Further on I developed a list of possible informants, where I did some research on each before reaching out. This way of recruitment is known as purposive sampling where the informants get contacted due to their position or work in organizations or institutions considered relevant for the project (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2021, p. 100). I also used a form of snow-ball sampling, where I asked the informants at the end of the interview if they had any recommendations for organizations, individuals or written work that could be beneficial for the thesis. The informant from Sjøfartsdirektoratet pointed me to the informant in Norges Rederiforbund and other informants had several tips on reports and documents provided by different stakeholders. The recruitment process was overall a positive experience where the individuals were accessible, replied fast and were positive to contributing to the project.

The qualitative aspect of interviews seeks qualitative knowledge where nuances and experiences are in focus (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2012). In this thesis, the notion of specificity is also highly relevant since part of the project is linked to a specific initiative, the BSGI. I was interested in knowledge about the R-U war, impacts on food security and views on the BSGI. During the recruitment process and when conducting the interviews, the BSGI were for some informants a sensitive topic as the initiative became quite fast, very political. This was, together with other factors, due to the initiative happening in the context of two warring nations that each promotes its respective country's interests. In result of this sensitivity, I chose to include methods of document analysis and rhetorical analysis as well.

The data gathered using interviews were concerned with different aspects of the R-U conflict and its impacts on food security. The informants which work politically and in the bureaucracy were especially relevant for the political aspects surrounding food insecurity issues and strategies for strengthened food security. The documents written by international stakeholders, such as FAO, WB, WFP and WTO also included similar qualities. The informant working in research informed the research and its alignment in the academic community on food security. The informant working in journalism gave insightful experiences from working on the R-U war and food security and how this operates in the media. Furthermore, the informants working in the maritime industry informed the research about the practical and safety procedures of the BSGI and the situation of negotiations in war-affected areas. The informant working in research presented ideas which were central for the

political actors and vice versa, showing to a degree of alignment regarding food security across different fields.

3.2.2 Conducting interviews

Before conducting my interviews, I created an interview guide, see Appendix 1. The interview guide consisted of general topics and questions I wanted to ask the informants. I adjusted the themes and questions, depending on the position of the informant and their line of work. I also adjusted the number of questions in line with the allotted time. I structured the interview guide into four overlining themes. The first one was based on the informant's background and information regarding their work. Further, the second theme was dependent on what line of work they were in. Here I divided informants into different groups, for example informants working with food security and another group working in conflict situations and diplomacy. In relation to this theme, the focus was on food security and how the R-U war had impacted food security across the globe. The questions were adjusted to their expertise. Thirdly the interview guide focused on the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the informant's knowledge and connection to the initiative. The last focus was on the future and the possibilities regarding food security and conflict. The interview guide can help structure the conversation, as well as allowing flexibility for the informants to elaborate on the topics and questions they have the most knowledge and interest for. I conducted seven interviews between February and October 2023.

3.2.2.1 Informant list

* Norwegian name of Organization

Name	**Position and organization**	**Date and place of Interview**
Anne Beathe Tvinnereim	The Minister for Development and Cooperation of Norway	Over telephone 5 February 2023
Ida Rudolfsen	Senior Researcher at The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)	Over Teams 15 February 2023
Cecilie Juul Stensrud	Political adviser for foreign affairs and Defence	The Norwegian Parliament, Stortinget 1 March 2023

Jan Speed	Journalist in Panorama Nyheter*, an independent news site published by NORAD	Over telephone 29. September 2023
Anna Kari Rasmussen	Senior Surveyor, The Norwegian Maritime Directorate Sjøfartsdirektoratet*	Over Teams 3 October 2023
Iselin Løvslett Danbolt	Communications advisor at the UN-Association Norway FN-Sambandet*	FN-Sambandet, Oslo. 5 October 2023
Audun Halvorsen	Executive Director of Security and Contingency planning, Norwegian Shipping Association Norges Rederiforbund*	Over telephone 23 October 2023

An elite interview is conducted with leaders or experts in a specific field, with a position of power and influence (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2012). For me as the interviewer, it was important to prepare myself in terms of knowing what their position implies, as well as what their specific interests are. To do this, I read different articles, statements and information written both by the informant themselves and by news outlets. I further on watched clips, videos and listened to podcasts episodes they had been a part of. The interviews lasted between 20 minutes to an hour. As several of my informants hold "elite" positions in Norwegian politics, bureaucracy and maritime industry, the use of digital tools for interviewing were central.

3.2.3 Audio recording and digital interviews

Before conducting the interviews, the informants were asked about audio recording. In accordance with the guidelines of UiO, I used the Diktafon app and stored the recordings in Nettskjema. Audio-recordings are classified as red-data, meaning confidential. All my interviews were audio-recorded. An advantage to recording the interviews, is that the dynamic of the conversation may flow better as I as the interviewer is less occupied with taking notes, and instead can focus primarily on the informant and what they are telling me. For the informants, the recording can be inhibiting, as they can be more cautious about what they say due to it being recorded (Dunn, 2021, p. 167). Two of my informants made a point about this by saying "do not cite me on this" before they told their views regarding certain aspects. Being audio-recorded can make the informants feel more vulnerable, therefore it is imperative

to respect their requests. In all interviews I asked the informants for permission to record beforehand. Three interviews were conducted over telephone. This was best suited for the informants due to their position and busy schedule. My experience with the telephone interviews were overall positive as it provided an opportunity for me as an interviewer to write down points and sub-questions as the interview progressed. Some limitations to doing an interview over the phone is that body language, facial impressions and so one disappears. Two of the interviews were done using Teams, one of the informants were located on the Westcoast of Norway, which led to Teams being the preferred interview format. Two of the interviews were done in physical meetings in Oslo. In the physical meetings it was important to be present, make eye-contact and engage with the informants.

3.2.4 Use of graphic elements and figures

In this thesis, I have chosen to include illustrative contributions from FAO, JCC, USDA and Trading Economics. Figure 1, in Chapter 4.3 is provided by USDA. The figure was gathered from a report published on the USDA website, which is considered a public domain where information can be freely distributed or copied, if the attribution is cited in the correct matter (USDA, 2023). Furthermore, Figure 2 and Figure 3, in Chapter 4.4, is retrieved from Trading Economics and FAO. Trading Economics provide historical data and forecasts, based on official sources, not third data party providers and their data are checked for inconsistencies (Trading Economics, 2023a). Figure 2 was also checked up against FAO's own information. Content on the FAO website is protected by copyright. FAO is committed to making its content freely available and encourages the use, reproduction and dissemination of text, multimedia and data presented (FAO, 2023a). The content on the FAO website may be copied, printed or downloaded for private study, research and teaching purposes (FAO, 2023a). Figure 4 from the JCC is subject to the regulations from the UN, meaning that information can be downloaded and copied for informational purposes (UN, 2023b). I have acted in accordance with the regulations of these organizations and institutions, and the reference under all figures are presented as purposed by the source themselves. This may differ from the other references in the text. The timeline in Chapter 5.1.2 was produced by me.

3.3 Document sampling

The document analysis is based on 9 official documents from international organizations and institutions. The document sampling started by making a list of international organizations

and institutions that work on food security and conflict in different ways. I searched for documents in their databases which were concerned about the war between Ukraine and Russia and if or how it affects food security. I used purposive criterion sampling, by applying the following search words; food security, food insecurity, food crisis, Ukraine war, Ukraine-Russia war, Russia-Ukraine war, Black Sea Grain Initiative, BSGI, conflict-food security. I also specified some searches to specific dates, being after 24 February 2022 when the war broke out. Most documents were accessible as open sources on the internet, others I had to for example use my student account through the University in Oslo to access the papers. Furthermore, I considered the data critically, meaning that I reflected on the document and its origin, authenticity and validity (Asdal & Reinertsen, 2020). The main organizations I chose to focus on are FAO, WB, WFP, WTO and UNCTAD.

Number	**Document title**	**Organization/ Institution**	**Issued date/year**
1	Impact of the Ukraine-Russia conflict on global food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	FAO	June 2022
2	FAO Brief on the interruption of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and its potential implications on global food markets and food security	FAO	2023
3	War in Ukraine: WFP renews call to open Black Sea ports amid fears for global hunger	WFP	20 May 2022
4	Second Joint Statement by the Heads of FAO, IMF, WBG, WFP and WTO on the Global Food Security and Nutrition Crisis.	FAO, IMF, WBG, WFP and WTO.	21 September 2022
5	The Crisis in Ukraine: Implications of the war for global trade and development.	WTO	2022
6	Trade dialogs on food: The Black Sea Grain Initiative	WTO - Director-	2023

		General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala	
7	Commodity Markets Outlook: The Impact of the War in Ukraine on Commodity Markets	The World Bank	April 2022
8	Food Security Update	The World Bank	27 July 2023
9	A Trade Hope: The role of the Black Sea Grain Initiative in bringing Ukrainian grain to the world	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development - UNCTAD	20 October 2022

3.4 Data analysis: Making sense of data

The following chapter describes the tools I used in the analytical part which followed data collection. This consisted of transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews before coding organizing and translating data. Furthermore, were document analysis and rhetorical analysis used for analysing the secondary sources.

3.4.1 Transcribing, coding and translating data

I transcribed all my interviews, the first five interviews I did manually and the last two I used Autotekst, which is an automatic speech-to-text software, provided by the University of Oslo. When the automatic transcription where done, I listened through the recordings and adjusted errors. Translation can involve both the process of translating the data from one language to another and the translation of values and concepts (Gergan & Smith, 2021). Context shape the meanings and associations of the concepts and values. All interviews were done in Norwegian, and the thesis is written in English, the interpretations and possible errors is my responsibility. The documents used in the thematic and rhetorical analysis were written in English, the quotations are therefore the formulations which were used in the documents. The exception was the Russian statement document, which was originally published in Russian, but the Foreign Ministry had an English translation on their website which I used. After the process of translating and storing data, the process of organizing and coding the data began.

Discourse analysis, following the insights of Michel Foucault, is an interpretive approach in geography, which aims at identifying sets of ideas, or discourses, that are used to make sense of the world within particular social and temporal contexts (Waitt, 2021, p. 333). This stage included a reflexive approach of self-critical awareness to my own research position. Choosing to do research on the R-U war and its impacts for countries in the Global South whilst researching from Norway, puts me in a position of an "outsider" to these processes. It is therefore important to note that this entails specific embodied knowledge (Waitt, 2021, p. 340). To handle this weakness of the research, I made a conscious effort to include critical analytical tools and theory. Familiarization with my source materials by assessing the social production of authorship, technology and intended audience were helpful for this (Waitt, 2021, p. 341). Firstly, authorship is considered as an outcome of highly social processes where the source material can be understood as a subtle form of social control. The categories in which the authorship is located is not considered to be "natural" and given, but rather a product of a social process (Waitt, 2021, p. 341). This applies for all the transcripts, stakeholder documents, news articles and statements that are included in the thesis. Secondly, the technology refers to how different categories of material have their own social histories and geographies. The notion of strategies of conviction by producing certain "truths" and objectives will entail specific "realities" (Waitt, 2021, p. 342). This element was especially relevant for choosing to do the rhetorical analysis of the Russian and Ukrainian statements of the suspension of the BSGI, as the two warring countries present contrasting "realities". Thirdly, intended audience shapes the initial production of all texts and an author will draw on specific discourses, mindful of the intended audiences needs and demands (Waitt, 2021, p. 343).

The first elements of source materials for analysis were the transcriptions. The initial phase started with reading over the material with "fresh eyes", before I highlighted relevant data, quotes and points that were put forward by the informants. Then I started the coding process of first organizing the data into four bigger themes: food (in)security, R-U war impacts on food security, food governance and the BSGI. Under each of the themes, I identified under-categories. Regarding food (in)security, the concepts of crisis, dependency and distribution were identified. Under R-U war and its impacts on food security, the element of availability, access, stability, rising food prices, trade dependencies and food as a weapon of war were prominent. This went over to the theme of food governance where trade liberalization, free

trade, food as a political leverage and self-sufficiency were put forward. Lastly, the BSGI included elements of food governance, politics and food-war nexus.

3.4.2 Coding and document analysis

Coding is an interpretation process which can help organize and analyse source material. In this thesis I operate with two different types of codes, descriptive codes and analytical codes (Cope, 2021, pp. 360-363). Descriptive codes can help to organize the data in the early stages of research by applying category labels, for example relating to questions of where, when, who, which events that happened, actions, statements, and experiences (Cope, 2021; Waitt, 2021). I used descriptive codes to organize the documents, reports, briefs and statements of international stakeholders. Following this, coding can be useful to identify themes and then counting the instances they appear for example in a document. To dive deeper into the material, I used analytical codes to interpretate the data. Analytical codes typically provide insights into why an individual or collective holds a set of ideas by which they make sense of places, themselves and others (Waitt, 2021, pp. 345-46).

When analysing documents, I started by identifying the following categories: sender and receiver, structure, argumentation, language and writing style, numbers, graphs and tables and references (Asdal & Reinertsen, 2020). Starting with identifying the sender and receiver of the documents can set the scene of who the document is written by and for whom. Public authorities may try to anonymize the authors by presenting the document as written by for example the World Bank, and not by certain individuals. In the selected documents the presentation of authors and perspectives was given differently. Some stated the authors clearly on the first few pages, hence creating some distance to the organization the document was published by. This was done by including a statement such as:

> "The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this update do not necessarily reflect the views of the World Bank, its Board of Executive Directors, or the governments they represent."

The structure of the text was not the focus of analysis, but several of the documents consisted of a significant number of pages, the help of headlines, under headlines, chapters and other ways of structuring the text were helpful during the analysis. Argumentation and narrative structure were a central part of the analysis. Research question two, which sightsee the BSGI

and its role for food security, were especially relevant for this part of the analysis. Therefore, the order and structure of their argument in their statements, reports and briefs were examined to connect it to the topic of the thesis. This was studied by identifying whom or what was the most in focus, who is mentioned directly and indirectly. Do the authors speak of certain groups in an active matter, whilst others are addressed more passively? Which actors are included, and not, and in which ways? This task was also explored by analysing the language and style of writing. Analysing words, phrases, and formulations and whether the text was complicated written or easy to understand. Bureaucratic language can often be referred to as a power language which creates distance to who bears responsibility in the issues that are discussed (Asdal & Reinertsen, 2020). The last point of analysis was references and what the arguments of the documents were constructed upon.

3.5 Rhetorical analysis

Rhetoric was defined by Aristotle as "*the art of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion*" (Houser, 2020, p. 18). Rhetorical analysis is done through the study of written, spoken and visual language and it investigates how language is used to organize and maintain social groups, construct meanings and identities, coordinate behaviour, mediate power, produce change and create knowledge (San Diego State University, 2023). These are infused by and shaped by power, relations and ideologies (Machin, 2013). This thesis studies political speech and writing, known as deliberate or political rhetoric (Houser, 2020, p. 19). The three rhetorical appeals, ethos, pathos and logos make up different tools for persuasion (Houser, 2020, 35).

Starting with the ethical appeal, ethos, focuses on the person that is delivering the speech or text and their character, ability, skill and knowledge. The ethical appeal to communicate is linked to the qualities of the speaker, or writer and how these qualities should make the audience listen to what they are presenting. Secondly, the emotional appeal, pathos, concentrates on the audience in a particular matter. The speaker will attempt to say things in a way that connects to the emotions of the audience. The conclusion from the audience is meant to align with the narration from the speaker. Sometimes the speaker itself may show emotions to elicit emotions in the audience (Houser, 2020, p. 37). The last rhetorical appeal, rational appeal, or logos, concentrates on the delivery with focus on intelligence and the mind of the audience. Here the speaker will show to facts and arguments of the topic. Rational appeal brings together rhetoric and logic. This appeal can be complicated as a smart or educated

person can struggle with the delivery of their speech or text, whilst other actors are strong in delivery, but weaker when it comes to the information behind the speech. Relations and power play into this appeal a lot, therefore it is important to be critical to the "facts" that are put forward (Houser, 2020, p. 38).

As the war progressed, the importance of rhetoric's related to food security and the BSGI became more prominent. Over the course of working on the thesis, I followed the debate and discussion relating to food security and the positionality of this in the R-U war. The statements from political leaders became more pointed and sharper. This was something I wanted to explore further, therefore I decided to do a rhetorical analysis of statements by the Russian Foreign Ministry and Ukrainian Foreign Ministry regarding the suspension of the BSGI.

3.5.1 Sampling of documents for rhetorical analysis

Russia	Title: Foreign Ministry statement on the Istanbul agreements Reference: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Russian Federation.	Date published: 17 July 2023 Downloaded: 25 August 2023
Ukraine	Title: Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba at the United Nations Security Council meeting on maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine	Date presented: 17 July 2023 Date published: 18 July 2023 Downloaded: 25 August 2023

3.6 Ethical considerations

Research ethics consist of a set of basic norms which have developed over time and is anchored in the research community (NESH, 2023). The following chapters address the ethical considerations of data and privacy connected to confidentiality, informed consent and anonymity. Then the critical reflexivity and sensitivity of the research is discussed before a chapter on rigour and transferability of the research is put forward.

3.6.1 Data and privacy

In qualitative research, confidently, informed consent and the consequences of research constitute important ethical elements. Confidentiality means that the individuals connected to the research, must be protected when storing data with securement of anonymity of the

informants (Thagaard, 2011, pp. 27-28). Informed consent means that the informants are informed about the project and stand free to both give and withdraw their consent of participation if they prefer without it having negative consequences for them (Thagaard, 2011, p. 26). As a researcher, it is a responsibility to avoid participants being exposed to injury or other serious burdens in relation to the project (NESH, 2023). The research has been governed by the institutional guidelines of the University of Oslo and Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (SIKT). Prior to gathering data, I applied for a research permit from SIKT, containing information about the project, the letter of consent to participants and the plan forward regarding storage of data and securing of privacy. The research project was accepted by SIKT 22 December 2022. Before all interviews, I sent the informants an information letter and the letter of consent (see Appendix 2). This was done to secure informed consent before taking part in the research project. The preference on anonymity in the final assignment were up to the informants and all informants wanted to be included with their name and job title.

3.6.2 Critical reflexivity and sensitivity

Sensitivity is central to any research, as was the case of this thesis which explore an on-going conflict. Research depends on implementation and conceptualization of the chosen topics and themes that are studied (Druckman, 2005). Critical reflexivity takes into consideration, the positionality of the researcher and its (their) active participation in their own research process (Catungal & Dowling, 2021). Research processes does not operate in a vacuum absent of uneven power relations and histories, but rather in an on-going process of knowledge and "reality" creation. Throughout the research process, it has been important to continuously analyse my own position relating to the research and conflict at hand. Since I am living in Norway, the daily news and articles that I am mostly exposed to is a product of Norway's position and politics relating to the conflict. This can additionally create a set of specific understandings and preferred solutions to the conflict that may differ widely from other perspectives. In order to even this out, I have made a continuous effort to also read news about the conflict from different origins and be critical when reading. An active conflict between two nations is highly political, this will entail influence on statements, documents, news and other outlets of information. I wanted to be cautious and sensible in the study, therefor I chose to a document analysis and rhetorical analysis to explore the views of international stakeholders.

3.6.3 Rigour and transferability

Ensuring rigour in qualitative research means establishing trustworthiness in the work (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2021, p. 102). To preserve the rigour of research, there are steps I have followed during the research process. Firstly, the four major forms of triangulation have been important. Using multiple sources, methods, investigators and theories. By using triangulation, I checked sources against each other, for example relating to specific attacks of grain facilities and ports. This was also applied when investigating the empirical data of Ukraine's market position and provision to countries in the Global South. When analysing data, see Chapter 3.4, I used diverse methods for analysing depending on the type of data. Furthermore, the dialog with my supervisor, as well as points taken up in the interviews were an important step related to quality and validity of the research (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2021). In the interviews, this was done by presenting information, for example gathered by international stakeholders or in media outlets and asking the informants about their take on this. Researching an on-going conflict can create challenges when navigating information and viewpoints which are influenced greatly by political processes and interactions.

The informants were offered to approve the direct quotations from their respective interviews. Out of the informants, one wanted to approve of the citations. I sent the citations to the informant by email and the informant made the minor adjustments. I also chose to do a citation check with one other informant because I considered the citations to be critical of certain international stakeholders and wanted to make sure this was okay with the informant. The informant approved this without adjustments. The transferability of this thesis is particularly relevant in relation to analytical transferability (Kvale & Brinkman, 2012). Analytical transferability is concerned with a reasoned assessment of whether the findings in the study are transferable to another situation (Kvale & Brinkman, 2012, p. 266). The transferability of this study is limited to the findings of this study. However, the study can bring insights into the positioning of food security in an on-going conflict, with emphasize on the different scales of interactions.

4 Pressure on International food markets

In this chapter I address research question one, which sightsee the R-U war and its impacts on international food markets. I begin by discussing the notion of Ukraine as the breadbasket of Europe, before examining the Russian federation and its role in world food markets. Then I engage with the empirical data regarding the immediate stop in exports of grains and other agricultural commodities from Ukrainian ports. This is done by looking at the Ukrainian provision to world markets pre-war and the changes that have occurred over the course of the conflict. The role of the Black Sea ports is discussed before moving to the management of grain supply gaps. Furthermore, the exploration of price variations on grains, such as wheat are presented. These commodities are foods that Ukraine and Russia are significant providers of. Then a chapter on trade restrictions and trade dependencies in the wakes of the R-U war follows. The empirical cases of Lebanon and Zimbabwe is addressed to examine food security vulnerability, using a scalar approach. Lastly, I present and discuss the provisional role of Ukraine to the World Food Program and how this has been impacted by the reduction of exports of foodstuffs.

4.1 Ukraine – The breadbasket of Europe

Ukraine is known as the granary and breadbasket of Europe. It is home to approximately 25% of the world's black soil which is one of the most fertile soils for farming and agricultural production (Lin et al. 2023). Ukraine has close to 104 million acres of agricultural land, an area larger than Italy, making it one of the most highly cultivated countries in the world. In a pre-war situation, the country had lower production costs than its European and North American competitors as well as the beneficial access to seaports on the Black Sea. Prior to the war, around 90% of Ukraine's exports went through the Black Sea ports at 5 million metric tons (MT) per month (European Council, 2023a).

Ukraine accounts for around 12% of the world's wheat exports (Lin et al. 2023). During the Soviet times, Ukraine was referred to as "The breadbasket of the Soviet Union". With their independence from 1991, Ukraine has undergone advancement becoming a key agricultural exporter in the international market. Land reform and technological change led to the rise of Ukraine as a major agricultural exporter of key crops. By 2018, cereal yields had increased by almost 40% and the country was considered the breadbasket of Europe. The market share by volume is wheat (10%), barley (13%), corn (15%) and sunflower oil (50%) (European

Commission, 2022). Ukraine is ranked fifth, second, third and first largest exporter of these crops to the international markets (Sheldon, 2022). The period between 2005-2021, Ukraine was ranked as the seventh biggest producer of corn, as well as being in the top 10 of wheat producing countries of the world (FAO, 2022a). The country was also the leading producer of sunflower oil in the same period. In the period between 2000-2020, Ukraine has been in the top five of wheat producing countries, accounting for around 3% of the world's production (World Grain, 2023). In marketing year of 2021/2022, Ukraine produced a record high of 86 million metric tons, and around 48 million of this was exported (FEWS Net, 2023. Reuters, 2023a).

As Ukraine has climbed the ranks in grain exports over the last decade, the fears of a potential conflict with Russia installed distress over whether Ukraine would be able to succeed with their grain exports if a conflict were to break out (Braun, 2022). In February 2022, these fears became real as the breadbasket now was at war with Russia. The international stakeholders FAO, WFP and WB underscored soaring prices and possible food shortages due to the acute export stop from the Black Sea ports (Dizard, 2022; FAO, 2022a; WFP, 2022b; WB, 2022a). The prospect of a prolonged conflict leading to local food shortages due to heavy food import dependency raised concerns of political instability. The 2011 Arab Spring uprisings have been partially explained by grain shortages (Dizard, 2022). Food insecurity generated by extreme weather and political instability, combined with rising food prices sparked social unrest and protests in countries such as Egypt, Syria and Morocco (Soffiantini, 2020). The R-U war raised similar concerns of possible political unrest due to rising food prices and grain shortages (WFP, 2022c). In Chapter 5.2.2, this will be further examined through the case of Tunisia.

4.1.2 The European breadbasket at war

Before the Russian invasion, Ukraine was expected to export 63.7 million tons of grains in 2021/2022 (Reidy, 2022a). In the month before the conflict started, Ukraine exported up to 6 million tons of grain per month, this number fell to around 1 million when the war began. The exports for the 2022/2023 season almost reached 49 million tons, exceeding the previous season’s 48.4 million tons (Reuters, 2023a). Reuters cited data provided by the Ukrainian Agriculture ministry. Out of this, the major grain crop was corn which accounted for 29 million of the tons exported. The share of agro-food products of Ukraine’s total exports increased to 53% in 2022 from 41% in 2021 (Kravchenko, 2023). It is worth mentioning that

the blockade of the Black Sea ports between February and July 2022 led to a significant portion, estimated at around 20 million tons from the record harvest of 2021, were unexported and was therefore actively exported in the new marketing-season from June 2022 (Kravchenko, 2023). The production and exports numbers for the 2022/2023 season on the other hand, has experienced a decline. The 2022 grain production in Ukraine decreased by 37% compared to 2021 and landed at around 53.9 million tons. The frontlines areas of Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts have seen the biggest losses in crops (Kravchenko, 2023). Ukrainian grain exports for the 2022/2023 season, were down 29.2%, due to a smaller harvest and logistical difficulties caused by the war (Successful Farming, 2023). It is worth noting that the grain production will also depend on factors such as weather conditions and cannot be independently explained by the impacts of the war.

In August of 2023, the first deputy Minister of Agriculture in Ukraine, Taras Vysotiskiy, stated that Ukraine may harvest more than 50 million tons, even up to 55 million, which is higher than the forecasted numbers from the ministry of 46 million tons (Polityuk, 2023). Weather forecasters predicted the crop up to 49 million tons. Domestic consumption lies at around 18 million tons, meaning that the production is three times higher than domestic consumption and exports will be important. The R-U war have been characterized as a war on global food security where Russia weaponize international food security (Goncharenko, 2022; Åslund, 2022). With the blockade of the Black Sea ports, rising food prices, and destruction of grain storages the call to reopen the ports were emphasized. The importance of the Black Sea ports is underscored as significant numbers of Ukraine's grain exports are transported there, see Chapter 4.3.

4.2 Russia in the world food market

During the Soviet period, Russia was a major importer of certain agricultural commodities, such as grain and soybeans which were needed to feed the expanding livestock sector. In the decades following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country has moved from being a large importer, to becoming a major exporter (Liefert & Liefert, 2020). The country is home to vast natural resources, the world's biggest gas reservoir and large areas of contiguous forest areas (FN-Sambandet, 2023). On top of this, Russia is the world's top exporter of fertilizer (EPRS, 2022). The marketing position of Russia in these sectors have been central for the imposing sanctions after the R-U conflict broke out, see Chapter 4.2.2.

As for food production and exports, Russia was ranked second, after Ukraine, in the period between 2005-2021 when it comes to sunflower-oil production. Furthermore, the Russian Federation was the third biggest producer of wheat after China and India (FAO, 2022a). Between the period of 2000-2020, Russia has been the third largest producer of wheat, with 1.2 billion tons and 8.4% of world total, being the top exporter (World Grain, 2023). As outlined in the analytical framework Chapter 2.3, the global food system has undergone transformative processes where new actors, such as Ukraine and Russia, have obtained strong positions as producers and exporters of agricultural products. When the R-U war broke out, the continuation of exports of agricultural products from both countries were therefore important.

4.2.1 Russia and the west

Historically, Russia's relations to the west and vice versa can be described as tense. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) created in 1949 would provide collective security against the Soviet Union. Applying the realist standpoint on war and conflict, NATO is a way of balancing power in the world system of international relations (Mingst et al. 2019). Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, twelve countries gained membership to the alliance. Most of these countries had been allied with the Soviet Union during the Cold War in the Warsaw Pact (FN-Sambandet, 2023). The Eastern expansion of NATO became a source of increased tension between Russia and the West, with USA leading the way. Russia particularly disliked the Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania becoming NATO members, since these countries also had been part of the Soviet Union itself.

In 2008, NATO decided that Ukraine and Georgia would become members eventually, but the plan was frozen when Yanukovych became president in 2010. Critics of NATO's expansion see the expansion as a provocation against Russia. The presence of American military bases across Europe is not welcomed. Robert Michael Gates, which have served as Defence minister both in George W. Bush and Barack Obamas administration have stated that including Ukraine and Georgia into NATO *"undermines the purpose of the alliance and recklessly ignores what the Russians considers their vital national interests"* (Carpenter, 2022).

The defenders of the NATO eastward expansion envision East-West conflict as latent or inevitable and see NATO as a protection against Russian aggression rather than a threat to

Russia. The expansion of NATO is therefore to create more security in Europe (FN-Sambandet, 2023). Explanatory insights into the R-U war are not the focus of this thesis, however, it is useful to outline some of the pre-existing tensions to the war as this has contributed to the political and rhetorical use of food security in this conflict.

4.2.2 Sanctions

Economic sanctions refer to the use of economic instruments to reach foreign policy goals and influence. Economic sanctions can also be defined as penalties that are used as threats or declared as consequences of the target's failure to observe international standards or obligations (O'Brian & Williams, 2016, p. 292). Sanctions are imposed by one country on another, to stop them from acting aggressively or breaking international law (BBC, 2023). The 2022 war resulted in implementation of economic sanctions on Russia from several countries. The European Union's, the US, the UK and Canada's sanctions aim to increase the cost of the war for the Russian regime, and they include several pillars. Firstly, the sanctions target key sectors of the Russian economy, including energy, transport, aviation and the defence industry. These measures include bans on the export or import of certain items to or from Russia and it includes an embargo on gold, bans of Russian-flagged ships from ports, export bans on drones, chemical and biological equipment, electronic components, weapons, aircraft and more (France Diplomacy, 2023).

Secondly, the energy sector, which is strategically important for the financing of Russia's war is targeted through ban on Russian coal imports and oil imports by sea. Thirdly, the financial sanctions seek to dry up the financial capacity of the Russian economy, banning transactions of assets and reserves of the Central bank of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, there is restrictions on purchases of Russian sovereign debt and exclusion of certain banking institutions from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication System (SWIFT). SWIFT provides services where international money transfers can be done between banks from different countries.

These sanctions have been heavily debated related to Russia's participation in the BSGI. Russian officials have stated that if certain mechanisms are in place, such as the exclusion from SWIFT, they will not resume their part in the BSGI (Russian Foreign Ministry, 2023). The interests and politics have become evident throughout the conflict, also pointed out by

several of the correspondents in this study. Therefore, a thorough examination of the BSGI will follow later.

4.3 Stop in exports from Ukrainian ports

The production and distribution in the world food economy have undergone restructuring, driven by global demand and internationalization of the agro-food industry (Dicken, 2006). Agricultural products have been implemented into advanced transportation and communication systems. Now, food travel long-distances from production to consumption. The Black Sea is surrounded by six countries with each their own connected coastline: Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, and Turkey. The ocean is home to a practical trade route towards the west, as well as a crossroad between Europe, Asia and Africa. Several of the long-distance vessels transporting different goods goes through the routes on the Black Sea (Lyratzopouoou & Zarotiadis, 2014). According to Reuters (Devitt et al. 2022) the Ukrainian military chose to suspend the commercial shipping at its ports after the Russian forces invaded the country, and in the following months government officials worked on agreements to resume the exports due to its importance for international markets.

The active fighting on Ukrainian territory has damaged inland transport infrastructure and seaports, as well as storage and processing infrastructure (FAO, 2022b, p. 2). Russia blockaded Ukrainian Black Sea ports in the six months after February 2022, until the BSGI were in place and operating. There was a suspension of all commercial shipping operations in several Ukrainian ports, which raised concerns given the limited alternative forms of transportation, such as rail, river or road transport. Further on, ships had to be redirected to other ports, causing delays, bottlenecks and higher costs for transport by sea (GEP, 2022). The 2022-23 grain season were down over 29% due to the harvest and logistical difficulties caused by the war (European Council, 2023a). Ukraine was estimated to harvest between 50-52 million tons of grain in 2022, down from the record year before with 86 million tons. The loss of land to Russian forces and lower yields are the biggest contributors to the decline (Reidy, 2022b).

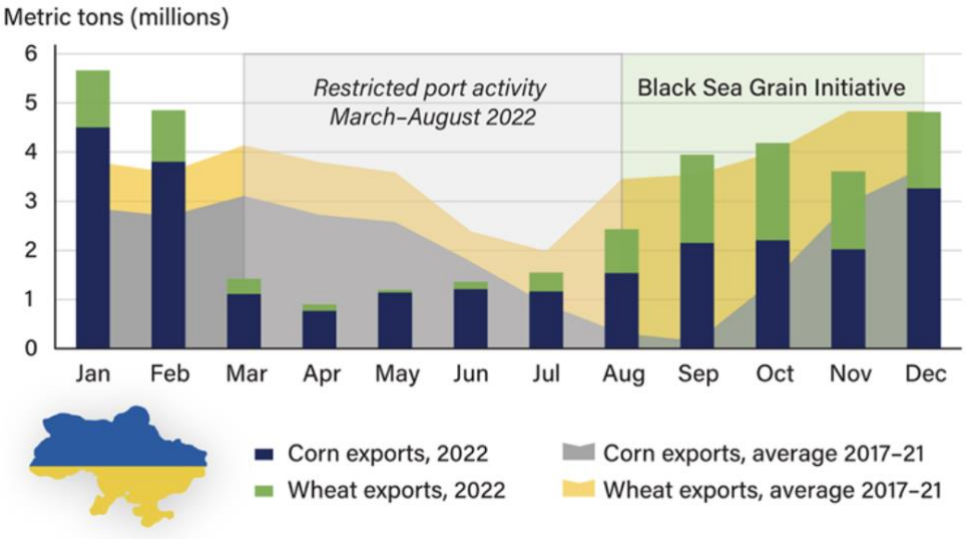


Figure 1: Ukraine Wheat and Corn exports in 2022 and 2017-2021 average. Source: Sowell et al. (2023). In Wheat Outlook: January 2023, p. 11. USDA, Economic Research Service.

Figure 1, provided by USDA illustrates how the exports of corn and wheat went drastically in the months after the war outbreak. Most of the Ukrainian exports between March-July were done by using railway (Sowell et al. 2023). The role of the Black Sea ports became evident and the negotiations to get port-activity back up started.

4.3.1 International stakeholders on the role of the Black Sea ports

Building on the previous chapters, I did a detailed analysis of documents provided by the international stakeholders, FAO, WFP and WTO, published in the period after the conflict broke out, I now explore their perspectives on the significance of the Black Sea ports. First off, FAO pointed to the possible logistical risks in Ukraine, linked to the damage to inland transport infrastructure and seaports, as well as storage and processing infrastructure.

> "All the fisheries landing points and ports located alongside the Black and Azov seas of the Russian Federation are closed, and therefore marine catches can be considered halted." – FAO, 2022c, p. 10.

The physical damage of the Black Sea ports can be linked to the food security dimension of access, as part of the provision of food commodities were halted. Additionally, the stability dimension was severely hit, contributing to rising food prices, which will be elaborated in Chapter 4.4. More directly connected impacts of the R-U war on food security, FAO points to the disruptions of food exports that expose the global food markets to heightened risks of

tighter availabilities. A forecast issued before the war, expected Ukraine to export approximately 6 million tons of wheat between March and June 2022, and Russia was expected to ship another 8 million tons during the same period (FAO, 2022c). The port closures and disruptions to supply chains in Ukraine, combined with anticipated sales difficulties for the Russian Federation considering the financial sanctions were anticipated to make these exports more difficult (FAO, 2022c). Furthermore, FAO pointed to the increasing insurance premiums for vessel destined for the Black Sea region, that could exacerbate the already elevated costs of maritime transportation. This could foster effects on the final costs of internationally sourced food that are paid by importers (FAO, 2022c).

This point was also made by WTO, stating that cargo ships had been diverted from Ukrainian ports to other destinations, such as Tripoli, Piraeus and Constanta (WTO, 2022). Moreover, the trade organization outlined a likely scenario of rising trade costs due to the blockade of Ukrainian ports. WTO stated that they were working with key market players in the global supply chain to ensure that problems of bottlenecks are identified and addressed as quickly as possible. I argue that international cooperation on trade is seen as a way of addressing the rising food prices and risk of hunger crisis. Linking back to the analytical framework, food security can be strengthened through trade as the levels of sufficiency increase due to food imports (D'Ororico et al. 2014). The demand to open the Black Sea ports were underscored as the closure of ports threatened food supplies for people around the world (Khorsandi, 2022).

> "Failure to open the Black Sea ports is a declaration of war on global insecurity." – WFP-Executive Director, David Beasley. 20 May 2022. (Khorsandi, 2022)

Additionally, they called for immediate investment and dialogue to release bottlenecked foods. By urging world leaders to collective action, Beasley stressed the already precure food insecurity situation and how the ripple effects of the war could be felt in the poorest families in Africa, the Middle east and beyond. The vulnerability in these countries is linked to food availability, access and stability and the possibility of more people slipping into hunger (Khorsandi, 2022). He also warned countries to avoid protectionism and keep trade flowing across borders. In sum, were the importance of Black Sea ports highlighted as being important for international food security in relation to access and stability, which brings me to the next section on supply gaps.

4.3.2 Managing supply gaps

Ukraine is a key provider, a breadbasket of Europe, but the country is also a strong provider of grains for countries located in the Global South. Some of the most vulnerable and impoverished countries rely on Ukraine for over 50% of their wheat imports, which caused food insecurity alarms in the wakes of the conflict (Lin et al. 2023). Countries such as Egypt, Mongolia, Turkey and Azerbaijan are highly dependent on wheat imports from Ukraine and in the weeks and months following the conflict outbreak, the estimated price increase ranged from around 7-13% in these countries, whilst the countries which have a smaller reliance would experience up to 3% increase in prices (Lin et al. 2023). The sudden and steep reduction in shipments of grains could be replaced by alternate origins, such as Argentina and India (Jamieson, 2022; Sigal, 2022). By increasing the wheat production in countries which already produce significant amounts, the pressure in international markets could be lessened (Mottaleb et al. 2022).

In Argentina the R-U war and the elevated agricultural commodity prices, resulted in an expectation of increased wheat planting and exports (Colussi & Schnitkey, 2022). Around 60% of the wheat produced in Argentina is exported and the country increased the exports to African countries easing some of the availability pressure caused by the R-U war (Colussi & Schnitkey, 2022). Early in the conflict, India which is the biggest wheat producer in the world, were underscored as an alternative supplier to world markets (Pasricha, 2022). India is traditionally a relatively small exporter, with high domestic consumption. Out of 109 million MT produced in the previous year, India consumed around 90 million of this domestically (Parvaiz, 2022). With the uncertainty caused by the R-U war, India eyed new markets across Africa and Asia. The supply gaps could potentially be the most serious for buyers in the Middle East and North Africa, given the importance of wheat as a food staple. Egypt, which is a major wheat importer, approved India as a supplier (Pasricha, 2022). Experts warned the government about the rising exports, as the domestic stocks is central for a big portion of the Indian population.

> "We need to keep a very close watch on domestic stocks because the next crop will only come next April, so we must ensure sufficient reserves. We should not move from saying we are going to feed the world to a situation where we suddenly must curtail exports." – Harish Damodaran, Agriculture Editor with Indian Express Newspaper. (Pasricha, 2022).

The concerns raised regarding the domestic supply and guarantees became applicable when the Indian government decided to ban wheat exports in May of 2022. This led to international criticism, especially given its pledge to provide solutions in a global crisis (Parvaiz, 2022). The ban was implemented to control rising domestic wheat prices due to an expected decline in wheat production caused by a severe heat wave. It was stated that India would export wheat to food-deficit countries and before the ban, India was in negotiations with Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, Indonesia and Vietnam as potential buyers. The export ban received heavy critique, especially from the G7 countries and the IMF urged India to reconsider the export ban to alleviate a wheat supply crisis (NDTV, 2022; Parvaiz; 2022). The Food Outlook report by FAO stated that the global wheat markets are embarking the 2022/2023 season with a great deal of uncertainty with the R-U war, trade policy changes and high international prices (FAO, 2022d). This brings me to the next chapter on price variations.

4.4 Price variations

The international market underwent upshots related to price variations after the R-U war began. As the focus of the thesis is on food, the price variations are linked to food and grains. After the conflict broke out, there was observed a jump in the price of staple foods on international food price indexes. The FAO Food Price index (FFPI), introduced in 1990 reached a historical high level in March 2022. The FFPI is a measure on the monthly change in international prices of a basket of food commodities. It is calculated using trade-weighted average for the prices of the food commodities in key agricultural markets for cereals, vegetable oils, sugar, meat and dairy products. These products are chosen due to their high and strategic importance in global food security and trade (FAO, 2023b). Both Figure 2 and Figure 3 is provided by Trading Economics, which deliver historical data and forecasts for more than 20 million economic indicators, exchange rates, stock market indexes and commodity prices (Trading Economics, 2023a).

Figure 2: The FAO Food Price Index between 1990-2023. Source: Trading Economics, 2023b. (October 2023). World Food Price Index.

As Figure 2 illustrates, were the food prices already elevated before the war. The global food commodity prices were at 10-years highs before the war broke out, because of the Covid-19 pandemic and harvest issues. The prices have been going down after the peak in March 2022, but they are still at an elevated level compared to the historical data. This point was also underscored by informant Rudolfsen.

> "There are extremely high food prices even though they are lower than right after the invasion. When we compare the situation now, to 2021, we must remember that the food prices were already elevated." – Ida Rudolfsen, Senior Researcher, The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). 15 February 2023. My own translation.

The FAO index also demonstrated a 12% increase in international prices for wheat, maize and vegetable oils between February and March of 2022 (UN, 2022b). This is also the highest level measured since the introduction of the index. During the first couple of months, a portion of the supplies from Ukraine for vegetable oils, maize and wheat were cut off, which caused a giant leap in food prices (BBC, 2022). The price of vegetable oils, which Ukraine is a massive exporter of, soared by 23%. The war in the Black Sea region spread shocks through the markets that were trading in these staples. Furthermore, the price increases of grains, for example wheat have been elevated since 2021 but reached a new high in the period after the R-U war outbreak.

Figure 3: Wheat Futures over the last 5 years from 2019-2023. Source: Trading Economics, 2023c. (November 2023). Commodity Wheat.

As illustrated in Figure 3, the wheat prices have been rising over the last 5 years and reached a record high in May of 2022. Even though the prices have gone down, the market and price fluctuations are marked by instability due to harvesting challenges, trade policies and trade restrictions. The number of poor and hungry people in the world have started to rise for the first time since 1990 (FAO et al. 2020). The first indicators of rising hunger first appeared in 2017. For food to be secure, it must be consistently available and accessible in sufficient quantities (FAO et al. 2013). With the acute exports stops and price spikes, the consistent availability and accessibility of food were put under pressure. This can further contribute to a temporary food insecure situation, as the fluctuations in food availability and access are impacted by food production, disruptions of food exports and imports and rising food prices (Sassi, 2018).

A FAO report states that the rising food and energy prices, which were magnified by the war in Ukraine undermines food security progress (FAO et al. 2023a). The soaring prices has shaken food and energy markets, contributing to increasing vulnerability for countries with less ability to adapt to sudden changes in the system. Furthermore, the report stated that the number of people facing hunger were around 23 million people higher, than what the scenario would have been if the R-U war had not happened (FAO et al. 2023b). As outlined earlier in the theorical part, the SDGs of 2015 aim for “no hunger” worldwide. This goal is expected to fall short in at least 47 countries (Von Grebner et al. 2021). The R-U war came at a time with several co-existing challenges that create multiple crisis.

> "Everything is happening at the same time. The ripple effects after the pandemic, local currency that are weakened, climate change that destroy everything and on top of that, we have conflicts." – Iselin Løvslett Danbolt, UN-Association of Norway. 5 October 2023. My own translation.

Multiple crises are happening at the same time and food insecurity are on the rise. The point on multiple challenges happening at the same time were also put forward by another correspondent. Informant Rudolfsen (15. February 2023) described the on-going situation as an explosive combination of vulnerability and food insecurity driven by climate change, drought and conflict. The views of the informants resemble the food crisis concept. Food crises are usually triggered by a shock or combination of shocks (GRFC, 2022). The acute export stop and food price elevations disturbed international food security by limiting food access and food stability. The impacts of shocks will differ depending on the degree of vulnerability a country is experiencing (Brück & d'Errico, 2019; Hart, 2009). Even though FAO have reported that food prices have declined by almost 18% since the all-time high in March of 2022, the price levels are still high when compared to pre-war and pre-pandemic stages. Food prices in January 2023 were 45% above the average over the past two decades. In sum, this show that the food security dimension stability is under continuous pressure triggered by shocks, such as the R-U war.

4.5 Trade restrictions and protectionism

When crisis hit, the fears of global food inflation rose, making countries turn to protectionist measures. When FAO's food price index reached record levels in May of 2022, countries started to look inwards to protect themselves. Following the R-U war, the number of countries imposing export restrictions on food climbed from 3 to 16 between February and April of 2022. This number continued to rise and reached a total of 34 countries that imposed restrictive export measures on food and fertilizers (Espitia et al. 2022). The commodities that were most affected by the restrictions were grains and vegetable oils (Glauben et al. 2022). Some of the countries that implemented trade restrictions were Indonesia, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Hungary, Moldova and Morocco. Compared to the crisis of 2007-08, 35 countries implemented export restrictions which affected commodities such as wheat and rice. During the first month of the Covid-19 pandemic, 21 countries implemented export restrictions on a wide range of products and at its peak in June of 2020, around 8% of total calories traded were affected (Glauben et al. 2022). As the 2007-08 crisis, Covid-19 pandemic

and the R-U war resulted in sharp intensification of trade restrictions, I argue that countries tend to implement trade restrictions in times of crisis as a protective tool.

With the food trade liberalization, promotion of free trade principles by the WTO, the basis of exchanges of trade are built on goods and services being bought and sold across international borders with little or no government tariffs, quotas, subsidies, or prohibitions to the exchange (Claes et al. 2019, p. 172; Nagy, 2020, p. 2). However, as stated above, shocks and crisis tend to create a sense of panic where countries turn to protective measures, which stands in contrast to the liberalization and free trade principles. The tendencies of trade restrictions in times of crisis can be especially harmful for countries relying on import of food. This show to a vulnerability in the international market that gets heightened when shocks occur.

> "It is a concern and a problem that the international market is so vulnerable. We must have stronger guidelines and incentives not to close down, to share what we have in good times, but also in worse times. So that there will not be panic when such massive shocks occur in the market." – Ida Rudolfsen, Senior Researcher, The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). 15 February 2023. My own translation.

Informant Rudolfsen shed light on the vulnerabilities of the food trade system. Furthermore, the need to share what we have, both in good times and though times can help mitigate shocks. During the price spikes on grain of 2007-2008, and during the Covid-19 pandemic, countries turned to restrictions on food trade, creating a cascading effect where one country announcing restrictions, followed by other countries doing the same. This can lead to a sense of panic in international markets with importers seeking to secure new suppliers. In sum, the surge in export restrictions which followed in the weeks and months after the Russian invasion show that in time of crisis, several countries seek to protect themselves and their population, hindering the flow of certain commodities. Ultimately, this further tightened global availability, adding additional upward pressure on prices and more instability (USDA, 2022).

4.6 Trade dependencies

> "There are often the already poor nations, with high degree of import dependency and households without the ability to cushion the shock with alternative strategies that are

> most food insecure." – Ida Rudolfsen, Senior Researcher, The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). 15 February 2023. My own translation.

The aspect of import dependency that informant Rudolfsen pointed to, connects with Otero et al. (2013) critiques of food security through food trade, which ultimately have led to countries in the Global South becoming dependent on staple foods. Furthermore, I link this dependency to the argument by Haq (1976) which identifies inequalities between developed and developing countries to their respective production of goods. This has put countries in the Global South in a position of dependency to the North for basic foods, for example wheat and corn (Otero et al. 2013). The Global North, on the other hand, is only dependent on "luxury foods", for example avocados. Given the economic globalization, the supply and demand of both food and energy are closely linked between countries (Zhou et al. 2023). The Russian invasion of Ukraine have once again put trade dependencies centre stage. Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2022) warned early in the conflict that African countries and countries located in the MENA-region were already facing severe food insecurity challenges, which could be further exacerbated by the R-U war. Several countries are highly dependent on imports when it comes to commodities like wheat, fertilizer and vegetable oils. Especially for countries in the Global South, the dependency on basic foods is apparent (Brück & d'Errico, 2019; Otero et al. 2013). Informant Tvinnereim spoke about the organization of the world food production and export systems and relating challenges for developing countries with this structure.

> "We have a few very big producers of staple foods in the world. Ukraine is one of them, Russia, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, USA and Canada who produce enormous volumes, and often, with a free-trade regime as fundament, it is hard for developing countries to build up their own production in competition with cheap imports of many food commodities." – Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, Norway's Minister of Development. 5 February 2023. My own translation.

The 10 biggest wheat-producing countries in the period between 2000-2020, are China, India, Russia, USA, France, Canada, Germany, Pakistan, Australia and Ukraine (World Grain, 2023). Using the classifications by the World Bank, all the 10 countries are lower-middle income or high-income countries (WB, 2023a). Wheat is a staple food for more than 35% of the world's population and a high degree of dependency on imports from Ukraine and Russia may face exacerbated food insecurity (FAO, 2022a). The war revealed that the global food

and energy markets are highly concentrated, showing to countries becoming agri-powers or food power countries (Hillman, 1978). Furthermore, can the presence of these agri-powers become especially essential for import dependent countries.

For example, Egypt depends on 85% of its wheat imports and this translates to around 50% of the available domestic wheat-based supply (Abdalla et al. 2023). Another country with even higher dependency is Lebanon which prior to the war depended 96% on imports from Ukraine and Russia and has a dependency ratio of 81% (Hellegers, 2022). Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and Cameroon source more than 40% of their wheat imports from the two nations at war (HRW, 2022). To sum up, did the R-U war cause disruptions in international food markets, which further displayed trade dependencies on staple foods from a concentrated group of providing countries. Applying a scalar approach to trade dependency issues, show to how these dependencies can propagate from the global to the local scales (Hart, 2009). The next chapters examine this in relation to vulnerability.

4.6.1 Vulnerability far from the frontlines

> "There is vital international concern that Russia's war will provoke a global food crisis, worse than what the world faced in 2007 and 2008." (EPRS, 2022. p. 1).

The statement above demonstrates an international concern of the R-U war and its potential to provoke a global food crisis. Russia and Ukraine provide basic agro commodities, ranging from wheat, maize and sunflower oil and they provide nearly 12% of food calories which are traded globally (Glauben et al. 2022). Ukraine and Russia combined accounts for about 40% of the world's grain exports (Lin et al. 2023). With the two countries at war, the vulnerability of other countries to cope with R-U caused shocks and stress became apparent. The ripple effects can generate impact across the global, national or local scales (Hart, 2009). Countries such as Syria and Yemen, as well as eastern Africa are experiencing increasing stresses in the form of local conflicts, climate shocks and food insecurity which push the population into even more vulnerability. Especially vulnerable regions that were highlighted by the informants were the Middle East, Northern and Eastern Africa and the Sahel region.

> "Regions that are greatly affected (by the R-U war) are the Middle East, North-Africa. The entire Sahel belt. (…). Yemen is also highlighted, they have a long-term conflict

> with terrible humanitarian suffering and food security is a very big challenge which is connected to all these challenges, they go hand in hand." – Cecilie Juul Stensrud, Political adviser, Foreign affairs and Defense. 1 March 2023. My own translation.
>
> "Countries which experience conflict, are more vulnerable for food insecurity. (…) Easter-Africa, Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Somalia. (…) The types of countries that are most vulnerable to shocks, also in form of food price shocks often face other existing challenges as well." – Ida Rudolfsen, Senior Researcher, The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). 15 February 2023. My own translation.

The informants show to countries with elevated vulnerability, which is further linked to other present challenges. Their view underlines the objective of considering the scalar impacts of conflicts on food security far from the frontlines of the on-going conflict. Discussed in Chapters 4.4 and 4.6, the role of food price shocks and food trade dependencies have been highlighted as contributing to worsening of food insecurity when shocks occur.

4.6.2 Lebanon example

Lebanon is a country that rely heavily on food imports from Ukraine and Russia, either through wheat-based products or sunflower oil. Over 25% of total calories consumed by the average Lebanese household originated from Russia and Ukraine pre-war, and wheat accounts for 38% of total calorie consumption (Breisinger et al. 2022). Of this, over 80% of the wheat is imported and in recent years, between 70-90% of wheat imports had been sourced from Ukraine and Russia (Breisinger et al. 2022). In 2021, Lebanon imported 630,000 tons of wheat, and 520,000 of this were from Ukraine (Hamdan, 2022). The country is facing a prolonged crisis in its modern history which relates to economic and financial crisis which started in October 2019. This was further exacerbated by the impacts of the Covid-19 outbreak and the massive explosion on the Port of Beirut in August of 2020 (WB, 2022b). Before this explosion, Lebanon's wheat reserves were equivalent to 3-4 months of consumption, but following the destruction, the stocks are down to a little more than a month (Rose, 2022).

I examine what the R-U war entailed for Lebanon, considering their wheat import dependency. When the R-U conflict broke out, a possible wheat crisis in Lebanon became

apparent (Rose, 2022). Combined with the on-going economic crisis, people feared that the state would be unable to provide the markets with wheat to produce bread (Hamdan, 2022).

> "We are trying to manage a crisis right now, and we have no plans. We only have stock for about a month and a half. We are currently looking for an alternative to Ukrainian wheat." – Geryes Berbari. (Hamdan, 2022).

Furthermore, Berbari noted alternative options of sourcing wheat from countries such as Russia and Kazakhstan to secure food security (Hamdan, 2022). Lebanon imports around 50,000 tons of wheat every month to cover the production of bread, and the government agreed to provide an advance to buy this quantum. This import account for around 600,000 tons annually (Hamdan, 2022).

Both the demand and price of bread were rising in Lebanon prior to the R-U war. The global rise in wheat prices, see Chapter 4.4 led to food crisis concerns. Already 25 February 2022, the country conferred with other exporting countries, such as the United States, India and France to secure their wheat shipments (Chehayeb, 2022; Hamdan, 2022). Fast shipments could be sent from Romania, Serbia and Hungary, using around 7 days. From the US, the transport would be 25 days, and the costs would be higher. As a response to the challenges in Lebanon, the World Bank launched the project "Lebanon: Emergency wheat supply response project" in April 2022. The objective of the project was to ensure the availability of wheat in Lebanon in response to the economic impact of the conflict in Ukraine and to maintain access to affordable bread for poor and vulnerable households (WB, 2022b). The WB provided a loan, worth $150 million to finance immediate wheat imports to avoid the disruption in supply in the short term. The project aimed at securing 250,000 tons, around 62,000 tons were provided in the first part of May 2023.

The proposed solution by the World Bank can help mitigate the potential shock and reduce pressure for short-term food security. However, such projects do not solve the long-term challenges of food insecurity. I argue that the WB project is a short-term, technical solution to the complex issue of food insecurity. This argument is supported by Mercy Crops, which conducted a situation analysis of food security implications in North Africa and the Middle East following escalations in the Black Sea (Mercy Crops, 2023). The assessment showed that Lebanon is facing overlapping crisis, with impacts of price increases and potential supply

shocks that can affect the most vulnerable residents in the country. They further point to larger structural issues that re-emerge when crisis hit and how the WB loan, once its expended potentially can lead to the country having to use more expensive supply routes, creating upward pressure on wheat markets which results in high bread prices for the vulnerable Lebanese households (Mercy Crops, 2023). The vice president of Consumers Lebanon, a local associations protecting consumers stated the following:

> "Why do we always need to depend on imports? Why don't we grow wheat in Lebanon, and why did we not plant soft wheat used for bread when the economic crisis first started?" – Nada Nehme. (Hamdan, 2022).

Nehme criticizes the import dependency, and instead argue for increased national production of wheat which could help mitigate shocks and strengthen long-term food security. As for 2022, Lebanon was able to import 424,000 tons of wheat from Ukraine out of a total of 552,000MT (FAO, 2023d). The remaining wheat were provided by Russia, Romania, Moldova and Bulgaria (FAO, 2023d). The provision from Ukraine represents a decline from 2021, but the imported amount still represents a significant portion of Lebanese wheat imports. Lebanon is facing several challenges at once, and even though the country were able to obtain around the same amount of wheat as the previous year, the challenges of dependency and vulnerability remain.

4.6.3 Zimbabwe example

To mitigate the effects of shocks, Breisinger et al. (2015) argues for increased resilience. One way to mitigate these shocks and build resilience is using national reserves of food to safeguard food price shocks. Furthermore, the role of national governments to foster agricultural growth by increasing productivity and income of smallholder farmers is considered to build resilience (Breisinger et al. 2015). A country which has achieved self-sufficiency in wheat production is Zimbabwe. The country used to be dependent on wheat imports, but in 2022 the country produced more wheat than what was required for domestic use, making the country self-sufficient (Moyo, 2023). Over the course of the last decade, the country has been building up its agricultural sector to meet the challenges related to food shortages. The wheat self-sufficiency is a result of a process which have developed over several years. The upturn in wheat production has made it possible for the country to save 300 million American dollars in import costs and the goal for 2023 is to produce 400,000 tons by

the end of the year (Moyo, 2023). The development in self-sufficiency reduced vulnerability, compared to other African countries when the R-U war broke out (Moyo, 2023).

The wish for a stronger, more timid action for food security is prominent, but finding an aligned way forward has proven to be more difficult. In summary, illustrates the Zimbabwe case a long-term strategy for strengthening of national food-self-sufficiency. The long-term strategy can contribute to mitigating unexpected food price shocks, for example on wheat as the national reserves work as a safety measure. The long-term strategies of self-sufficiency can in that matter strengthen the resilience of short-term food security as the vulnerability to shocks is reduced (Huish, 2008; Jarosz, 2014). The discussion on self-sufficiency will be elaborated in Chapter 6 when discussing future implications for food security in relation to conflicts and shocks.

4.7 Ukraine's role in the World Food Program

The World Food Program (WFP) is the world's largest humanitarian organization. Their work is situated around providing food assistance in emergencies for people during conflict, disasters and impacts from climate change (WFP, 2023b). Conflict is one of the biggest drivers of hunger, which together with the global rise of fertilizer prices and food prices raised further concerns regarding international food security (WFP, 2023b). WFP has a presence in over 120 countries and territories worldwide and the organization estimates that more than 345 million people are facing acute levels of food insecurity, which is more than double of what the number were in 2020. Ukraine have been an important provider of food to the WFP and in 2020, it was the biggest contributor in terms of quantity (WFP, 2020). In 2021, Ukraine was the second biggest procurement country after Turkey (WFP, 2021).

The WFP implemented a local and regional food procurement policy in 2019 to boost the purchases from local producers and small holders. This principle has been applied to Ukraine as the country is both on the receiving end of food aid and providing the WFP with food as of 2022-2023. Food kits and ready-to-eat food rations are delivered primarily in hard-to-reach areas where the commercial supply lines are disrupted and access to food in unreliable. The food kits can typically include wheat flour, pasta, oats, canned beans or meat, sunflower oil, sugar and salt. WFP buys more than 90% of this food inside Ukraine and they also work with local bakeries to deliver bread (WFP, 2022a). The WFP rely on funding for their operations,

which is now under pressure due to funding gaps and resulting cuts in assistance. The informant working in the UN-Association of Norway pointed to these challenges.

> "The World Food program is facing big challenges. There are millions of people in need of acute food assistance, who do not get the help needed due to a general lack of funding." – Iselin Løvslett Danbolt, UN-Association of Norway. 5. October 2023. My own translation.

The uprise in costs for delivering food assistance is partly due to high food and fuel prices (WFP, 2023a). The monthly costs are around 73.6 million US dollars, which is a rise of 44% since 2019. The combination of increasing food insecurity and all-time highs in costs for food assistance, the WFP consider the situation critical for countries with high degree of food insecurity.

> "We have no choice but to take food from the hungry to feed the starving, and unless we receive immediate funding, in a few weeks, we risk not even being able to feed the starving. This will be hell on earth." – WFP-Executive Director, David Beasley. (WFP, 2022e).

The Beasley statement underscore an already vulnerable situation, made worse by the lack of funding. Furthermore, the WFP director pointed to the R-U war and the expected rise in fuel and food prices. As noted in Chapter 4.4, witnessed world food prices surges when the war began. Beasley show to the local scale of food insecurity, where higher food prices push more people into a vicious circle of hunger and dependence on humanitarian assistance (WFP, 2022b).

> "In light of the funding-challenges they (WFP) have, and since its tender-based, it will be interesting to see how they manage to do it in the future. India has boosted their grain production. Countries like India can contribute more, become a new partner." – Iselin Løvslett Danbolt, UN-Association of Norway. 5 October 2023. My own translation.

The way informant Danbolt describes it, the humanitarian operations in the WFP operates in the "normal" global food market, which is tender based. Linking back to the theoretical chapter on food trade, I propose that market liberalization (Claes et al. 2019; Greenaway & Milner, 2014) has affected the ways in which humanitarian operations are carried out. In light

of the vulnerabilities the R-U had proposed, see the previous Chapters, the WFP operations are also affected by these vulnerabilities. In sum, I argue for a triple nexus approach to food insecurity challenges. This is done through understandings building on food as a human right, food security as a dimension of humanitarian aid and peace operations and the inclusion of local understandings (Messer & Cohen, 2023). Seeing food as a human right is emphasized, for example through the food justice and SDG agenda of zero hunger. Moreover, is food security an important part of humanitarian aid, for example by the WFP and their operations located in vulnerable countries. The R-U war shed light on vulnerabilities of such operations which are in the "normal" world market for food and the vulnerability of these markets (Informant Rudolfsen 15. February 2023). Lastly, considering the local and national context of food insecurity is necessary as it related to both the short-term, but also the long-term challenges of the food insecurity situation, as discussed using the empirical examples of Lebanon and Zimbabwe.

4.8 Summary and concluding comments

Chapter 4 have explored how the international food markets were affected by the R-U war outbreak, focusing on research question one. Firstly, Ukraine and Russia are perceived as two central providers of grains, such as wheat and corn, as well as vegetable oil to world food markets (FAO, 2022a; European Council, 2023a; Lin et al. 2023; Sheldon, 2022). The countries both produce and export significant amounts of these commodities to world market and with the R-U war outbreak, the international food markets experienced a "shock" (GEP, 2022; Sassi, 2018).

This shock relates to acute export stop from the Black Sea ports, price variations and implementation of trade restrictions. Firstly, the acute stop of exports through the Black Sea led Ukraine to looking for alternative forms of transportation, mainly in the form of railway, rivers and road transport. The alternatives are seen as less effective and more costly, than the regular transportation through the seaports. Furthermore, this was linked to the direct consequences for food security by the WFP director stating the closure of the ports was a war against global food security (Khorsandi, 2022). Secondly, examining the FFPI and data from Trading Economics, did the R-U war outbreak contribute to rising international prices of food. With several challenges being apparent at once, I consider food security to be part of a multiple crisis, where vulnerabilities get heightened when unexpected events occur. Then the examination of trade restrictions is seen as a result of shocks creating uncertainty and

instability in the food markets. This uncertainty and instability further drove countries to implement trade restrictions to protect themselves (Glauben et al. 2022). The tendency of countries to do this has also been apparent in earlier crisis, pointing to the R-U war being a "crisis" and "shock" that disturbed the stability. The findings show to weakening of the food security dimensions of availability, access and stability (Maxwell, 1996; Peng & Berry, 2019; UN, 1975; WFP et al. 2013). Availability through lower Ukrainian grain production resulting from military activities. However, this aspect will be elaborated in Chapter 5.5.3, where Ukraine's production and exports during the marketing year 2022-23 is examined. Weaking of access is especially related to the closure of the Black Sea ports in the months after the conflict broke out. Still, these two dimensions were partly replaced by alternative producers, for example Argentina and India, upping their production and exports (Colussi & Schnitkey, 2022; Parvaiz, 2022; Pasricha, 2022).

The R-U shock led to renewed attention to the aspect of trade dependencies for countries in the Global South and how such shocks impact countries. Using the empirical examples of Lebanon and Zimbabwe, the vulnerability of dependency to wheat showed that the initial stages of the shock led to fears of shortage in Lebanon (Breisinger et al, 2022; Hamdan, 2022; Rose, 2022). The fears were a result of other underlying factors such as the economic crisis and the destruction of wheat storage facilities leading to fewer possibilities for securement. For Zimbabwe, the vulnerability to the R-U shock was lower as the country have reached self-sufficiency in wheat after a longer process for food sovereignty (Breisinger et al, 2015; Moyo, 2023). Lastly, Ukraine's role in WFP as a central procurement country prior to the war was discussed. Ukraine is now both a source of food for the WFP, at the same time as being on the receiving end of humanitarian operations and food-aid.

5 The launch of the BSGI

In this chapter, I address research question two on the launch of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) and the role of the initiative for food security. The BSGI was launched in response to the export stop from the Black Sea ports. The chapter begins with an explanation of the initiative and the identification of the actors involved. Following this is an exploration of the negotiation rounds. Here the views of the R-U war and its impacts on food security are examined through the international stakeholders, FAO, WFP, WB, UNCTAD and WTO. Lastly, the chapter presents the provisional numbers of the initiative to world markets as of October 2023.

5.1 The Black Sea Grain Initiative

The BSGI was an UN-brokered agreement between Russia and Ukraine which was signed 22 July 2022 and lasted until 17 July 2023. Chapter 5.1.2 presents a timeline of the initiative. The agreement was introduced to resume exports from Ukrainian ports, which had been effectively blocked since February 2022. This was first due to Russian military exercises, then by Ukrainian mines which was placed to prevent possible Russian sea-based attacks after the invasion (Laborde & Glauber, 2022). The initiative was meant to secure exports of grains and related foods from the ports of Odesa, Chornomorsk and Pivydennyi. Ukraine ships almost 75% of its agricultural exports through the ports on the Black Sea, and around half of these exports go through the three ports Odesa, Chronomorsk and Pivydennyi which was covered in the deal (USDA, 2022). Before the BSGI was in place in July of 2022, Ukraine was relying solely on a rail, truck and barge logistics to get agricultural products out of the country, see Chapter 4.1 and 4.3 (USDA, 2022). The deal was first set to last for 120-days, several negotiation rounds renewed the deal until the Russian suspension in July 2023. The BSGI was considered a breakthrough for the UN and the Secretary-General Guterres stated the following on the day of the signing.

> "Let there be no doubt, this is an agreement for the world. It will bring relief for developing countries on the edge of bankruptcy and the most vulnerable people on the edge of famine. It will help stabilize global food prices which were already at record levels even before the war – a true nightmare for developing countries." – UN-Secretary-General, António Guterres, 22 July 2022. (UN-Secretary General, 2022a)

Guterres underscored the BSGI as an agreement that would bring relief for developing countries and the most vulnerable people on the edge of famine. Furthermore, he highlighted the stabilization of food prices, see Chapter 4.4. Over the course of the initiative, there was challenges in the cooperation from the Russian side. The disruptions sparked concerns amongst international stakeholders regarding accessibility to exports and uncertainty in world markets linked to food prices.

Russian officials criticized the deal for not considering Russian interest in the deal and that they considered backing out. Russian officials accused Ukraine of using the established corridor to conduct operations against Russia, which Ukraine has categorically denied (UN, 2022c). Following an attack 8 October 2022 on the Kerch bridge which connects Russia to Crimea, Vladimir Putin declared "This is an act of terrorism". Additionally, he blamed Ukraine's intelligence services and on 10 October Russia sent a huge barrage of missiles into Kyiv and cities across Ukraine (The Economist, 2022). Odesa which is a major grain hub and one of the port cities in the initiative were also attacked. On 29 October the official suspension was made by the Russian federation. The suspension led to no movement of new vessels and Russia were put under pressure to return to the deal. Russia resumed their participation just a few days later 2 November 2022.

Before this suspension, the grain prices had stabilized at pre-war levels. However, it is worth mentioning that this price level was still 50% higher than it was in January 2020, as discussed in Chapter 4. Russia's short suspension of the BSGI was a setback for the efforts to reduce the impacts of the war in Ukraine on global consumers. With a smaller portion of Ukrainian commodities on the world markets and their significant share of grain and vegetable oils pre-war, the resumption of the BSGI was highlighted.

> "Getting the Black Sea Ports open is the single most important thing we can do right now to help the world's hungry. It will take more than grain ships out of Ukraine to stop world hunger, but with Ukrainian grain back on global markets we have a chance to stop this global food crisis from spiralling even further." – WFP-Executive Director David Beasley, 16 August 2022. (WFP, 2022g).

The director underscored the role of the Ukrainian Black Sea ports as important for the worlds hungry. Moreover, he stated that world hunger does not end with Ukrainian grain ships, but

that the resumption of the BSGI could hinder further spiralling of the global food crisis. Countries in the Middle East and North Africa, also known as the MENA region, tend to be more dependent on Ukraine as a wheat and grain supplier (FAO, 2022a; Glauber et al. 2022). Moreover, these countries often import more during the winter season, as they consume their own harvests by the end of the year. The next chapter identify the key actors of the initiative.

5.1.1 Identifying the actors

On 22 July 2022, the senior representatives from Ukraine, Russia and Turkey gathered in Istanbul to sign the initiative which established a mechanism for the safe transportation of grain, foodstuffs and fertilizer from Ukrainian ports to global markets. The UN, represented by the Secretary-General signed the initiative as a witness. The parties to the initiative agreed to set up the Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) in Istanbul which would monitor the movement of commercial vessels, focus on the export of commercial grain and related food commodities, ensure on-site control and monitoring of cargo from Ukrainian ports and report on the shipments facilitated through the initiative. The JCC's responsibility was to ensure the safe passage of commercial vessels carrying grain, foodstuffs and fertilizers out of the ports of Chronomorsk, Odesa and Pivdennyi (JCC, 2022; UN, 2023c; UN, 2023d). The coordination centre monitored the movement of the vessels to ensure compliance with the procedures communicated to the vessels. The JCC also carried out inspections of inbound and outbound vessels to ensure that there was no unauthorized cargo or crew onboard the ships. The inspection team consisted of representatives from Turkey, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the UN which conducted inspections on behalf of the JCC.

The initiative is based on the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS), and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code). The Russian Federation also facilitated an agreement with the UN for unimpeded exports to world markets of Russian food and fertilizer, including the raw material required to produce fertilizers. The principle of the agreement is that the sanctions imposed on Russia do not apply to these products. Simultaneously, Russia has committed to facilitate the unimpeded export of food, sunflower oil and fertilizers from Ukrainian controlled Black Sea ports (UN, 2023c). The agreement was meant to secure unrestricted access to exports of Ukrainian food from the Black Sea along with exports of food and fertilizer from the Russian Federation. This could contribute to calm the commodity markets, lower prices and provide critical relief

to the most vulnerable people and countries getting hammered by an unprecedented cost-of-living crisis.

The BSGI can be assessed differently, depending on the wavering positions. The agreement was seen as a big step forward by the UN in tackling the global food crisis which are gripping the world, as Guterres stated, see Chapter 5.1. On the other hand, the initiative can be described as a commercial initiative that simply opened up for trade for Ukrainian commodities again. This is evident in the JCC documents which states information regarding *commercial grain* and movement of *commercial vessels* (JCC, 2022). The insights from the informant in the Norwegian Shipping Association described the initiative in a similar matter.

> "This (the BSGI) was implemented within a relatively normal commercial and mercantile framework for shipping operations. There were ordinary commercial and mercantile mechanisms that were supposed to take care of the shipping of goods to and from these ports. (…) This took place in the normal global market for transport of food and agricultural products." – Audun Halvorsen. Executive Director of Security and Contingency planning, Norwegian Shipping Association. 23 October 2023. My own translation.

The informant, understand the initiative as a commercial and mercantile initiative within the normal global market for transport of food and agricultural products. As the analytical contributions of Dicken (2006, p. 360) indicated, have agricultural products been implemented into advanced transportation and communications systems, leading to complex global value chains. The BSGI was part of this system, where transnational actors operates and the modes of production, transportation and distribution are interlinked. Furthermore, the BSGI involved ships sailing under numerous flags, the informant from the Norwegian Maritime Organization explained what their role was for the Norwegian flagged ships that participated.

> "The initiative and the agreement are handled by the UN, and there were already procedures and methods for how the initiative were to be carried out. (…) Norway come in as a flag-state, which means that we only have influence on Norwegian-flagged ships. Ships were to pass through the Bosporus strain and into a waiting area in Turkish waters where Turkey was responsible for the supervision on board for

> securing the ships. (…) Our job is to see if there are any Norwegian-flagged ships that are interested in participating in the initiative and the Norwegian Maritime Authority's primary role is to secure ships. This means ships must be seaworthy, all certificates must be in order, and we can approve a security plan, which is made according to certain regulations." – Anna Kari Rasmussen. Senior Surveyor at the Norwegian Maritime Directorate. 3 October 2023. My own translation.

As the informant states, consider them UN as being the actor in charge of the procedures and mechanisms of the initiative, in collaboration with Ukraine, Russia and Turkey. Therefore, Norway came in under regulations that were already in place and carried out their procedures for safety. As the initiative were happening in areas of military activity, the security aspects have been important for shipping companies to take part. Moreover, the role of Turkey as a negotiator within the initiative were pointed out by several of my informants.

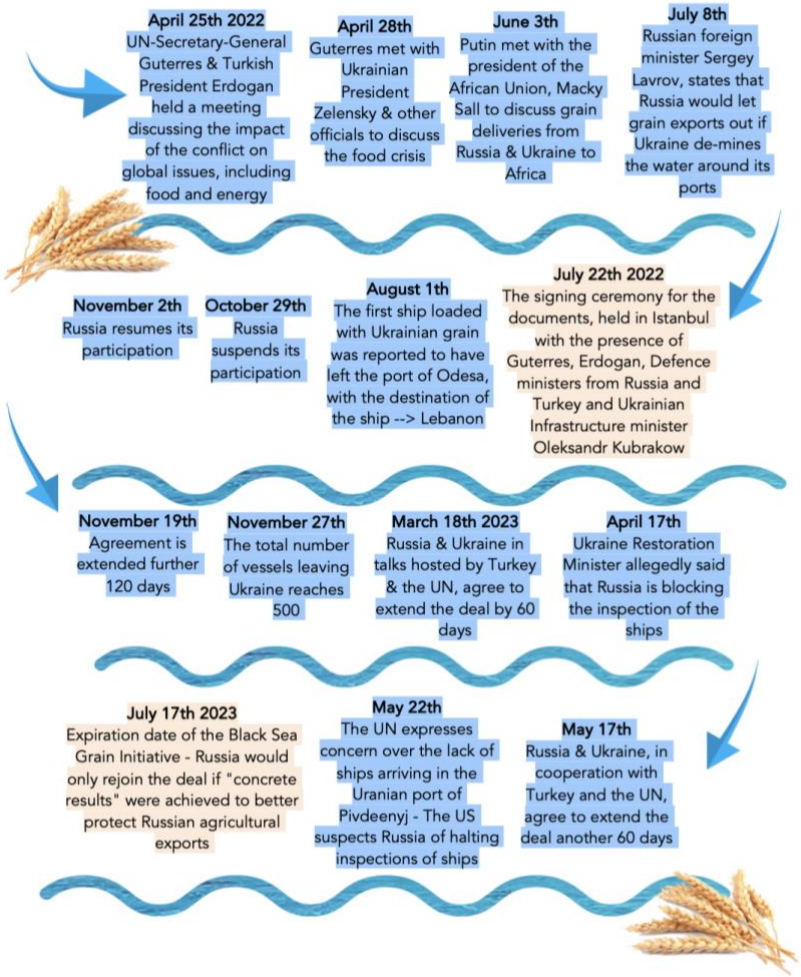
> "A key actor was Turkey, and they were very proud of this agreement that came to be. They were probably a little relieved to ease some of the pressure that came from several teams." – Anna Kari Rasmussen. Senior Surveyor at the Norwegian Maritime Directorate. 3 October 2023. My own translation.

> " (…) It is clear that Turkey is also in a somewhat strange position. They probably love to be a negotiator. But they also make money from this. They are, after all, a transit area, so it is clear that Turkey has a somewhat mixed role as well. And yet it is hard to know exactly what their role is other than being somewhat important. Turkey is in fierce competition with at least several of the other Arab countries to gain influence in Africa. They are heavily involved in Somalia; they are trying to be an actor in Libya. They try to be important. And this is perhaps one way of being important." – Jan Speed. Journalist at Panorama Nyheter, an independent news site published by NORAD. 29 September 2023. My own translation.

The informants understand Turkey's role in the initiative as a form of negotiator. Turkey's role can be linked to their geographical position and the established Turkish inspection area of vessels participating in the initiative (JCC, 2022). Furthermore, were there political ties with Russia important to get them on board with the initiative. The point of informant Speed, of Turkey having a mixed role, both as the transit area but also as an actor which wants to feel

"important" is interesting considering the governing processes behind the BSGI and how these are made up by specific actions from different actors driven by their own agenda.

5.1.2 Timeline of the BSGI



5.2 The negotiation rounds of the initiative

The following chapters present the negotiation rounds of the initiative. Here the focus is to explore the situation, as it was perceived at the different stages leading up to the initiative and in effective period of the BSGI. The first negotiation round took place in the months following the conflict outbreak, from February to July 2022, leading to the agreement. This negotiation round is focused on predicted impacts on food security as the situation was then, with record-high food prices, stop in exports through the Black Sea and implementations of trade restrictions. The second negotiation round, happening between July and November 2022, sightsee what happened when the initiative was launched, and the mostly positive attributes and attitudes connected to the BSGI. The third negotiation round explore the period between November 2022 to March 2023, when the initiative faced challenges regarding

Russian suspension, reduction in number of inspections per day and critique towards the destination of the commodities shipped in the initiative. Lastly, the period between March and July 2023, ending with the termination of the BSGI just days before the 1-year mark is explored. This chapter also includes the final data from the initiative, as of October 2023.

5.2.1 A feared food crisis – February to July 2022

In the months following the war outbreak in February 2022, the importance of facilitating full access to world markets for Ukraine's food stocks and Russian food and fertilizer were seen as a pressing issue on top of all other challenges regarding the war on the European continent. The UN Secretary-General travelled to Moscow and Kyiv in April 2022 to propose a plan to secure the access of these commodities (UN-Secretary General, 2022a). Ukraine and the Russian Federation are both considered to be part of the breadbaskets of the world with significant numbers production and export numbers of wheat, barley and sunflower oil. Both countries were ranging in the top five exporters globally for wheat and grain markets, and with the R-U war, the shipments from Ukraine were halted and Russian grain deals were paused amidst uncertainty around sanctions, as discussed in Chapter 4.

In March 2022, it was estimated that 13.5 million tons of wheat and 16 million tons of corn were frozen in the two countries (WFP, 2022d). Russia had largely been unable to export food because of sanctions which cut them off financially. Ukraine was cut off physically due to the Russian blockade of the Black Sea ports and Ukraine's lack of railways to transport food overland. On March 11, 2022, the Ukraine's agriculture minister asked allies for 1900 rail cars of fuel, due to the country's farmers running out of supplies which were diverted to the military. The UN also estimated that up to 30% of Ukrainian farmland could become a war zone, and with millions of Ukrainians fleeing the country or joining the front lines, far less people could work in the fields (FAO, 2022b). Insurers demanded high premia for vessels entering the Black Sea, if willing to provide coverage in the first place due to the risks of being hit by missiles and other war related attacks. Aid organizations, economists and government officials warned that the repercussions could lead to an increase in world hunger (Nicas, 2022). The war's impacts on global food markets could cause an additional 7.6 to 13.1 million people to go hungry (European Parliament, 2022). Executive director of the WFP stated that the war in Ukraine were a catastrophe on top of a catastrophe. The WFP costs increased by 71$ million a month, enough to cut daily rations for 3.8 million people (WFP, 2022f).

While many countries would be facing higher prices, some places were already struggling to find enough food at all. Eritrea, Armenia, Mongolia and Kazakhstan imported all of their wheat from Russia and Ukraine, and as of March 2022, they had to find new sources (Nicas, 2022). However, these countries were competing against much larger buyers, including Turkey, Egypt, Bangladesh and Iran which have obtained more than 60% of their wheat from the two warring countries. China being another exporting country, faced its worst wheat crop in decades after severe flooding in the same period which means they would also be looking to buy more wheat than usual at the international markets. China's agriculture minister stated that the seedling situation can be the worst in history for the country (Nicas, 2022). The fears of a food crisis illustrated the scalar implications of the war, demonstrating how a conflict between Ukraine and Russia sparked global concern and consequences.

5.2.2 A local conflict with global consequences

> "Food pricing is our number one problem right now, creating a perfect storm for 2022. But by 2023 it very well will be a food availability problem. When a country like Ukraine that grows enough food for 400 million people is out of the market, it creates market volatility, which we are now seeing." – WFP-Executive Director, David Beasley 20 May 2022. (Khorsandi, 2022).

The WFP director points to availability, access and stability concerns caused by the R-U war. The reduction of food shipments from the Black Sea, combined with the elevated food prices raised immediate alarms and reactions in the international policy community regarding food security. The WTO pointed to vulnerabilities of poorer countries towards higher food and energy prices (WTO, 2023a), as well as the reduction of available goods exported by Ukraine and Russia since the beginning of the war (WTO, 2022). The shares of Ukraine and Russia in world trade and output are considered relatively small, but being important suppliers of essential products such as food and energy made the situation uncertain. The market shares were additionally underscored by FAO. FAO pointed to exports of wheat, corn and cereals and the possible supply gaps of these commodities. FAO forecasted that Ukraine's 2021/2022 corn exports accounted to 18% of the global trade in this grain (FAO, 2022c, p. 8). The main receivers of this corn are China, the EU, Egypt and Turkey which on average source 1/3 of their corn from Ukraine. FAO predicted an increase of shipments of wheat and corn from

Argentina, India and the United States in result to the loss in exports from Ukraine and Russia, which would lessen the supply gaps, see Chapter 4.3.2. Rising international food prices and additional pressure on global markets were underscored as worsening the food security situation because of the war.

> "Nearly 50 countries depend on the Russian Federation and Ukraine for at least 30 percent of their wheat import needs. Of these, 26 countries source over 50 percent of their wheat imports from these two countries. In that context, this war will have multiple implications for global markets and food supplies, representing a challenge for food security for many countries, and especially for low-income food import dependent countries and vulnerable population groups." – FAO, 2022c, p. 1.

The World Bank (WB) (2022a) stated early in the conflict that the war caused a major shock to commodity markets, altering global patterns of trade, production and consumption in ways that will keep prices at historically high levels through the end of 2024. The WB commodity Markets Outlook report stated that this is one of the largest commodity shocks since the 1970s.

> "Commodity markets are experiencing one of the largest supply shocks in decades because of the war in Ukraine." – Ayhan Kose, Director of the World Bank's Prospects Group. (WB, 2022a).

The food price increases are seen as driving an acceleration of domestic food price inflations and increased food insecurity (WB, 2022a, p. 23). This is explained by the war-driven disruptions of food trade, elevated food price inflations and higher costs of food-assistance. WFP pointed to that the global grain supply would stay low unless shipping from the Black Sea were resumed (WFP, 2022c). Further the WFP highlighted how the risk of civil unrest gets heightened in situations where prices soar in already hunger-stricken areas. I link this to the connection between conflict and food security, potentially leading to civil unrest (Hendrix & Brinkman, 2013; Van Wezeel, 2016). This was evident in 2007-2010 when large-scale political unrest and instability, or "food and hunger" riots coincided with big spikes in food prices in Syria, Libya and Yemen (WFP, 2022c). Tunisia is one of the countries which was hit badly by the 2022 rise in global wheat prices, as well as heightened prices on animal feed barley and energy costs. In May of 2022, farmers in several areas protested at the high cost of

animal feed by blocking roads, pouring milk in the streets and threats of cuts in production. Following these protests, the Minister of Agriculture announced that the eggs, poultry and milk would be price reviewed in order to ensure profit margin for producers (Amara, 2022).

> "The Tunisian consumer must support the Tunisian farmer, because the farmer is a pillar of Tunisian food security in this delicate situation around the world." – Mahmoud Elyes Hamza, Tunisian Agriculture Minister. (Amara, 2022)

Tunisia shows to the scalar implications of the R-U war, making impacts span over country borders. The WB characterized the on-going global food crisis as being the worst food insecurity crisis in a decade. WB officials (Pangestu & Trotsenburg, 2022) argued that the crisis was worsened by the growing number of countries that were banning or restricting exports of wheat and other commodities to put a lid on soaring domestic prices (Pangestu & Trotsenburg, 2022). The WB argued that such actions are counterproductive and must be halted and reversed. The WB are critical to these kind of actions as they reduce global supply, which in turn drive the food prices even higher.

Food price inflation often hit developing countries the hardest, as they tend to be net importers of food. The R-U war was accelerating a price surge that started due to unfavourable weather in key producing countries, Covid-19 aftereffects and the growing costs of energy and fertilizers (Pangestu & Trotsenburg, 2022) The blockaded Ukrainian ports and disruption of shipments, combined with unilateral trade restrictions rendered the situation precarious. I argue that the views of the WB align with the food trade liberalization arguments which highlights a market, free from trade restrictions and protectionism (Greenaway & Milner, 2014; Nagy, 2020; Traverso & Schiavo, 2020). To summarize, were international stakeholders concerned with the R-U impacts on international food prices, lower availability and access caused by lack of Black Sea exports, trade restrictions and an existing vulnerability in countries with high dependency and less resilience for handling shocks to the world system.

5.3 Second round of negotiation – The ships start to sail

When the BSGI was signed in July 2022, the activity from the Black Sea ports were quickly opened again. The first shipment left the port of Odesa 1 August 2022 (JCC, 2023a; JCC, 2023b). The following chapter explores the stabilization of food prices and food availability and the notion of the BSGI as a "trade hope". This period of the BSGI were characterized by

an optimism regarding the attributes of the initiative and the cooperation between the involved actors.

5.3.3 Stabilization of food prices and food availability

FAO (2023c, p. 2) pointed to the contribution of the BSGI on lowering global food prices, together with the Solidarity Lanes out of Ukraine, as well as seasonal factors and solid harvests. The concerns regarding food availability, especially for countries with wheat dependency from Ukraine and Russia, lowered as countries managed to adjust their food imports to satisfy domestic needs (FAO, 2023c, p. 3). Lebanon was a country that international stakeholders i.e. FAO, WTO and WB highlighted regarding Ukrainian wheat dependency. It was able to import around 424,000 tons of wheat from Ukraine, out of a total of 552,000 tons total (FAO, 2023c, p. 29).

> "The initiative (BSGI) is important for improving global food availability and lessening the pressure on world prices. Going forward, the duration of the initiative, the speed of vessel inspections, the safety of transport and the functioning of ancillary inland infrastructure will all play critical roles in ensuring that food and agricultural products reach the world markets." – FAO, 2023c, p. 32.

The food security dimension of availability was underscored by FAO. This dimension is concerned with the food production and availability of food stocks for populations across the world (Peng & Berry, 2019). Food availability is traditionally linked to the contributions from agriculture, fisheries and forest products. Agricultural products are particularly relevant for Ukraine and the BSGI enabled exports of these commodities again. The WFP characterized the BSGI as a "Black Sea breakthrough" with the opening of the maritime corridor for food exports (Bryant, 2023). The WFP chartered 29 vessels under the initiative, providing food aid to countries such as Yemen, Afghanistan and Ethiopia (JCC, 2023b).

In September of 2022, the heads of FAO, WB, WFP and WTO, together with IMF, released a joint statement on the global food security and nutrition crisis. The contributing factors to the exacerbation of food insecurity issues, was high and volatile prices on food, fertilizer and energy, restrictive trade policies and supply chain disruptions (FAO et al. 2022b). The group welcomed the efforts of the BSGI which allows grain and foodstuffs to once again be exported from these trade routes. They also welcomed the downward trend of trade restrictive

measures that were implemented in the time after the war outbreak (FAO et al. 2022b). Even with a reprieve in global food prices and the resumption of grain exports through the Black Sea, food remains beyond reach for many due to high prices and weather shocks. The stakeholders expect the number of acute food insecure people to continue to rise (FAO et al. 2023b).

5.3.4 A trade hope

UNCTAD published a report in October 2022, which emphasized how the BSGI had offered hope and shown the power of trade in times of crisis. The analytical framework suggested that participation in international food trade can lead to positive effects on low-income countries, especially for the two food security pillars of availability and access (Traverso & Schiavo, 2020). The contribution to availability from the BSGI was also underscored by the WFP, see Chapter 5.3.3. The report by UNCTAD also highlighted the need for renewal of the BSGI in the next month. Port activity in Ukraine was picking up between August and October 2022 and large shipments of grain were reaching world markets once again.

> "In a short space of time, the BSGI has gathered momentum. Port activity in Ukraine is picking up and large shipments of grain are reaching world markets. The initiative has helped to stabilize and subsequently lower global food prices and move precious grain from one of the world's breadbaskets to the tables of those in need." – UNCTAD, 2022, p. 3.

In the middle of October 2022, the total tonnage of grains and other foodstuffs exported through BSGI reached 8 million MT (UNCTAD, 2022). It became a priority to keep the trade flows open. The report stated that the initiative had helped to stabilize and subsequently lower the global food prices. This decline was due to several factors including a strong dollar, declining transportation costs, weakening global demand, a strong corn harvest in Brazil, and less-than anticipated drought damage to wheat harvests in Western Europe and North America (Laborde & Glauben, 2022). On 29 October 2022, Russia suspended its participation in the grain-deal. Before this suspension, the grain prices had stabilized at pre-war levels. Still, the price level was 50% higher than in January 2020. Russia's short suspension of the BSGI in October was a setback for efforts to reduce the impacts of the war in Ukraine on global consumers. This can be linked to the food security dimension of stability which have faced severe challenges during the R-U war. The price variations manifested throughout

international markets, down to national and local scales, as seen in the Tunisia example, see Chapter 5.2.2. On 2 November 2022, Russia resumed its participation in the initiative and the ships could once again start sailing.

Another international stakeholder which shared the views of UNCTAD is the World Trade Organization (WTO). In a digital meeting regarding the BSGI, the WTO-Director-General told the participants that the jump in food and energy prices, triggered by the R-U war brought a completely new spotlight on the issue of food security. Further on she pointed to how developing countries, particularly the least developed countries are on the receiving end of the food crisis that are happening in the world.

> "With one-fifth of calories traded internationally, imagine how important the role of trade is now in order to help us solve this problem of access, of building resilience and of managing the volatility of food prices and energy prices." – WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. (WTO-Director General, 2023)

To meet the challenges of the on-going food insecurity crisis, the view of the WTO is to first and foremost keep trade open, predictable and stable in the international multilateral system. Their view is that trade has an absolute central role on the food front. The view of the WTO aligns with those of the WB, which highlight the trade liberalization perspective, urging for openness and no-discrimination between countries in trade (Claes et al. 2019; Nagy, 2020). Keeping the trade routes open out of Ukraine was also important for Ukraine as a country, as they need economic revenues to continue to defend themselves against Russia.

I argue that the response of the WB and WTO with emphasis on open trade measures, is a technical solution to a complex issue. By this I mean that trade measures such as the removal of export restrictions can generate a grater flow of commodities such as food and fertilizer which have been at the forefront of this conflict. The BSGI is considered to contribute to strengthening of food security by opening these trade routes again, which further contribute to lowering global world prices (WTO, 2023b). However, these measures do little for the long-term food security, which continue to be vulnerable in relation to unexpected shocks. The mechanisms of BSGI and open trade can help lessen the shocks in the short-term, which is important, but it does not contribute to building more long-term resilience against future shocks.

5.4 The beginning of the end – November 2022 to March 2023

On 29 November the BSGI agreement was extended for 120 days, with the new expiration date being 18 March 2023. In December of 2022, the exports through the BSGI marked over 3.7 million MT. UN-Secretary-General Guterres stated that the BSGI had shown the possibility of Ukraine and the Russian Federation to advance global food security, with the support of Turkey and the UN. Further on he also spoke on the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between the UN and Russia to facilitate exports of Russian food and fertilizers to global markets. He said that they were working hard to remove all the remaining obstacles to implement the memorandum (UN-Secretary General, 2023a). The initiative faced challenges early on with the Russian suspension in October 2022.

These challenges only intensified over the year in the form of fewer completed inspections per day. In the beginning, Russia completed approximately 10 inspections per day, this number fell to 7 in November 2022 and this development only worsened. In May of 2023, the inspections were down to 2 a day. The UN had the capacity to inspect as many as 40 ships a day, and several spokespersons criticized Russia for slowing down the process on purpose on their side (EEAS, 2023; Wintour, 2023). Compared to March 2023, there was a 29% decrease in food exports by tonnage through the initiative and 66% decrease in May (Wintour, 2023). According to the Russian Federation, the second part of the deal that allowed for greater Russian agricultural exports, were not being honoured by the west (Wintour, 2023). Sanctions on Russian goods exports had not been lifted clearly enough to give cautious insurers legal comfort to ensure Russian ships carrying food. Russia also wanted sanctions lifted on the exclusion from the SWIFT system. The UK asserts that the Russian levels of food exports are higher than last years and that the country is exporting plenty of grain and fertilizer out of Novorossiysk (Wintour, 2023). This show that even with the sanctions in place, Russia was able to export higher amounts than last year, despite their own protests about exclusion from systems such as SWIFT (Reuters, 2023b; Xinhua, 2023).

5.5 The end of the BSGI – March - July 2023

Russia formally withdrew from the grain deal 17 July 2023. Kremlin spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, announced the suspension and repeated the complaint that Russia has made since the deal was first agreed upon last year. He argued that the U.S. and other of Ukraine's international partners were not allowing the pact to be carried out fairly by making it

impossible for Russia to export some agricultural products (Falk, 2023). When talking to reporters, Peskov used the word "suspension", rather than termination of the deal. In the official letter to the Joint Coordination Centre, the Russian Federation used the word "termination", making Russia's position on the BSGI unclear.

> "I deeply regret the decision by the Russian federation to terminate the implementation of the Black Sea Initiative – including the withdrawal of Russian security guarantees of navigation in the north-western part of the Black Sea." – UN-Secretary General, Antonio Guterres. 17 July 2023. (UN-Secretary General, 2023b)

The initiative had allowed just under 33 million metric tons of food to be exported by sea from Ukraine since August of 2022. Carlos Mera, head of agricultural commodities markets at Rabobank, said that without a Black Sea deal, Ukraine would have to reroute exports via land borders and smaller ports on the river Danube. This would increase costs and reduce farmers' profits, which could lead them to plant less next season, placing further pressure on supplies going forward (Seddon et al. 2023). See Chapter 5.5.3 for more detail.

5.5.1 The reactions of the international stakeholder community

After the termination of the BSGI, international stakeholders, focusing on the UN, WTO, WB, FAO and WFP, once again pointed to the importance of the initiative for global food security and markets. The positioning of Ukraine and Russia, as well as the global price hikes were considered to hit the poorest countries the hardest.

> "The abrupt termination of the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative is a matter of grave concern. I share UN-Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's deep regret and disappointment. Global food security should not become a casualty of war. Ukraine and the Russian Federation are important suppliers of food, feed, and fertilizer to international markets. People in poor countries struggling with food and energy price inflation stand to be hit hardest by the termination of the initiative: prices for future delivery of wheat and corn are already rising. Therefore, I urge all parties to make every effort to come back to the negotiating table." – WTO-Director-General, 2023.

The WB was aligned with the views of the UN and the WTO in their Food Security Update on 27 July 2023. The unease for global markets and prices were underscored, together with the provision of the initiative to what they refer to as developing countries, receiving 57% of the exports through the BSGI. It is worth mentioning that the categorization of developing countries from the WB includes countries such as China and Turkey (JCC, 2023a; WB, 2023b, p. 6). Due to anticipated conflict and rainfall forecasts below-average, the local crops were predicted to be limited in African countries, making the region more vulnerable to food insecurity (WB, 2023b, p. 9). Ethiopia and Somalia rely on Ukrainian wheat imports, and the suspension of the BSGI is therefore considered to cause more distress for these countries.

The possibility of alternative export routes can mitigate the impacts, but the Russian withdrawal will affect Ukrainian farmers the most in the coming year according to the WB food security update. The initial market reaction was muted, but the WB pointed to uncertainty about future trade dynamics and stability (WB, 2023b, p. 7). FAO underscored the need for the BSGI to continue, as the initiative was considered to advance global food security and global food price stability (FAO, 2023e). FAO did not envisage any risk to the global availability of food in the short term, but food access and affordability are concerns that could negatively impact the agricultural systems (FAO, 2023e, p. 5). Moreover, FAO pointed to undernourishment issues in countries like Yemen and Afghanistan They considered the BSGI to have played a small role for the provisions of wheat, but future disruptions in supply chains were considered a risk due to high vulnerability (FAO, 2023e, p. 5).

WFP, with their food assistance and direct participation in the BSGI, pointed to international trade dynamics as being important for wheat availability and prices in countries such as Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan (WFP, 2023c, p. 1). Since July 2022, almost 876,000 MT of food were shipped to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan through the BSGI and more than 343,000 MT of wheat were shipped by the WFP. The favourable production prospects for 2023 in major wheat producing countries, along with the carryover stocks from the previous year are likely to offset the suspension of the BSGI. The organization pointed to factors, such as El Nino event, referencing high temperature variations in the ocean, which is forecasted for the end of 2023 that could add additional uncertainty for production prospects and stability of international wheat prices in the medium to long-term (WFP, 2023c, p. 1). Now I turn to the provisional numbers of the BSGI and the connection to food security.

5.5.2 The provision from the BSGI

By enforcing a safe maritime humanitarian corridor from Ukrainian ports, vessels loaded with million metric tons of corn, wheat and sunflower products were transported through the BSGI. The total volume exported were 32,9 million MT (JCC, 2023a). The leading commodity was corn accounting for 16.8 million MT. This was followed by 8.9 million MT of wheat and 1.8 million tons sunflower meal. October 2022 was the month with the biggest volume of exports with over 4 million metric tons. The three departure ports of Odesa, Chornomorsk and Pivydennyi. sent off a total of 1004 ships. The leading importing countries were China, Spain, Turkey, Italy and the Netherlands. After this, Egypt, Bangladesh, Israel, Tunisia and Portugal followed. Using the classifications by the World Bank, high-income and upper-middle income countries received just over 80% of the cargo, whilst the lower-middle income received 17.5% and low-income group countries received 2.5% of the exports.

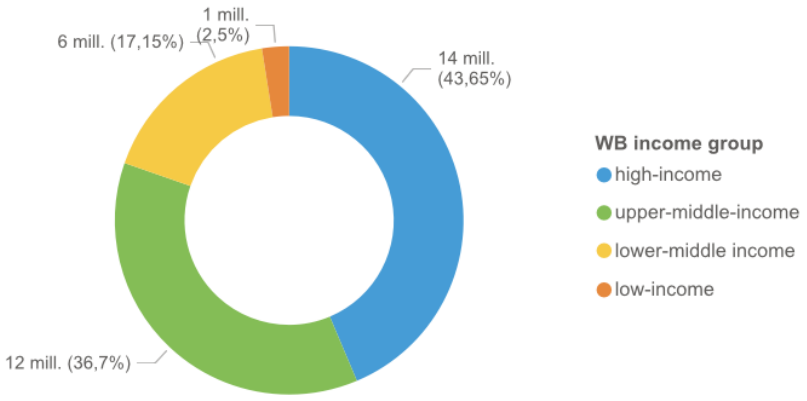


Figure 4: Destination of Cargo in the BSGI, illustrated by WB income group. Source: The Joint Coordination Center, 2023a.

Out of the 32.9 million MT, the WFP received 725,000 MT. These shipments went to countries such as Afghanistan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen (JCC, 2023a). Recurring the Lebanon example, the country was receiving wheat from both Ukraine and Russia prior to the signing of the BSGI. This was delivered by vessels sailing from Ukraine's smaller Danube River ports, with the destination of Beirut. The shipments were organized to help alleviate wheat shortages that had left some supermarkets without staple foods, such as pita bread (Gebeily, 2022). The blockade of Ukrainian grain export via the Black Sea contributed to an already vulnerable situation for Lebanon. The price of wheat flour rose with 209% following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since the economic crisis began in 2019,

the price has risen with 330%. When the BSGI was signed it was considered crucial for providing relief from a growing food crisis (Graham, 2022). Under the BSGI, Lebanon received 98,400 metric tons from Ukraine. With the ending of the BSGI, Ukraine has sought alternative routes for their Black Sea port exports, which brings me to the next Chapter.

5.5.3 Ukrainian exports as of November 2023

Ukraine's grain exports fell by 51% in September 2023, compared with the same period in 2022, citing Ukraine's agriculture ministry (Donley, 2023). Traders and agricultural unions have stated that reduction of exports from the Black Sea ports and Russian attacks on the Danube River and Black Sea ports are the main reasons for lower exports (Reidy, 2023a). According to a statement, made by Ukrainian Deputy prime Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov, Russia has destroyed almost 300,000 MT of grain since July 2023, in attacks on port facilities and on ships (Reidy, 2023a; Reuters, 2023c). Satellite imagery also estimates around 7-8% of the Ukrainian farmland has been abandoned since the start of the war. Most of the areas are located near the frontlines (FEWS, 2023). There have been reported attacks and damage to over one hundred port infrastructure facilities (Tetteh et al. 2023). Ukraine has exported 4.2 million tons less, in the marketing year 2023-2024 compared to the same period last year, as of early November 2023 (Tetteh et al. 2023).

Following the termination of the BSGI, Ukraine looked to alternatives for their exports. The Danube River ports, Romanian ports and the EU's Solidarity lanes have been critical for Ukrainian exports following the end of the BSGI. Before the war, only around 4% of Ukrainian grain exports were shipped through the Danube River ports. Now, the number has gone up to 65% for grain exports (Bonser, 2023). With the accompany of military boats, grain ships have been using a new temporal export corridor which hugs the western coastline near Romania and Bulgaria. Ships have been able to transport around 700,000 MT of agricultural commodities (Reidy, 2023b; Reidy, 2023c). With both Romania and Bulgaria being NATO members, the corridor comes to show the combined support from neighbouring countries of Ukraine.

The corridor was temporarily suspended in the end of October 2023, due to military threats from Russian warplanes and sea mines. The Ukrainian Grain Association stated that Ukraine has the potential to export around 49 million metric tons of grain in the 2023-2024 marketing year, depending on functioning export logistics. This would entail 15-16 million MT exported

using trucks and railway in the EU's solidarity lanes. Furthermore, 30 million MT through the Danube River ports and Romania. The remaining exports would have to gone through the available Black Sea routes (Gordijchuk, 2023; Tetteh et al. 2023). There has been a decline in exports of Ukrainian grain since the end of the BSGI, but not to the extent that many feared. Ukraine has exported a total of around 8.7 million tons of grain since the start of the 2023/2024 marketing year, which started 1 July. This is a reduction of around 30% compared to the same period last year. According to the latest World Bank October analysis, the predictions of average wheat prices for 2024 will be 2.9% lower than average 2023 prices. Trends in Ukrainian exports are not as pressing as when the war broke out, as the global supply chains and market have largely adapted (FEWS, 2023; WB, 2023b). The existing concerns to some degree changed to possible impacts of future shocks, such as escalation of other conflicts.

5.6 A beacon of hope for food security or a mercantile trade initiative

I now turn to a discussion on the role of the BSGI for international food security. Starting with the positive attributes from the BSGI, the initiative gathered political leaders from both the warring countries to the negotiation table and opened up for dialog. This further led to almost 33 million MT of grains and vegetable oils reaching world markets from the earlier blockaded Black Sea ports. Increased availability and access positively added to stabilizing the food markets and prices. These views have been prompted by stakeholders such as FAO, WB, IMF, WTO and UNCTAD. The initiative has also been presented as a major victory for the UN and as "a beacon of hope" in a time of crisis (UNCTAD, 2022; UNCTAD, 2023). Claiming links of causality between the BSGI and global food prices is complex, as the world markets are affected by several factors.

The International Crisis group (ICG) stated that the BSGI was expected to have limited effect on the global food prices (ICG, 2022). The views of FAO, UNCTAD and WTO stands in contrast to this as they have suggested that the BSGI contributed to the lowering of global food prices (FAO, 2023c; UNCTAD, 2022; WTO, 2023b). The findings of this thesis are that there is not possible to claim a direct link between the lowering of food prices by the BSGI. However, the initiative is considered to have lessened the pressure in international markets by allowing greater amounts of food commodities to reach world markets, leading to a higher degree of stability. Seeing this in relation to other factors, such as favourable weather, added to lowering of food prices. The trends in Ukrainian exports were considered more alarming in

the beginning of the conflict as the war caused a shock to food markets. The shock aspect of the R-U case is seen in relation to elevation of food prices and instability in the weeks and months following the invasion, see Chapter 4.4. Over the course of the conflict, global supply chains and markets have largely adapted (FEWS, 2023; WB, 2023b).

As the BSGI progressed, the connected "stories" or narratives of the initiative have varied. For the UN, with Secretary-General Guterres at the forefront, the initiative was considered a breakthrough in the diplomatic matter that the two warring countries, together with the UN and Turkey reached an agreement that lasted for around a year. The statements put forward by Guterres and Beasley, see Chapter 5.1, highlighted the importance of the BSGI to address acute food insecurity in vulnerable populations. The provision of food from the WFP to vulnerable countries reached 4.8 million MT of food in 2022. Out of this, 642,000 MT were sourced from Ukraine, making it the biggest contributor measured in quantity (WFP, 2022h; WFP, 2023d). During the year of the BSGI, the WFP sourced 725,000 MT for their operations. The shipments went to countries such as Afghanistan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Yemen and Somalia. With the statements by UN-Secretary-General, the WFP-Director and in the UNCTAD report, the narrative of securing food security for the world's most hungry were reinforced through the BSGI.

However, as the provisional numbers from the JCC (2023a) illustrated, did only around 2.5% of the exports in the BSGI go to low-income countries. This stands in contrast to the narrative presented by the UN, WFP and UNCTAD whom considered the BSGI as crucial for the worlds hungry. An article published by CNN, quoted USAID director, Samantha Power saying that "*any attempt to undermine the agreement is an attack on hungry families around the world whose lives and livelihoods are dependent on this initiative*" (Jongerden & Vicol, 2022; Kottasová, 2022). Similarly, CNN also quoted the US Embassy in Kyiv statement "*the world will be watching for continued implementation of this agreement to feed people around the world with millions of tons of trapped Ukrainian grain*" (Jongerden & Vicol, 2022; Picheta & Cotovio, 2022).

Oxfam food expert, Hanna Saarinen, stated that the BSGI had played part in calming the skyrocketing food prices, however, it was not the cure for world hunger (Saarinen, 2023). She further urged the need to rethink the ways in which the world's hungry are fed. Food insecurity is not solved by growing crops in a few limited breadbaskets of the world, reliance

is better built by diversifying production and investing in small-scale farmers in poorer countries where food production is needed (Saarinen, 2023). Similar critiques were raised by Jongerden and Vicol (2022), who pointed to how these stakeholders and the media have presented the BSGI as being overwhelmingly about addressing the food crisis, famine and global food insecurity. To summarize this chapter on the BSGI, have the narratives and motives for the initiative been presented differently. For some actors, the underlining of the BSGI as "feeding the world" is evident. However, on closer inspection, the initiative has clear commercial and mercantile features which has operated in the "normal" global markets for food and agricultural products. That does not equal into the initiative being negative, but its direct contribution to world food security can be debated.

5.7 Summary and concluding comments

Chapter 5 addressed research question two, focusing on the launch of the BSGI. I first argue that the BSGI was a result of governing processes where economic and political interactions, between actors such as Ukraine, Russia, Turkey and the UN resulted in a collective agreement meant to secure their respective interests in different ways (Candel, 2014). For Ukraine, were the economic incentives for exporting their record-high grain harvest from the previous year and opening up their Black Sea ports important. The same can be applied to Russia, as they also hold economic interests regarding their agricultural products and fertilizer exports. Russia threatened to suspend the initiative several times, arguing that their interests were not met. I argue that Russia has used the initiative politically to "protect" their own interests and try to lessen some of the sanctions imposed on them. Turkey has a geographical position, as well as a political position towards Russia that make them a key actor for the functioning of the initiative. This led them to a form of negotiator role in the BSGI as well as being a transit area for inspections. As for the UN, I argue that their main objective has been to lessen the pressure on the world's vulnerable populations and stabilize international food prices.

Over the course of the initiative, the negotiation rounds and the views of international stakeholders showed to varying degree of cooperation. As the initiative progressed, increasing attention were given to the provisional numbers of the initiative and how most of the shipments went to high- and upper-middle countries. This has challenged the narrative of the BSGI as "feeding the world". However, with almost 33 million MT of commodities on the markets, the findings of this thesis show that the BSGI contributed to lowering the pressure in international markets and stabilizing food prices to pre-war levels (Bryant, 2023; UNCTAD,

2022; WFP, 2023e; WB, 2022b; WTO, 2023b). The contributions of the BSGI are not considered independently from other factors, but rather in connection to strong harvests of other producing countries and market adaptions (WFP, 2023e; WB, 2023b).

6 Weaponization and Politicization of food security

> "It looks like we have options after the agreement (BSGI), but it does not go as quickly, or are not as effective, and the constant fear of bombing is there. But now, unfortunately food is starting to become a real weapon from both sides." – Iselin Løvslett Danbolt, UN-Association of Norway. 5 October 2023. My own translation.

In this chapter, I am going to examine research question three which explores how food and food supplies have been weaponized and politicized during the R-U war. Furthermore, I link this to what the R-U war can tell us about the positioning of food security in an on-going conflict. This is firstly done by investigating the use of food as a weapon of war through the physical destruction of food supplies in Ukraine with the damage to grain storages, ports, infrastructure and railways. Then I discuss the politicization of food security in the R-U war, which is linked to using food and food security rhetorically and politically to gain support or weaken your opponent.

The launch of the Solidarity Lanes is put forward to examine the role of solidarity and arisen alternatives that has emerged during the conflict. Then the contrasting stories of the BSGI ships Razoni and Brave Commander illustrate some of the existing challenges related to the positioning of food security in a war. The chapter concludes with a discussion on renewed attention to food security by the R-U war.

6.1 Physical destruction and weaponization of food supplies

Food wars encompass the deliberate use of food or hunger as a weapon of war where conflict induced food shortage occur as result of reduction in food production or market availability (Messer & Cohen, 2023, p. 289). The detriment of farmland and crops is considered one of the oldest forms of food as a weapon of war (Lee et al. 2003). This can further lead to severe disruptions in value chains (Holleman et al. 2017, p. 27; Lee et al. 2003). According to Center for Strategic & International Studies (2022), Russia has been targeting key agricultural infrastructure across Ukraine. The attacks have been directed at grain silos, railways, food warehouses and ports. In the months after the invasion, Ukraine was shipping its exports via rail, road and river routes in an attempt to substitute for reduced port activity (Rzheutska, 2023; Sowell et al. 2023). One of Europe's largest food storage facilities, located 19 kilometres from Kyiv, were attacked 12 March 2022. The mayor of Brovary stated that the

attacks were no accident with the entire warehouse and 50,000 tons of food being destroyed together with attacks on every food store in the city (Brown, 2022). The attacks occurred at the same time Russia's 40-mile-long convoy was redeployed towards Kyiv, after being stalled for a week. This suggests that the attack on the Brovary food warehouse was a part of an attempt to cut of Kyiv's access to vital food storage as Russian forces tried to seize the city (Brown, 2022). Satellite imagery from 15 March 2022, the facility's two large warehouses suffered catastrophic damage, with a partially collapsed roof and smoke rising from smouldering fires. No substantial damage was observed in the surrounding areas, suggesting that the warehouse was targeted intentionally. The same strategy was seen in the attacks on the port city of Mariupol, where citizens were forced to collect rainwater and ration food supplies during the months-long siege (Brown, 2022).

Ukraine's key transportation infrastructure which is vital for agricultural commodities, humanitarian aid, lifesaving supplies and evacuations have been systematically destroyed in Russian attacks (Welsh et al. 2022). Ukrainian port cities were targeted early in the conflict, and in addition to this, the railway infrastructure and the power stations which keep the trains running were heavily hit as well. The invasion led to Ukrainian forces destroying bridges within their own country to prevent Russian troops in supplying weapons and to advance on target cities (Welsh et al. 2022).

The Chuguyevsky Railway Bridge is one example of a so called "lifeline" which have been destroyed since the war began. Whether it was Russian or Ukrainian troops who destroyed the bridge is unclear. The bridge is located 37 kilometres from Khrakiv, the second-largest city of Ukraine. The railway bridge is an important transport route in one of the most agriculturally and industrially productive regions of Ukraine (Welsh et al. 2022). The Kharkiv Oblast is the largest regional producer of wheat in the country, and it accounts for 8% of domestic production. The transportation infrastructure in this region is crucial for moving grain supplies within the country and towards port cities. Damage to the bridge Chuguyevsky completely cuts off rail access to this location in both directions, which further limits Ukrainian farmers' abilities to transport their goods across the country or for cross-border exports (Welsh et al. 2022). The Ukrainian Ministry of Defence has also claimed that Russian forces have attacked grain silos and stolen around 400,000-500,000 MT of grain from occupied regions to increase Russian competitive advantage in the export market (Petrequin, 2022; Welsh et al. 2022).

The attacks on Ukrainian food storages are arguably a deliberate use of food as a weapon of war, supporting the concept of a food-wars where the destruction can lead to food shortage at the local scale (Messer & Cohen, 2023). By targeting Ukrainian farmland and crops, especially in the warring areas, food supplies and productive capacities have been destroyed (Cohen & Pinstrup-Andersen, 1999; Welsh et al. 2022). The empirical evidence aligns with the theoretical attributes of food supply being of strategic economic importance for armed groups, resulting in plundering of food storage and looting of civilian households and markets (Kemmerling et al. 2022; Petrequin, 2022; Welsh et al. 2022). After the Russian suspension of the BSGI in July 2023, the attacks on port cities have intensified as Russia warned that they would treat grain ships as military targets. The Black Sea port Odesa and Mykolayiv were heavily hit by air strikes in the days following Russia's suspension of the deal (Arhirova, 2023; Pruchnicka, 2023). Ukraine answered by announcing that they also would treat Russian vessels as targets. The diplomatic and political sphere has been working hard to find solutions to keep the parts of the maritime corridors open. This has been done by navigating the shorelines of Romania and Bulgaria, while armed forces keep Russian naval vessels under control (Olearchyk et al. 2023). The wish to keep Ukrainian commodities out on the world markets were underlined early in the conflict. This brings me to the next part, which examine the EU Solidarity Lanes.

6.1.1 The solidarity lanes and EU export restrictions

Ukraine has alternative export routes for its grain than through the Black Sea ports, but these involve significantly higher transportation costs. In May of 2022, the European Commission launched the "Solidarity Lanes Action plan" to establish alternative logistics routes via rail, road and inland waterways. This has been financially backed by the European Investment Bank, the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development which has invested 1 billion euros to ensure a lifeline for the Ukrainian economy as well as strengthen global food security (European Commission, 2023).

> "On 24 May 2022, the council adopted a regulation allowing for temporary trade liberalization and other trade concessions with regard to certain Ukrainian products." European Council, 2023b.

The implementation of temporary liberalization is considered a short-term solution to the war-induced challenges for Ukraine's exports. Losses in the agrarian sector, combined with the

destruction of infrastructure, roads, bridges and ports can affect the inland possibilities of production and distribution of food, potentially weaking national and local food security (Tusiime et al. 2013). These obliterations can impact food security and vulnerability for other countries far from the supply chains. The immediate stop in exports from the Black Sea ports, discussed in Chapter 4.3 contemplated some of these challenges. Furthermore, the concept of food paths, refers to the path from production to consumption. The longer the food path, the more vulnerable are food to become weapons of war (Lee et al. 2003). As established earlier in this thesis, exports Ukraine a significant share of their grain and vegetable oil production, making the food paths longer. This can increase the possibility of food weapons, either through plundering (Kemmerling et al. 2022; Petrequin, 2022) or through physical attacks on production and infrastructure (Welsh et al. 2022) which provide foods destined for international markets.

Over the course of the conflict, the solidarity lanes have faced increasing opposition from European countries. This has been a result of the commodities "falling off" into the markets of neighbouring countries where the commodities have been transported through. In May of 2023, the EU stopped import on products such as corn, and sunflower oil to the five neighbouring countries of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria (Matuszak et al. 2023). This was done as an answer to greater challenges for the local farmers in these countries as the commodities from Ukraine went into their local markets, putting increased struggle on farmers (Gjengedal, 2023). The EU decided to repeal the import restrictions on the commodities from Ukraine in the middle of September 2023 as they consider the market-impacts to have gone down, but Poland, Hungary and Slovakia refused to implement the EU-decision.

Hungary had the toughest action in response to the lifting of the restrictions with a unilateral ban on the four cereals which had been subject to the EU restrictions. In addition to this, Hungary also implemented restrictions on 25 other categories of agricultural products, including meat, eggs, honey, flour, bread and vegetables. The Hungarian Agriculture Ministry stated that the cheap Ukrainian imports "flooded" the markets of the member states and the neighbouring countries to Ukraine (Matuszak et al. 2023). Slovakia and Poland chose to maintain the embargo on the same products which had been subject to the EU restrictions until the end of the year, December 2023. As a result of this, Ukraine notified that they would take legal measures to stop Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia's own import bans (NRK, 2023).

Later in October 2023, Ukraine reached license agreements with Poland and Slovakia, which will replace the import bans of Ukrainian commodities. Ukraine withdrew the appeal to the WTO. In sum, we see that the EU wants to show solidarity with Ukraine in a time of war by providing substitutions for their exports. Simultaneously, the political and economic "solidarity" has created tensions between members of the union when their own interests and local farmers were weakened in competition with the solidarity lanes. With the global supply chains travelling long distances from production to consumption (Dicken, 2006), these tensions can lead to unintended impacts on food security. This brings me to the next chapter which examine food security governance in light of the BSGI and what two contrasting "stories" from the initiative means for food security.

6.1.2 Politics, allies and solidarity

The analytical chapter on politicization and food governance introduced theories with attention to political and governmental processes in relation to food security. These processes are shaped by social, economic and political aspects of interactions between the public and/or private entities, aiming for collective goals (Candel, 2014, p. 586). To explore this concept further, I consider the BSGI as a form of food security governance, impacted by social, economic, rhetorical and political interactions. These interactions take place both within and outside of the food systems. In the following chapter, the departure of the two ships, Razoni and MV Brave Commander is investigated as they represent contrasting stories of the BSGI and what the initiative have contributed to in relation to food security.

6.1.2.1 Razoni

On 1 August 2022, the JCC authorized and sent of the first ship, the Razoni from the port of Odesa (OCHA, 2022a). To secure a safe passage for the ships, the specific coordinates and restrictions had been communicated in accordance with international navigation procedures. The JCC further requested all its participants to inform the respective military and other relevant authorities to ensure the safe passage of the vessel. The Razoni which were destined for Lebanon with 26,000 tons of corn encountered challenges along the way. As outlined in Chapter 4.6.2, is Lebanon experiencing an economic crisis which has contributed to more food insecurity (Reuters, 2022). Nonetheless, the original buyer in Lebanon reportedly refused delivery. According to Ukrainian officials, the shipment's five-month delay caused by the invasion, prompted the Lebanese buyer to cancel the deal once the ship was already at sea (Daily Sabah, 2022). Therefore, the ship first docked up in Turkey. When the ship was set to

sail again, the transponder was turned off, making the location of the ship unknown. The ship went dark on the radar before it was spotted on satellite images in the Syrian port city of Tartus where Russia has its own naval base (Gambrell, 2022; Le Monde, 2022; Radio Free Europe, 2022).

Russia is an important ally to Syrian president Bashar-al-Assad and in June of 2022, Damascus recognized the independence declarations of Luhansk and Donetsk in eastern Ukraine where Russia-backed separatists have controlled land since 2014. Reuters published imagery from Planet Labs PBC showing the Razoni at Tartus, with a shipping source claiming at least some of the cargo being unloaded there (Reuters, 2022). The Razoni was closely monitored on its journey and the changes in direction attracted even more international attention to the ship. The Razoni could be identified in the satellite images by its colour, length and width, as well as four large whine cranes on its deck. The ship was located right next to the port of Tartus grain silos, which supply wheat to the nation (Le Monde, 2022).

> "It seems in the end the first corn from Ukraine went to Syria, a strong ally of Russia."
> – Yörük Isjik, a geopolitical and maritime analyst based in Istanbul (Le Monde, 2022).

Trading food and grain with Syria does not contravene western sanctions imposed on the Damascus regime over the country's long-running civil war. Syria being closely allied with Russia and then the ship appearing in Tartus gathered attention, especially due to the ship being the first to leave in the BSGI. When the UN JCC was asked about the Razoni, officials stated that after the outbound vessel's was cleared at inspection in Istanbul, the JCC ceases monitoring of the ships (Euronews, 2022). Ukraine previously accused Syria of importing at least 150,000 tons of grain that was plundered from Ukrainian warehouses after the Russian invasion. Russian officials have denied these claims. According to data obtained from the JCC (2023b), the corn carried on the Razoni ended up in Turkey and Egypt. As discussed in the chapter on supply gaps were Egypt put forward as one of the countries with high wheat-dependency from Ukraine (Abdalla et al. 2023; Lin et al. 2023). Bearing in mind that the BSGI is considered as a form of food security governance, the story of the Razoni illustrates how economic interactions do not consider the final destination of the food and which actors that are involved. This can be linked back to essential understandings of the initiative and how different stakeholders have presented the BSGI differently.

> "This (the BSGI) was implemented within a relatively normal commercial and mercantile framework for the shipping operations. There were ordinary commercial and mercantile mechanisms that were supposed to take care of the shipping of goods to and from these ports. (…) This took place in the normal global market for transport of food and agricultural products." – Informant Audun Halvorsen. Executive director, security and contingency planning, Norwegian Shipping Association. 23 October 2023. My own translation.

As informant Halvorsen stated, which is working in international shipping, is the BSGI considered as a commercial and mercantile initiative, operating in the normal global market for transport of food and agricultural products. Understanding the BSGI as a commercial initiative, therefore explain the destinations as results of economic mechanisms of trade. Such trade mechanisms do not consider allies, politics and solidarity. This view of the BSGI stands in contrast to the "trade hope" and "feeding the world's hungry", presented by the WTO, UNCTAD and UN earlier. However, it is worth mentioning that this is dependent on the actors behind the specific shipments, meaning that two things can be true at the same time. This brings me to the Brave Commander.

6.1.2.2 Brave Commander

The departure of the Brave Commander stands in contrast to the Razoni. This ship was the first delivery of humanitarian food assistance under the BSGI and it marked an important step towards reintegrating Ukrainian food to countries worst affected by the global food crisis (OCHA, 2022b). The UN-charted vessel, Brave Commander, arrived at Pivdennyi, collected wheat and sailed towards the Horn of Africa where WFP is operating. WFP purchased wheat for its operations in the Horn of Africa, where the food security situation is dire due to four consecutive failed rainy seasons and following droughts.

> "Chartered vessel heading towards Horn of Africa marks a milestone as the World Food Programme fights famine amid a global food crisis." – WFP, 2022f.

The grain ships out of Ukraine contributed positively to prevention of the global food crisis from spiralling even further (WFP, 2022f). The supplement from the BSGI eased global supply chain disruptions through the resumption of maritime traffic out of Ukraine. The ship was loaded with 23,000 metric tons of Ukrainian grain destined for Ethiopia (Al Jazeera,

2022). After two weeks, the ship docked in Djibouti to provide 1.5 million people in neighbouring Ethiopia with food aid for a month (Houreld, 2022; WFP, 2022f). Before the war, WFP sourced three-quarters of its food aid from Ukraine and Russia for their operations around the world. Ukraine was the number one supplier of commodities for WFP prior to the R-U war, and the WFP purchased 880,000 MT in 2021, making four hundred million people across the world, fed by farmers of Ukraine (WFP, 2022f).

With fears of ripple effects of the R-U conflict, getting the commodities out from the breadbasket at a time of record global hunger were underscored. WFP has stated that there was a need to see increased shipments coming from Ukraine and Russia, as well as other forms of support to the Horn of Africa (Byaruhanga, 2022; WFP, 2022f). The basis of WFP's operations sees food as a right and necessity for survival. Additionally, the BSGI showcased how the food supply is dependent on the market and commodity flows, which ultimately are governed through trade mechanisms. As outlined in the earlier Chapter 4.7, is the WFP facing challenges regarding funding gaps and cuts, which makes the international food security situation even more precure. WFP officials hoped that the successful voyage of the Brave Commander would inspire private companies to begin shipping grain from Ukraine to Eastern Africa. This underlines the earlier point on humanitarian operations happening within the normal global food market, see Chapter 4.7. In sum, are these markets exposed to vulnerabilities and shocks that can weaken food security across different scales.

6.2 The rhetorical use of food and food security

In this chapter I elaborate on the rhetorical use of food security as a form of rhetorical weapon of war. This is done by exploring two official statements put forward by the respective foreign affair offices. This is done to examine rhetorical and political use of food security by Russia and Ukraine in this war. By examining this, I further underline the understandings of food as a human right, which should not be used as any form of weapon, either physically, politically or rhetorically by any parties to war.

The statement from Ukraine was presented through a speech to the security council, whilst the Russian document was Russia's official statement on the suspension of the BSGI that was published on their government website. The analysis is built on the three rhetorical appeals ethos, pathos and logos that make up tools for persuasion (Houser, 2020). Each of these are infused by and shaped with power, relations and ideologies. The two chosen statements fall

under a study of political speech and writing, which is known as deliberate or political rhetoric (Houser, 2020). Through an investigation of the statements, the aim is to inform the discussions on the positioning of food security in an on-going conflict.

6.2.1 Russian statement

Kairos, which refers to the timing of the delivery, was 17 July 2023, the day of the Russian suspension of the BSGI. In the Russian statement, the ethos which focuses on the person or group that is delivering the message, is considered to strengthen the credibility, as the text was published as the official statement from the Russian Foreign affairs office. There were no listed authors of the document, which is argued to be a weakness as there is limited ability to regard the writer's qualities and position. At the same time, is this the official foreign affairs government body and the text is considered of high credibility of the views of the Russian stances on international relations and the BSGI suspension. Regarding the logos part of the statement, referencing the rationality and "facts", the statement uses several examples throughout the text to get their points across. I have attempted to fact-check the examples which are presented in the statement and their credibility.

> "The Black Sea Initiative was launched just a week after it was signed. A maritime humanitarian corridor was outlined quickly (…). On 1 August 2022, the first Razoni dry ship left Odessa, which clearly confirmed Russia's good-faith and responsible approach to fulfilling its duties as a party to the agreement." – Russian Foreign Ministry, 17 July 2023.

The Razoni ship and its departure 1 August 2022 are well documented, but the further proceeding after departure is unclear, as presented in the previous Chapter 6.1.2.1. The quote also shows to Russia describing their actions as having "good-faith" and "responsible approach" to the BSGI. However, as Russia decided to suspend the BSGI, this "good faith" and "responsible approach" is no longer prominent. A central argument for Russia against the West, the EU and the UN is that the countries in the Global South did not receive a big proportion of the exports in the BSGI.

> "The facts and figures speak for themselves. During the time of the Black Sea Initiative was in force, a total of 32.8 million tons of cargo were exported, of which more than 70% (26.3 million tons) was shopped to countries with high and higher than

> average income, including the EU. The low-income countries, notably Ethiopia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Sudan, Yemen and Somalia, received less than 3%, or 922,092 tons." – Russian Foreign Ministry, 17 July 2023.

According to the data presented by the JCC itself, the numbers presented by Russia are correct concerning the receivers of the cargo being mainly high-income or upper-middle income countries. The argument put forward by the Russian Federation is therefore correct. A way to strengthen the logos and trustworthiness of text is to acknowledge the arguments made against you. Counter arguments to the Russian claims are for example concerned with the rising food prices and instability in markets which happened because of the illegal occupation of Ukrainian territory. Russia did not mention the effects of their suspension of the world market prices on the commodities which have been transported through the BSGI. Another argument presented in the Russian statement is that the humanitarian initiative is a part of commercialization where the western actors are the ones who profit the most from it.

> "A significant portion of Ukrainian arable land (over 17 million hectares) is owned by Western corporations such as Cargill, DuPont and Monsanto. They brought up Ukrainian land after Kiev lifted a 20-year moratorium on land sales at the request of the IMF and became the main beneficiaries of the Ukrainian grain exports." – Russian Foreign Ministry, 17 July 2023.

The discussion around Ukrainian land ownership is comprehensive. A report published by the Oakland Institute proposes that oligarchs and financial interests are expanding control over Ukraine's agricultural land with help and financing from Western financial institutions (Mousseau & Devillers, 2023). According to the report, over 28% of Ukraine's arable land is controlled by oligarchs, corrupt individuals and large agribusinesses (Mousseau & Devillers, 2023, p. 4). It is of great importance for Russia to underscore the Western agricultural expansion and significant amounts of commodities to high-income countries through the BSGI. Civil society, academics and farmers are working against this development in Ukraine, and this discussion goes beyond the scope of this thesis. The argument put forward by Russia is nevertheless worth mentioning as this has been a central part of the Russian critique of the BSGI. The next textual instruments I will explore is the way of argumentation and use of language. If we consider the text in its eternity, the tone is strict and with little or no room for discussion. The text uses "we" throughout the whole statement and due to the source of the

statement, the “we” is an aligned position in the Russian foreign ministry affair offices. Furthermore, the statement contains expressive language and wording.

> “A year later now, progress on implementing these agreements has been disappointing. (…) The facts and figures speak for themselves. (…) We believe it’s time for Kiev’s European allies, who can export Ukrainian food through land corridors, to show their purported solidarity.” – Russian Foreign Ministry, 17 July 2023.

In reference to the “purported solidarity”, the European Solidarity lanes is a direct counterargument to the Russian statement as Europe has been showing solidarity with Ukraine during the conflict by opening trade routes, see Chapter 6.1.1. On the other hand, as discussed earlier, have the solidarity faced challenges when neighbouring countries experienced local and national disadvantages. The same was seen in the initial period after the conflict broke out, when India promised wheat for world markets, before going back on this and implementing export bans. This shows that the solidarity is there, but only to a certain degree, as each country is the most concerned about national interests when challenges occur.

The use of “Kiev” instead of Kyiv, when referencing the Ukrainian capital is also a demonstration of power from the Russians. The “Kiev” originates from the Russian language and after a time where Ukraine was under Russian and Soviet control. Kyiv on the other hand, is derived from the Ukrainian language. The use of “Kiev” is highly political, and the reference is mainly used in relation to Western and European allies for Ukraine. They address “Kiev” rather than Ukraine. This implies that “Kiev” is considered an individual opponent to Russia in their war. By presenting “Kiev” as an independent actor, rather than as a part of a united Ukraine, I also consider this as an attempt to assert a type of division within Ukraine and to steer the focus away from the aggression from Russia on the Ukrainian territory.

As the statement is produced and published by political authorities, the content is heavily impacted by the political processes surrounding the conflict. The statement tries to weaken the position of Ukraine, or “Kiev” and the West. This is part of the greater tension between the Russian Federation and the West which spans back to history. The eastern NATO expansion, especially with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania who are former part of the Soviet Union, are principally apprehensive for Russia. The same applies to Ukraine becoming a member of the

alliance. These developments have led Russia to a narrative in the R-U war where the West and the "Kiev" elite is considered the enemy to Russia. The statement bears the imprint of this which further impacts the discussion regarding the BSGI. To summarize the Russian rhetorical analysis, is food security in this conflict placed at the intersection of politics, trade and economics. Russia portray the BSGI as something only Western countries have benefitted from, whereas themselves only have "good faith" and a "responsible approach". Furthermore, Russia also implies that there are Western companies which are the main benefactors of the BSGI with their landownership in Ukraine. However, with food commodities being the transported goods in the BSGI, food supplies have increasingly become political leverage used to strengthen their own position in the war and gather support. This element will be elaborated in Chapter 6.3 and 6.3.1, regarding the political use of food and food security.

6.2.2 Ukraine statement

The kairos of the document is on the same day as the Russian statement, 17 July 2023. The ethos in the Ukrainian statement is strong as there is a representative of the Ukrainian foreign affairs which delivered the statement in front of the Security council. The statement was presented by the minister of foreign affairs, Dmytro Kuleba, which is an educated lawyer, diplomat and politician. This strengthen the ethos of the statement as Kuleba is the highest representative, besides the president, when it comes to Ukraine and its foreign affairs. Even though the statement was delivered orally, I have chosen to do the analysis on the written speech for a better comparison to the Russian statement. The Ukrainian statement started by an expressive story of the MH17 flight crash and the history of Russian aggression against Ukraine.

> "Today marks nine years since Russia shot down the civilian airliner MH17 over Ukraine, killing all 298 people on board. Ukraine mourns the victims of this crime." – Dmytro Kuleba, Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 17 July 2023.

The statement starts with a short story about Russian aggressions, but also their lack of cooperative attitude. This can be connected to the emotional appeal, pathos, which concentrates on the audience of the speech. By presenting the story of the MH17 and the connected mourning of the victims of the crash, the speaker connects to the emotions of the audience. After the initial part about the MH17 and the on-going war, Kuleba moves on to the BSGI and how Russia is and has been applying a strategy to "kill, lie and deny".

> "(…) Russia has been systematically obstructing the Initiative's normal functioning. Russia is deliberately decreasing the number of inspections in the Joint Coordination Center in Istanbul, limiting the capacity to 1-2 vessels per day. On 29 April 2023, Russia fully blocked the functioning of Ukraine's Pivdenny seaport. The last grain vessel departed the port of Odesa 16 July 2023. As of now, Russia has fully blocked the functioning of the Black Sea Grain Initiative without announcing its termination." – Dmytro Kuleba, Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 17 July 2023.

The slowness in inspections were reported as early as in October of 2022, mentioned in Chapter 5 regarding the BSGI. The highest number of inspections were reported in September of 2022. After March of 2023, the total amount of inspections started to decrease significantly. Kuleba also pointed to how the blocking of their ports and mis-cooperation from Moscow are happening at the same time as Russia is increasing its exports of its own grain, including the grain from temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. To examine the argument by Kuleba, I investigated Russian grain exports. In the agricultural year of 2022-2023, Russian grain exports hit a record of 60 million MT, citing the Russian Minister of Agriculture (Xinhua, 2023). The rise in Russian grain exports were also put forward by Informant Danbolt (Danbolt, 5 October 2023).

The biggest importers of Russian grain were Egypt, Turkey and Algeria (Reuters, 2023b). Moreover, Kuleba highlighted how the grain prices around the world immediately dropped following the launch of the initiative last year. Supported by data from FAO and Trading Economics, see Chapter 4.4, the food prices were more stabilized following the implementation of the BSGI. These mechanisms cannot be explained independently from other factors such as seasonal factors and solid harvest, but the BSGI is a contributor.

The next textual element which was deliberated was language. Kuleba use personal pronouns such as "I", "me", "we" and "our" throughout the speech. This way of speech makes the statement more personal, which can contribute to strengthen the pathos. In contrast, the Russian statement focused on the Russian state and interests. The use of strong language is evident when talking about the Russian actions against Ukraine and the world.

> "The second one is Russia killing the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Russia is blackmailing the world. (…) The immediate outcome of Russia pulling out of the deal now will be that prices will again go up. Hurting those most vulnerable, primarily in Asia and Africa. Russia must stop playing hunger games with people around the world." – Dmytro Kuleba, Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 17 July 2023.

Firstly, the use of "killing the initiative", refers to the aggressive nature of Russia's actions against Ukraine and the on-going war. By using characteristics this way, the aim is to portray Russia as brutal and inconsiderate in all their affairs. The use of "hunger games" delivers a strong message, as its portraits Russia "playing" with the food reserves for the world, as well as causing price surges due to their withdrawal from the agreement. Furthermore, he encourages Russia to keep politics out of global food security. By implying that Russia is playing "hunger games", I would argue that Russia's prominent position, or agri-power for food commodities, is portrayed by Ukraine as a weaponization of food (Hillman, 1978). Kuleba also pointed to the most vulnerable populations, primarily in Africa and Asia, which strengthens the notion of food power or agri-power where food supplies are used as political leverage towards developed and developing countries. Moving forward the minister also pointed to a weakening of President Putin and his position.

> "Russia is losing its illegal war against Ukraine. Putin's regime is getting weaker by the day, and the latest Wagner mutiny has demonstrated it not only to the whole world but also to the Russians themselves. (…) For when the Kremlin's chief liar realizes no one believes his lies any longer, we will be forced to call a halt to the war." – Dmytro Kuleba, Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 17 July 2023.

The minister underscored the lies of the Russian political regime and that the support and trust is declining. To weaken the positioning and credibility of the Russian president, Kuleba showed to internal tensions in Russia that played out when the Wagner mutiny happened. The credibility of Russia has been under increasing pressure over the course of the conflict. In sum, is the focus of the Ukrainian statement on portraying Russia as an aggressor who do not follow the rules of international law and cooperation. Relating this to their slowness of inspections in the BSGI and their "hunger games" against the world is done to show that Russia does not "only" try to sabotage Ukraine, but also other vulnerable countries. Both rhetorical analyses show to rhetorical use of food security, either directly (Ukraine example)

or indirectly (Russia example) by the two warring countries. I argue for understanding food as a human right, which should not become a rhetorical, political or economic weapon of war by any parties in conflict. The political use of food and food security in the R-U war will be elaborated in the following chapters.

6.3 The political use of food and food security

The views of food security in the R-U conflict are complex as the many interests, actors and actions of different stakeholders contributes to the food security-conflict connection. The BSGI was a short-term solution to opening up trade routes on the Black Sea. This displayed cooperation from both nations at war in the initial parts of the deal and underscored how mutual dependence in trade can contribute to dialog even in times of war. This cooperation came as an answer to proposed food insecurity challenges caused by the R-U war. According to commercial peace theory, the mutual interdependence between states can contribute to conflict prevention (Mingst et al. 2019). Furthermore, the role of international institutions and organizations are seen as actors that promote peace in the way of increasing interdependence. The cooperation in the early stages of the BSGI strengthen these arguments as both warring nations sat down at the same negotiation table, together with other actors, mainly the UN and Turkey, and came to an agreement that lasted a little under a year.

However, when the BSGI broke down, the political use of food and food security were evident, as seen in the rhetorical analysis. On 3 August 2023, there was an all-day debate in the UN regarding conflict-induced food insecurity. During the meeting, speakers called for unity in tackling the global food insecurity challenges and several urged the Russian Federation to re-join the BSGI. Speakers condemned the actions of Russia, underscoring their tactics as weaponizing food and food security.

> "The Russian Federation's withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative confirms a policy of weaponization of food and the use of famine as bargaining chip." – Megi Fino, Deputy Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania. (UN, 2023e).

At the meeting mentioned above, the weaponization of food and food security were brought up by representatives from around 15 countries in total. Around 2/3 of these encouraged Russia to return the the BSGI and to stop using food as a weapon in war (UN, 2023e). Both through the physical attacks which includes bombing of food infrastructure, as well as the

suspension of the deal that had transported food to 45 countries. Furthermore, the politicization of food and food security became evident during the Russia-Africa top-meeting in July 2023.

6.3.1 Russian promises of grain to Africa

Political top-meetings gives insights into how food and food security are used politically, as a type of bargaining chip to gain support. On 27. – 28 July 2023, it was held a Russia-Africa top meeting in St. Petersburg. There were fewer heads of state who participated during the summit than the last meeting, which was held in 2019 (Kruse, 2023). During the summit, Russian president Putin promised free grain to six African countries (Kruse, 2023). The promises of the Russian President came just 10 days after the Russian termination of the BSGI. Russia has been criticizing the West for the destinations of the commodities in the BSGI, pointing to the low percentage which were going to southern countries. The tactic by the Russian Federation is arguable a type of food-power (Hillman, 1978). Firstly, by withdrawing from the BSGI and in that matter reduce the availability and access to Ukrainian grain products. Then, by promising free grain to African countries 10 days later, Russia "steps in" as a provider of these commodities.

The promises from Russia did not result in massive support, as Russia were the one to suspend the BSGI and bombed the Odessa ports shortly after (Arhirova, 2023). This did not create a convincing case for Russia and its contribution to food security. The informant from Panorama Nyheter, talked about the Russia-Africa top-meeting and how the support for Putin have been declining.

> "There were relatively few heads of state who participated, and I believe that is partly related to Russia breaking the agreement. (…) (During the BRICS top-meeting) His speech was not applauded in the same way, his explanations of the war were not approved. (…) Even China was a little lukewarm in its reception. I think Putin, in a way, has undermined his own position in Africa, simply because of that and saying no to the Black Sea Grain Initiative." – Jan Speed. Journalist at Panorama Nyheter, an independent news site published by NORAD. 29 September 2023. My own translation.

The way in which Speed perceives this, Russia has experienced a declining support over the course of the R-U war. Several countries in Africa have been reluctant when it comes to voting's in the UN, trying to keep a certain distance from the conflict. With fewer state leaders participating in the top-meeting (Kruse, 2023; Speed, 29 September 2023) we see how Putin tried to use food to gain political support. African leaders have been concerned with questions of food supply and price jumps caused by the R-U war (Kruse, 2023). Interestingly enough, were the wheat self-sufficient country Zimbabwe one of the countries that Putin promised free wheat.

> "We are grateful. We are not in any grain deficit at all. We are food-secure, he is just adding to what we already have." – Zimbabwean President, Emmerson Mnangagwa. (Reuters, 2023d).

As the Zimbabwean president stated, have Zimbabwe self-sufficiency in grain and is food-secure in that matter. The promises from Putin were nevertheless welcomed but may not as needed as for other African countries.

> "It has been a point for Russia to highlight how the initiative (BSGI) has not been as important for Africa as presented. Therefore, it became a little bizarre when Putin promised, for example Zimbabwe wheat, which is self-sufficient. (…) – Jan Speed. Journalist at Panorama Nyheter, an independent news site published by NORAD. 29 September 2023. My own translation.

Informant Speed characterised the promises to Zimbabwe as a little bizarre, both because of Russia's point of the BSGI not being as important for African countries before promising grain to a self-sufficient country. Based on the findings, the Russia-Africa top-meeting show an attempt from the Russian Federation to gain political support from African leaders by promising free grain, just days after the termination of the BSGI. However, it also illustrates how these processes must be considered with attention to the broader picture, for example of the Zimbabwean self-sufficiency as this impacted the response from the Zimbabwean president.

6.4 Dependency and sovereignty in food security

In this chapter, I argue for the need to challenge the existing food systems, especially relating to production, trade and dependency on staple foods. I further link this to a discussion on self-sufficiency. The food trade system is highly globalized, with supply chains running across borders and continents (Dicken, 2006). The neoliberal agenda and the free trade principles have contributed to the implementation of food into this system, resulting in uneven power dynamics where some countries, often located in the Global North, have become big producers of staple foods that are exported to the Global South (Agbebi & Virtanen, 2017; Haq, 1976). Countries in the Global South have produced "luxury" foods, which typically are sold to the North, and not as crucial for everyday consumption (Otero et al. 2013). I argue that this form of production and trade imbalance have been prominent in the R-U war. The war revealed how food dependencies can create extra vulnerability of food insecurity when faced with a shock.

> "If you talk to African political leaders, they tell you that they believe it is a lost opportunity that they must import as much of their food, instead of creating jobs and income for their own population in those value chains. (…) With some countries producing enormous volumes, and with a fundamental free trade regime as starting point, it becomes difficult for developing countries to build up their own production in competition with cheap imports of many food commodities." – Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, Norway's Minister of Development. 5 February 2023. My own translation.

Informant Tvinnereim understand the trade system as fundamentally built on free trade principles, which further has led to difficulties for developing countries to strengthen their own production as they are in fierce competition with already established actors in the world markets. The view of the informant resembles with the perspectives of food justice and food sovereignty (Huish, 2008). Linking this to the international debate on conflict-induced food insecurity, similar points were made in the UN-session on conflict induced food insecurity.

Several representatives from the Global South emphasized the need for more self-sufficiency in food. Representative of Ethiopia, Tesfaya Yilma Sabo, said that its unacceptable that African people are exposed to food shortages while the continent is endowed with land, water and manpower that should be able to feed the world. Speaking on behalf of the African

Union's agenda, he called for global solidarity and unity of purpose in support of their agenda om complete elimination of hunger and food insecurity at the African continent (UN, 2023e). The union is also working toward reduction of food imports and increasing inter-Africa trade in agriculture. Sabo further encouraged the international community, the UN and international financial institutions to support the agriculture and food production sector whilst also transforming trade practices that perpetuate food import dependencies of African countries (UN, 2023e).

Ethiopia is one of the countries which have been referenced by international stakeholders in relation to food insecurity vulnerabilities due to Ukrainian wheat dependency and how the BSGI contributed positively to the country, see Chapters 5.3.3, 5.5.2 and 6.1.2.2. In the short-term the initiative can restore exports that play an important role for these countries, but in the longer-term, there is a call for more sovereignty when it comes to both trade and production at the African continent. Several of my informants pointed to similar elements of self-sufficiency for countries in the Global South, especially related to the long-term strategies for food security.

> "Working towards greater transformation of food systems and self-sufficiency needs to be done (…). There are many challenges in many different countries, and then boosting food production, agricultural production, is the smartest thing to do, on slightly more climate-safe crops." – Iselin Løvslett Danbolt, UN-Association of Norway. 5 October 2023. My own translation.

> "In the short term, emergency assistance and humanitarian aid is very important (for food security), as the initiative (BSGI) contributes to. (…) When it comes to food security (in the longer-term) the sustainable solutions for agriculture is important. Many local communities and countries can produce food themselves, but they lack the mechanisms or opportunity to start up. I believe that investing in both climate adaptation in agriculture and sustainable solutions could help foster this development." – Cecilie Juul Stensrud, Political adviser, Foreign affairs and Defence. 1 March 2023. My own translation.

Building on the statements from the informants, I argue that their views correspond with the food sovereignty concept, which builds on a wish for national sovereignty in agriculture

(Jarosz, 2014). In the food sovereignty approach, there is a demand for people within states and within the world food system to have stronger sovereignty. This can further be linked to alternative agro-ecological models which opposes the high-input industrial agricultural models which have dominated in the last decades (Huish, 2008; Messer & Cohen, 2023). This brings me to the next section, which goes to the basis of understandings of food and how this ultimately leads to varying strategies for strengthening of food security.

6.5 Varying understandings of food

> "We need to take into account that food is a different type of product than a bicycle, or a television or an iPhone. It is, in a way, a unique commodity in the matter that we must have it to live." – Ida Rudolfsen, Senior Researcher, The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). 15 February 2023. My own translation.

Researcher Rudolfsen understand food as a unique commodity, needed for survival. Therefore, food should not be treated the same was as for example an iPhone or a bicycle. Applying the different understandings of food, either as a commodity, a human right or a weapon will present varying discussions. I argue that food tend to be considered as commodities which are sold and brought on world markets. This was also evident to some degree with the launch of the BSGI. The initiative has arguably been important for Ukraine's exports of these food commodities and resulting revenues from the exports. At the same time, were perspectives of food as a human right apparent, for example through the work of the WFP and the objectives of the UN. The R-U war demonstrate how crisis span over into trade, economics and politics of food, leaving some countries more vulnerable than others. Applying the food as a commodity, independent from other processes will therefore overlook aspects relating to vulnerability.

> "With the invasion, we have seen how extremely depended we are on the international market, but also how vulnerable we are. It is as paradox that in the future we will become even more dependent on it, to export food and for everyone to have enough food." – Ida Rudolfsen, Senior Researcher, The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). 15 February 2023. My own translation.

An interesting point from informant Rudolfsen is connected to the vulnerability of the trade system. So far in this thesis, the vulnerability aspect has been mainly connected to countries experiencing vulnerabilities to shocks. The dependency aspect is lifted in a different matter as well. The informant describes the international market as something we are dependent on and will continue to be in the future. This further creates a paradox for the future of food. I link this to Candel (2014) and the defining features of food security governance and how this has been characterized by an optimistic approach where governing is seen as a problem-solving mechanism. I consider the BSGI as a form of food security governance, where the short-term food security was strengthened through increased availability and access, as well as stabilization of food prices. In the short-term, such mechanisms can be essential for acute humanitarian aid and in times of unexpected food shocks. However, in the long-term, core food security issues of dependency, vulnerability and distribution is not solved through such mechanisms.

Food sovereignty and food justice movements are approaches that considers the local diversity and global complexity of the connections between production of food and human needs (Huish, 2008). The perspectives of several of my informants correspond with this (Danbolt, 5 October 2023; Juul, 1 March 2023; Speed, 29 September 2023; Tvinnereim, 5 March 2023). By challenging the "given" structure and organization of the world food and trade system, the countries in the south can obtain stronger positions with a reduced degree of dependence on staple foods (UN, 2023e).

6.6 A renewed attention for food security

> "The Ukraine war made it (the food security challenges) like a catalyst or magnifying glass for the challenge of food security, because it affects both short-term and long-term food security." – Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, Norway's Minister of Development, 5 February 2023. My own translation.

Informant Tvinnereim showed to how the R-U war became a sort of magnifying glass for food security challenges. She further shared that during her time as Development Minister, she had been invited to several conferences and top meetings, where the development minister had not traditionally been invited to, for example the World Economic Forum in Davos. The food security issues have always been there, but the R-U war, in her perspective, contributed

to aggravation of the problems where the global interests in the complex connections between for example food security and conflict have gathered more attention. The minister also talked about a conversation she had with Executive Director of the WFP, David Beasley, before the R-U war. He had expressed a hopelessness in regard "making the world listen" in relation to the on-going food crisis. Then the R-U war broke out, and everything went from bad to worse.

The research informant Rudolfsen also pointed to a renewed attention. She pointed to an intensification of political interest on food security. She further spoke about the media and how she had never been as much in the media as after the R-U conflict broke out. Even though the food security issues had been there all along, this war gained enormous attention, especially relating to the international and cross-border consequences. To summarize, I argue that the R-U conflict created a momentum for renewed attention for food security issues. It remains to see if this attention will last and lead to more long-term strategies for reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience against future shocks.

In the analytical framework, Breisinger et al. (2015) underscored how food security issues tended to be "forgotten" in the "normal situations of global political, economic and social challenges, but when crisis hit, the attention was renewed. Building on the experiences of the informants as well as the overall process on working on this thesis, I support this argument. During the work of this thesis, there have been significant amounts of information regarding how the R-U war has impacted food security, both for Ukraine and for other countries, such as those in the Global South. With this thesis, I have attempted to bridge the gap between research on food security and conflict, with emphasis on impacts on countries far from the frontlines of the war.

6.7 Summary and concluding comments

Chapter 6 addressed research question three which is concerned with weaponization and politicization processes of food security in the R-U war. I started the chapter with examining food and food supplies as physical weapons of war. In the R-U war, this has entailed destruction of grain storages infrastructure, railways and port attacks. The findings of this thesis show to a weaponization process through deliberate use of food and food security as weapons of war (Cohen & Pinstrup-Andersen, 1999; Hillman, 1978; Kemmerling et al. 2022; Lee et al. 2003). With the destruction of transportation systems for Ukrainian grains, I discussed the Solidarity Lanes as one of the alternatives for transportation of food

commodities. The Solidarity Lanes illustrates complexity of social, economic and political interactions and how these shape food security challenges. Furthermore, the BSGI can be seen as a form of food security governance, were the departure of the Razoni and Brave Commander illustrates contrasting stories of the BSGI. The two vessels' journeys in the BSGI illustrates how the social, economic and political aspects have propagated the BSGI. The two ships also illustrate the difficulty of placing food security in conflict as one of the ships were characterized by political alliances and speculation relating to the destination of the Ukrainian corn. On the other end of the spectrum is the Brave Commander which was considered a humanitarian victory for drought affected countries.

Examining the rhetorical use of food security from Russia and Ukraine added to the discussion on food security-conflict as the warring countries each tried to strengthen their own position and weaken the opponent. This was for example done with links to food security, Western interests, hunger games and mis-cooperation. The R-U case illustrates how food security spanned into political and rhetorical processes used to gain support. This further brings me to the Russian promises of free grain to African countries and how food supplies were used strategically during the Russia-Africa top meeting shortly after the termination of the BSGI. The chapter went on to discussions of dependency and vulnerability (Otero et al. 2013) both in regard to food production and food trade (Agbebi & Virtanen, 2017; Haq, 1976). My findings suggest the need to consider the world food production and trade system to strengthen resilience and lessen the dependency and unevenness where countries in the Global South are more vulnerable to food insecurity. Lastly, I find that the R-U war worked like magnifying glass for food security challenges, which was there prior to the R-U war, but gathered increased and renewed attention following the conflict outbreak.

7 Conclusion

In this thesis I have shed light on impacts of the R-U war on food security, using a scalar approach where different scales, such as the local, national and international have been examined. The object of this thesis was to examine how a conflict between Ukraine and Russia, are affecting vulnerable countries in the Global South. I have studied the role of international stakeholders and how they engage in food security issues related to conflict. The aim was to contribute to research on the connection between food security and conflict, with emphasis on the connection *from* conflict *to* food security and what we can learn from the R-U example. Hence, in doing so, I had three research questions which explored food security impacts on different scales and from different angles. I find that the connection between food security and conflict is impacted by interactions across different scales. These interactions are understood as specific actions from actors who engage in processes of economics, politics and rhetoric. Additionally, I find that the food security-conflict connection is objected to "normal" trade processes where commercial and mercantile processes influence the supply chains of food.

7.1 The R-U war outbreak and the effects on international food markets

In this thesis, I first answered research question one which examined how the R-U war outbreak affected international food markets. My findings suggest that the R-U war impacted the world markets as a type of "shock" to the food system, resulting in higher degree of instability (WFP, 2022b). Building on the work of Dicken (2006), I consider agricultural products to be part of a food economy with advanced transportation and distribution systems. My findings suggest that the war outbreak impacted the supply chain and food availability with the export stop from the Black Sea ports and the presence of military activity at Ukrainian territory. Building on this, suggest my findings that food security access was impacted by stop in Black Sea exports, which limited accessibility to Ukrainian grains in world markets between February and July 2022.

The world food security situation is part of a multiple crisis, where the world community is facing several challenges at the same time (WFP, 2023a). The price variations are therefore considered in relation to other crisis, such as the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic and a downward trend in international food security from 2017. As the thesis has showed, were the food prices already at elevated levels prior to the R-U war. However, with the R-U conflict, the food prices reached historical high peaks. The R-U can be seen as a form of

shock to the world food system, leading to an increasing degree of pressure, vulnerability and instability (FAO et al. 2013; Sassi, 2018). The findings suggest that the increasing pressure in international food markets, led countries to imposing trade restrictions in a sense of panic. Sassi (2018) understands temporary food insecurity as a result of short-term shocks that cause fluctuations in food availability and food access. To grasp the food security-conflict challenges in a more comprehensive and scalar approach, I applied this understanding together with the concepts of food insecurity and vulnerability (Hart, 2009; Sassi, 2018; WFP, 2022b). Building my analysis with a scalar approach and applying these concepts made it possible to examine R-U food security impacts through examination of empirical examples in the Global South.

My findings suggest that some countries in the Global South were more exposed due to vulnerability (Breisinger et al. 2022; Brück & d'Errico, 2019; Hart, 2009). I further link this vulnerability to food trade dependency which I understand as a result of liberalization processes of food trade (Claes et al. 2019; Greenaway & Milner, 2014; Payne & Phillips, 2010). Aligning my analysis with D'Odorioc et al. (2014) and Otero et al. (2013), I argue that countries, for example like Lebanon, experience greater vulnerability to food price shocks, such as caused by the R-U war, due to their dependency on staple foods like wheat. Their answer to this kind of shock was to look for short-term solutions in fear of food shortage, as well as underscoring their need to build more long-term resilience. BSGI and the WB wheat loan were launched as short-term solutions to handle the possibilities of food shortage in countries like Lebanon. However, in the long-term perspective, the role of food sovereignty (Breisinger et al. 2015; Huish, 2008; Mercy Crops, 2023) can strengthen resilience against shocks, which we saw in the Zimbabwe example. To summarize, show my findings that the R-U war led to increasing pressure in the international food markets, and the pressure was experienced differently depending on preconditions of vulnerability and resilience.

7.2 The role of the BSGI for food security

The second research question addressed the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the role it played for food security. Firstly, I understand the BSGI as a type of food security governance, with emphasis on short-term solutions for the export stop from Ukrainian Black Sea ports. Using the governance perspective from Candel (2014), I find that the BSGI illustrates interactions between public and private entities, which ultimately aims at the realization of collective goals. The collective goal was to open up for Ukrainian Black Sea ports again.

First, I find that the BSGI contributed to stabilizing world food prices, together with other factors such as strong harvests in producing countries and adaptions in the world markets. In this respect, it contributed to lessening pressure in international food markets (WFP, 2022b). I also find that the BSGI helped increase food access to world markets as the initiative resulted in almost 33 million MT of grains and vegetable oils being exported from Ukraine despite the war. A little over 700,000MT were bought by the WFP for their operations to countries such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Somalia. However, I consider the motives for the BSGI from two contrasting perspectives. In my document analysis of international stakeholders, I find that the initiative was presented as "feeding the worlds hungry" and being a "trade hope" (UNCTAD, 2022; UN-Secretary General, 2022a).

Additionally, I adapt a critical standpoint towards the BSGI and its role for food security. The purposed role of the initiative as "feeding the worlds hungry" is contested. This critical assessment builds on the data from the JCC, see Chapter 5.5.2 and the small proportion that went to low-income countries. Despite the positive contributions from the WFP, this proportion is relatively small compared to the remaining cargo that went to high-income and higher-middle income countries. In this respect, the initiative can be seen as a mercantile project, which has been important for the Ukrainian economy. Moreover, I find that the initiative has been objected to politicization processes (Candel, 2014; Duncan & Claeys, 2018; Feindt et al. 2021) where economic, rhetorical and political interactions between stakeholders, such as Ukraine, Russia, Turkey, the UN, WFP and WTO have emphasized contrasting narratives of what the initiative meant for food security. As the initiative was initiated in the context of an on-going political conflict, I expected this to some degree as each of the warring countries will attempt to protect and promote their respective interests.

To summarize what we can learn from the BSGI is that it succeeded in the diplomatic matter of gathering the two warring countries at the same negotiation table, resulting in an initiative that lasted almost a year. However, it also reveals challenges to this cooperation with Russian threats of suspension, slowing down of inspections and the initiative taking on political characteristics where stakeholders credited the initiative differently. This shows to existing challenges of aligning a way forward for food security, and especially with the connection to conflict.

7.3 Weaponization and politicization of food security in the R-U war

Lastly, I addressed research question three which examined how food security has been subject to weaponization and politicization processes and what this tells us about the connection between food security and conflict. I find that food and food security have been used as a weapon of war, both in form of physical destruction (Kemmerling et al. 2022; Lee et al. 2003; Messer & Cohen, 2023) and as a political bargaining chip for support (Hillman, 1978). Russian attacks have led to damage to food supplies, storage facilities and transport infrastructure, which has impacted Ukraine's abilities to produce, transport and export their products (Brown, 2022; Welsh et al. 2022). The findings suggest that Ukrainian grain exports are subject to long food paths, making it more vulnerable to become weapons of war (Lee et al. 2003). As a result of these challenges of exports, the EU Solidarity Lanes and the BSGI were launched to support Ukraine. The Solidarity Lanes faced challenges when neighbouring countries of Ukraine, like Poland, Bulgaria and Slovakia experienced increasing pressure in their own national and local markets for agricultural products.

Furthermore, food security issues have been used politically by both nations at war to promote their respective interests at the international arena, showing to a politicization processes of food security (Feindt et al. 2021). The rhetorical analysis of the respective country's foreign affair's reasons for termination or suspension of the BSGI showed the political and emotional dimensions which were expressed. From the Russian side, a central critique towards Ukraine, the UN and the West was the small proportion of the commodities in the BSGI going to low-income countries. Furthermore, Russia used their own wheat reserves as a political bargaining ship during the Russia-Africa top meeting when promising free grain to six African countries (Hillman, 1978; Moyo, 2023). For Ukraine, the statement of the termination highlighted Russia as an aggressor, consistently working against the norms and values of the international community. Each of the empirical examples of the Razoni and Brave Commander show to the opposing narratives of food security which have become evident in the R-U conflict. Lastly, I conclude that the R-U war resulted in a renewed attention to food security issues on the international arena.

Main findings

These are the main findings of this thesis:

(a) The R-U case reflects a multi-dimensional crisis and a shock to the world food system which impacted food systems across different scales, leading to a sense of panic where countries "fall back on" protecting themselves. This leads to varying degree of impacts due to countries having different vulnerabilities and resilience.

(b) The R-U war sheds light on the importance of continuous attention to food security in the long term to build resilience towards shocks.

(c) The Black Sea Grain Initiative reveals a short-term food security governing process where interactions between public and private entities were present and underscored varying objectives and motivations for the initiative.

Further research

The case of the Russia-Ukraine war illustrates empirical evidence of the linkages between food security and war. The literature on food security and conflict tends to explore local impacts of conflict on food security for populations in warring areas. The continued efforts in this category of research are important as conflicts remain across the globe. I furthermore encourage for more research on the rhetorical and political use of food security in conflicts and governing processes. This can for example be done by examining how stakeholders and state leaders use food security to gain support or weaken their opponents in conflicts. I also suggest further research on the connection *from* conflict *to* food security across different scales.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

Background and work

1. Can you tell me about your background in the field of food security and/or conflict?
2. How long have you been working on this?
3. After the conflict outbreak between Russia and Ukraine in February of 2022, has your work changed and, if so, in what ways?

Food security and conflict

4. What characterizes your organization's work in food (in)security?
5. In what ways has the work changed as a result of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine?
6. Which countries and/or regions do you consider most vulnerable in terms of food insecurity?
7. In connection with the R-U conflict, which countries other than Ukraine do you consider having experienced increased vulnerability or greater challenges as a result of the conflict and in what ways?
8. Are there any specific focus areas that have become extra important as a result of the conflict?

Black Sea Grain Initiative

9. What knowledge do you have of BSGI?
10. How does the BSGI initiative affect your work (indirectly and directly)?
11. Which partners do you have in this project?
    a. Authorities, the NGO sector? How do you collaborate? Division of work, tasks.
12. What do you think is the most important thing that BSGI can contribute with regard to food security?
13. What are the biggest challenges within/and for BSGI?
14. What do you think the initiative has contributed to so far?
15. What do you think are the biggest challenges for BSGI?

The future

16. What do you think will be important in the future when it comes to strengthening food security (in conflict situations and otherwise)?
    a. Short-term strategies
    b. Long-term strategies
17. Would you like to add something?

Appendix 2: Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project “Russia-Ukraine conflict and its impact on food security” and have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

I agree to:

- ☐ To participate in a semi-structured interview
- ☐ That the interview is audio recorded
- ☐ That information about me (name, position) is published so that I can be recognized in the assignment
- ☐ That my personal information is stored after the end of the project for the purpose of being able to use it in later research
- ☐ That my information is processed until the project is finished

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Signed by project participant, date