



Opportunities to strengthen trade policy for food and nutrition security: an analysis of two agricultural trade policy decisions

Ellen Johnson¹ · Anne Marie Thow¹ · Nicholas Nisbett²

Received: 1 April 2022 / Accepted: 14 June 2023 / Published online: 11 July 2023
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Abstract

Food insecurity and the double burden of malnutrition have emerged as prevailing global health challenges of the twenty-first century. These have been influenced by trade policy decisions, particularly in relation to agriculture, which are highly political and can have large effects on global, national, and local food systems. The aim of this study was to analyse two multilateral trade policy decisions relevant to food and nutrition security, to understand the political and power dynamics in the spaces in which these decisions are being made at the global level, in order to strengthen trade-related food systems governance to improve population nutrition. This qualitative policy analysis drew on data from a targeted literature and policy review, as well as in-depth interviews with eight individuals with expert knowledge and/or involvement in the case studies. The analysis focussed on policy processes and power dynamics, drawing on two frameworks from political science. This study found that power dynamics were shifting, such that developing countries had more of a voice at these multilateral negotiations, and decisions reflected growing resistance from developing countries who were unable to protect their most vulnerable. Contextual factors such as level of food insecurity, socio-economic situation, and historical institutional processes at the World Trade Organisation, were influential in shaping actor agendas. The study suggests that engagement with the historical context of agricultural trade policy, the global spaces in which these policy decisions take place, and creating strong coalitions will be essential to create sustainable and equitable future food systems.

Keywords Food and nutrition security · Trade policy · Agriculture · Nutrition · Power

1 Introduction

Recent external shocks on global food systems such as the Covid-19 pandemic, conflict, and climate change, have raised calls for global cooperation on trade and food and nutrition security to address growing food insecurity and hunger (HLPE, 2020b; Mbow et al., 2019; The World Bank, 2023; UN OHCHR, 2022). After decades of decline, the number of people around the world suffering from hunger is increasing. More than 820 million people lack adequate food, many of whom live in developing countries that rely on agriculture for their livelihoods (HLPE, 2020a). The 2021 United Nations (UN) Food Systems Summit expressed the

need for nutrition-focused changes in trade rules and regimes to address these challenges, and protect those vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity (UN, 2020). In 2022, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) called for an agreement aimed at strengthening agriculture within the multilateral trading system that upholds countries human rights obligations, and ensures that, in the words of the Sustainable Development Goals declaration, that ‘no one is left behind’ (UN OHCHR, 2022). As such, there is a need for greater coherence at the policy level between countries to achieve the right to adequate food and nutrition security within World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements (De Schutter, 2014; UN OHCHR, 2022).

This paper reflects ongoing debates surrounding opportunities for nations to realise their food and nutrition security policy objectives within the confines of trade policy and trade negotiations. A key challenge within this area is a lack of effective engagement across policy sectors, between those concerned with food and nutrition security, and those concerned with trade liberalization

✉ Ellen Johnson
ellen.johnson@sydney.edu.au

¹ Menzies Centre for Health Policy and Economics, School of Public Health, Charles Perkins Centre (D17), The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia

² Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, UK

(HLPE, 2020a; UN OHCHR, 2022). The historical trade and food security agenda has been focused on sufficiency (i.e. food quantity), however as the burden of malnutrition has shifted, there is a need for considerations of food quality (i.e. dietary diversity and nutrition). This will require further analysis of the trade policy agenda, to include consideration of the opportunities and threats regarding food and nutrition security. To explore this, we analyse two historical multilateral trade policy decisions relevant to food and nutrition security, to understand the political and power dynamics in the spaces in which these decisions are being made at the global level, in order to strengthen trade-related food systems governance to improve population nutrition: (1) the negotiations on agricultural safeguards that were implicated in the stalling of the 2008 WTO July Ministerial and; (2) the negotiations on public stockholding programmes for food security purposes that were implicated in the limited outcomes of the 2013 WTO Bali Ministerial. By examining these two case studies from the DDA period, this paper sheds light on the changing dynamics and geopolitics of international trade. The power dynamics in the food-related trade policy space are often implicit and relatively hidden for actors with food security and nutrition expertise who are not experts in trade. Improving food-related trade, for example through targeted further liberalisation in support of food and nutrition security, or more nuanced approaches to balancing trade and non-trade objectives, requires food and nutrition security experts to understand, navigate, and engage strategically with future trade policy making processes. This in turn will require understanding of the shifting dynamics of power in the trade policy space. With Covid-19, climate change and conflict, the examination of shifting power between developed and developing countries, agriculture exporters and importers, and the role of agriculture and food and nutrition security in domestic constituencies are ever important, and much can still be learnt, particularly where the discourse and power structures are under constant transformation as our case studies show.

By drawing on multi-disciplinary literature and insights from ‘insiders’ in these policy processes, we present a detailed analysis of how the WTO agenda relevant to food and nutrition security was shaped during these periods, and reflect on the implications for those seeking to influence trade policy agendas to support food systems transformation today. This paper provides an important historical perspective of the intersection of trade and food security, which is essential in interpreting and engaging with trade policy moving forward.

1.1 Food and nutrition security, and food systems

Achieving and maintaining food security remains a challenge for many developing and developed countries. Food security is defined as “...a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2001). More recently there has been increasing recognition that food insecurity is directly linked to all forms of malnutrition, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight and obesity, and growing use of the term ‘food and nutrition security’ (FAO et al., 2018). In 2019, an estimated 2 billion people experienced moderate to severe food insecurity (FAO et al., 2020), which severely impacts diet quality and increases the risk of all forms of malnutrition. Effectively addressing these food and nutrition security challenges will require food systems transformation, including a rebalancing of agricultural policies (FAO et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has already put additional strain on food systems and food security, but the long-term impacts remain uncertain (FAO et al., 2020; HLPE, 2020a).

The global food system and agriculture supply chains have expanded as a result of globalisation, with 20 to 25 per cent of world food production being traded on international markets (HLPE, 2020a, b). Trade policy impacts on food systems in a number of ways, with impacts on the cost and availability of food as well as shaping domestic and international policy rules and regulations relating to nutrition, human health and food security (Kanter et al., 2015). Rural populations and those that rely on agriculture are particularly vulnerable to changes in global agricultural trade policy, which impacts the health and nutrition of these populations (FAO, 2017; HLPE, 2020a) as well as the livelihoods opportunities available to people as producers or food system workers. For example, the expansion of agricultural markets through trade liberalisation can help reduce the costs of commodities through increased inflows of trade, but often this has been less advantageous for smallholder farmers in developing countries because they struggle to compete with large scale industrial agricultural production, particularly where this is heavily subsidised by more wealthy national governments (De Schutter, 2009).

In response to these challenges, many countries have adopted measures to protect national food security. Notably, many of these measures can have trade policy implications, including those relating to procurement, stockholding and distribution of food grains to reduce the vulnerability of poor consumers and producers to seasonal fluctuations

in staple foods and world price shocks (Thow et al., 2019). Price support mechanisms – often paired with public stockholding programmes – are used by governments to set guaranteed commodity prices, which can (1) help stabilize food prices and (2) create emergency food reserves during periods of food price increases in order to protect national food security (Oyejide et al., 2019; Thow et al., 2019). However, public stockholding programmes may not always be effective as they can crowd out private stocks (which reduces their effectiveness in price stabilization) and also may be susceptible to mismanagement and corruption, which can worsen price volatility (Oyejide et al., 2019).

1.2 Background on trade, food systems, and food and nutrition security

There are very few global agreements governing food and nutrition, but many aspects of food and agriculture policy are influenced by various WTO agreements, particularly the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA). The WTO is the global governing institution that deals with the rules and negotiations of trade agreements between nations (WTO, 2020e). The AoA was an outcome of the Uruguay Round, concluded in 1994, and provides a framework for long-term reform of agricultural trade and domestic policies (WTO, 2020d). Agricultural trade can be a contributor to food security, due to its contribution to stabilising food availability and prices (Smith & Glauber, 2020). However, the AoA was and in many ways still is viewed – by both developing countries, such as India and Pakistan, and agricultural exporters, such as Australia and Argentina – as being unfairly weighted towards large developed countries who were allowed to provide large subsidies to farmers or maintain very high tariffs on some commodity lines deemed sensitive (Clapp, 2006, 2015). Due to the way in which the Uruguay Round tried to simplify the complex system of quotas and tariffs, some provisions were not extended to developing countries, particularly the ‘special safeguard’ (SSG) – a type of safety valve for trade flows that would operate if a country experienced a sudden surge in trade inflows that were deemed harmful to domestic production. Although the negotiators had tried to limit the most egregious inequities in terms of global subsidies to agriculture, huge disparities remained in what the richest countries were still permitted to pay to their domestic producers, even within the confines of the AoA’s limits (Green & Griffith, 2002).

In theory, international trade policy and rules constitutes a reciprocal system of rights and obligations. However in practice, these constraints have historically fallen more heavily on developing country members, and have been biased towards the interests of developed countries such as the US and EU (Shaffer, 2021). Not only are agriculture and food security still an unresolved issue within the WTO,

but disagreement on these issues were a driving factor in the stalled negotiations of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) (Wolfe, 2009a, b). Between 142 and 164 countries were involved in the negotiations of the DDA. However, in the face of continued stalling of negotiations, the DDA was formally abandoned in 2017. Multilateral negotiations have continued in the WTO (WTO, 2022, 2023a, b), but overall there has been a forum shift, with much more progress made in trade negotiations in plurilateral, bilateral and regional spheres (such as ASEAN). With respect to food and agriculture, following the end of the DDA, there was a decline in optimism regarding the potential for meaningful reforms in agricultural trade (Wilkinson, 2019; Wilkinson et al., 2016). Whilst agricultural trade is still negotiated within the WTO (WTO, 2023c) and other (regional and bilateral) forums (e.g. ASEAN, SADC), little progress has been made. Overall, agricultural trade rules have seen little fundamental change, with the long-term underlying issues related to agricultural subsidies being addressed only through temporary measures (i.e. the Peace Clause). Given the lack of progress in multilateral negotiations and the less than satisfactory outcomes regarding food security policy from ongoing negotiations, significant change is unlikely to originate from within WTO ministerials, though the organisation plays an important role in policing existing agreements as an appellate body. However, the interface between trade and food security remains critical, and as such the lessons from this historical study can usefully inform engagement moving forward.

2 Methods

2.1 Study design

This study was a qualitative policy analysis. Policy analysis offers a comprehensive framework for examining policy change (Walt et al., 2008), and our study design drew on case study research methodology to guide the triangulation of data collected from two different sources (Yin, 2003). The research objectives were:

- Identify the context, process, actors, and content of the policy case studies
- Analyse the ways in which power (forms, spaces, and levels) was exercised and who benefited from the decisions made
- Consider the implications of these policies for reform of the governance of food systems to create a more equitable and sustainable system for better population nutrition

We collected data through a targeted literature and policy review on the two case studies, and in-depth interviews with

individuals with expertise or involvement in the case studies. These case studies were selected as being two recent debates on agricultural trade relevant to food and nutrition security, which provides an important historical perspective in interpreting and engaging with the trade policy space moving forward. These case studies relate to the broader issue of effective (or not so effective) engagement across policy sectors, between those concerned with food security and those concerned with trade liberalization. With the expansion of trade policy forums over the last 20 years, these case studies reflect a pivotal moment in which power dynamics and domestic interests shaped the future of global agricultural trade negotiations. Data were analysed thematically. Our study aim and objectives implies a focus on policy processes and power dynamics in global agricultural trade, and thus we drew on two theoretical frameworks to inform the study design and analysis. Study design and analysis was also informed by the experience of one of the co-authors as being present at the 2008 ministerial, with responsibility for food and agriculture, as part of the wider UK delegation. This study was granted ethical approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Sydney (2020/267).

2.1.1 Analytical frameworks

We used the Walt and Gilson (1994) policy analysis triangle to inform the study instruments and guide the analysis. This model for health policy analysis is simplified, but acknowledges the complex set of interrelationships that is critical to understand policy decisions and inform policy reform. In this framework, ‘process’ relates to how issues get on the policy agenda, ‘context’ is the complex interaction of environmental factors that influence policy decisions, ‘actors’ may participate directly or indirectly in the policy process and ‘content’ includes the substantive information and material contained in a policy, reflecting some or all of the above dimensions (Walt & Gilson, 1994).

Due to our explicit focus on power in this study, we also complemented the Walt & Gilson (1994) model with Gaventa’s (2006) approach to power analysis, in order to understand the spaces, levels and forms of power in which these negotiations take place and influence the decisions made. Gaventa (2006) describes ‘spaces’ as opportunities and channels where actors can act to potentially influence policies, decisions and discourses that reflect their interests (closed, invited, or claimed/created). ‘Levels’ refers to where actors can exert their power (usually identified at either the local, national or global level), and, drawing on Lukes (2004) ‘form’ refers to the degree of power an actor has in a given space and level (visible, hidden or invisible) (Gaventa, 2006). Visible power is understood as the formal rules, structures and procedures of observable decision making. Hidden power is agenda setting behind the scenes, where

powerful individuals and institutions maintain influence by controlling what gets on the agenda and who is allowed at the decision-making table. Invisible power is more complex, and includes the wider norms that shape meaning and what is ‘acceptable’ (Gaventa, 2006).

2.2 Data collection

2.2.1 Literature review

A targeted literature search was conducted, including Google Scholar, PubMed, government websites and global institution websites (including WTO), to identify existing literature on the two case studies relevant to policy process, context, and power. Search terms such as ‘governance’, ‘policy’, ‘trade’, ‘food systems’, ‘power’, ‘agriculture’, ‘food security’ and ‘nutrition’ were used to identify resources relating to the broad context in which these trade policy decisions relevant to food and nutrition security events occurred. Literature was restricted to the date range January 2000 to August 2020 (due to the nature and historical context of the case studies, we purposely chose to look at published material between this period) and was published in English. The literature review also included major reports, publications, and peer-reviewed papers on the two case study events. This included searching specifically for case-study oriented or much-cited publications, and included a large number of technical reports, unpublished (‘grey’) literature and WTO documents. We used the literature to develop a timeline (Fig. 1) which identified underlying processes, actors, context, and content of the two case studies, as well as levels, forms, and spaces of exercised power.

2.2.2 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain further information regarding the case studies, particularly ‘insider’ views and observations of actor interests as well as implicit and explicit forms of power exercised in the two case studies. An interview schedule was developed based on the literature and the theoretical frameworks, and included questions relevant to each of the case studies on why agriculture and food security was on the WTO agenda, key actors and their influence, and factors influencing the agenda and outcome of the case studies.

Interviewees were purposively selected based on their knowledge and/or involvement in one or both case study events. The research team identified potential initial interviewees based on their published work and/or known involvement in the trade negotiations, and a snowballing technique was used to further identify potential participants for the study. Interviewees were recruited via email, and interviews were conducted via online platforms. A total of 17

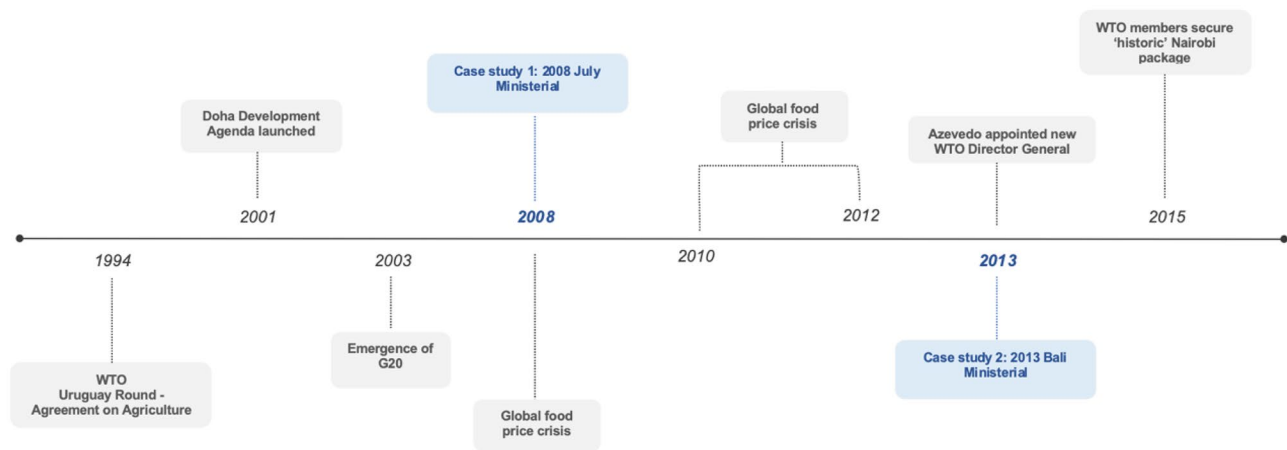


Fig. 1 Timeline of events of key findings

participants were contacted, with eight agreeing to and participating in the study, five declined to interview and four did not respond. (Of the eight who participated, four were initial contacts and four were recruited through snowball sampling). Relevant experience of interviewees consisted of one academic, four working for government or multilateral institutions and three working with non-government organisations (NGOs). Six interviewees were actively engaged in either the 2008 July or 2013 Bali negotiations, and the other two had studied these negotiations extensively. Interviews were 1–1.5 h in length, conducted by the research team in English, and were recorded in full. Immediately following each interview, the recordings were used to prepare detailed written notes on the interview content. (We did not fully transcribe all interviews; due to our focus on the reporting of policy processes, actor interests and power related to the case studies, we did not intend to analyse the specific phrasing of interviewee responses). Interviewees were coded based on their relevant sector (academic, government, NGO) and economic status of country they represented (developed, developing).

2.3 Analysis

The research team prepared detailed chronological descriptions of the two case studies, based on the literature and policy review. Each of these descriptions addressed the context, policy process and decision, and the interests of major actors.

The lead author then hand-coded the interview data using pre-determined codes based on the policy analysis and theoretical frameworks (Table 1). These coded data were reviewed by a second author. The coded data were then thematically analysed to identify themes in response to the research aim and objectives, with a particular focus on understanding the influences on the policy process, actor interests, and use of power.

The analysed interview data were then analysed jointly with the emergent themes from the targeted literature and policy review to refine the chronological descriptions of the two case studies and the emergent themes. Below we present the findings regarding context, content, process, actors, and power for each case study. The discussion deepens this power analysis, with reference to the broader literature, to focus on changing power dynamics at the WTO negotiations, and how this was influential in policy decisions, as well as the complexities of agriculture as a global trade market.

3 Results

3.1 Case study 1 – 2008 July Ministerial: Decisions surrounding special provisions in the area of agriculture for developing countries

3.1.1 Context and content

In 2008, WTO member states met for a series of meetings held in Geneva between 21st to 29th July to conclude the Doha Round (WTO, 2020b). This followed the earlier ministerials in 2001 (Doha), 2003 (Cancun) and 2005 (Hong Kong), in which many issues surrounding trade and agriculture had been left unresolved (WTO, 2020b). Adhering to the AoA Article 20 ‘Continuation of the Reform Process’ (WTO, 2020d), the main objective of the 2008 July Ministerial was to agree on modalities in agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA) (WTO, 2020b) and other modalities that had to be agreed together as part of the ‘single undertaking’ to agree all parts of a new deal at the same time. To address outstanding issues in the area of agriculture, a draft text was circulated to member states two weeks prior official commencement of negotiations (WTO

Table 1 Pre-determined codes

Code	Definition
Policy processes	The process in which issues get on the policy agenda.
Policy context	The complex interaction of environmental factors that influence policy decisions.
Institutional context	Formal rules and channels of communication of political spaces, that represent particular interpretations of institutional goals and agendas.
Economic context	Related to money, industry and trade of a state, region, or society.
Policy space	The different settings in which policy decision making, implementation, agenda setting, and policy formulation take place.
Explicit forms of power	The capacity or ability to directly influence decision making or outcomes.
Implicit forms of power	The capacity or ability to indirectly influence decision making or outcomes.
Food systems governance	The actors and institutions that are responsible for or involved in activities that relate to the production, distribution, preparation, and consumption of food.
Food security	“...a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO, 2001).
Agriculture	The practice of cultivating and growing crops, and rearing livestock.
Actors and institutions	Individuals and groups with vested interest in the agenda setting, decision making and implementation of policy.
Actor roles and interests	The influence and agenda of actors involved in policy processes.

Authors' definitions, based on Smith and Katikireddi (2013) glossary

Committee on Agriculture, 2008), following months of technical negotiations and draft papers produced at an official level and led by the chair of the agriculture negotiations, Crawford Falkoner. This draft outlined the agreements that had been reached and remaining gaps in three areas for agricultural trade reform: (1) market access; (2) domestic support and (3) export subsidies (WTO, 2020b). The agriculture draft included a number of special provisions for developing countries (such as the SSM), many of them foreshadowed by provisions that had been made for developed countries in the Uruguay Round (VanGrasstek, 2013).

Technicalities surrounding the SSM became a highly contested issue at the 2008 July Ministerial (VanGrasstek, 2013; Wolfe, 2009a, b), with discussions focussing on the size of the temporary tariff and size of the import volume surge needed to trigger the agricultural modality (Wolfe, 2009a, b). Due to conflicting ideas on the technicalities of the SSM, WTO Director General Pascal Lamy convened a smaller set of meetings with a select few countries, in the hopes to re-focus discussions and come up with a compromised agreement (Ismail, 2009; VanGrasstek, 2013). This group – known as the G7¹ – included the EU, US, China, Brazil, India, Japan, and Australia (Efstathopoulos, 2012). The assumption was that if these countries, who had the greatest interests in agriculture, could come to an agreement on issues relating to agriculture (such as the SSM) and NAMA, then the countries and groups they represented

would agree as well (Ismail, 2009; Wolfe, 2009a). The G7 negotiations centred around a modified text known as the “Lamy Draft”, with the suggestion that the SSG be phased out, and the volume trigger for the new SSM would be set at a 40 percent surge in imports (Wolfe, 2009a). However, this proposal was strongly contested by the G33 group, India, and China, claiming that if they left the SSM trigger at 40 per cent, permitted surges of imports below this level would destroy the livelihood of the most vulnerable farmers (Wolfe, 2009a). Many farmers in developing countries are poor or low-income and are therefore vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity (FAO et al., 2018; HLPE, 2020a; Sharma et al., 2020). India in particular has a large agricultural sector, with 70 per cent of rural households relying primarily on agriculture for their livelihoods (Hopewell, 2018). With 80 per cent of Indian farmers being small, subsistence farmers (Rapsomanikis, 2015), it was argued that any changes to global agricultural trade policy needs to be weighed carefully against concerns of rural livelihoods and poverty and the wider food and nutrition security of these populations.

After much deliberation over the Lamy Draft within the G7, the negotiations eventuated in an impasse on July 29th, 2008, with members unable to come to agreement on trigger mechanisms for the SSM.

3.1.2 Process

Findings from the literature review and interviews showed that unresolved issues from the Uruguay Round and consistent failures of previous Doha Round negotiations, were primary driving factors for initiating the 2008 July Ministerial (Martin & Anderson, 2008; Scott & Wilkinson,

¹ The formation of the G7 at the 2008 July Ministerial is different to the other known ‘G7’ – the intergovernmental forum consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the US.

2011). This was also identified by interviewees as a key reason for agriculture being on the WTO policy agenda. Agricultural safeguards negotiated in the Uruguay Round (primarily for developing countries) were perceived as inadequate to protect their domestic agricultural sectors, compared to provisions (such as the SSG) available to developed countries shifting from volume or quota based systems in the Uruguay Round (Martin & Anderson, 2008; Scott & Wilkinson, 2011). At the first Doha Round of negotiations in 2001, the idea of an SSM was written into the draft texts (WTO, 2009). However as many interviewees commented, specific technicalities of the mechanism were not negotiated until the 2008 July Ministerial.

All interviewees identified the key contention in the negotiations regarding the SSM as whether it would allow countries to impose tariffs above current bound rates.

“The SSM was the straw that broke the camel’s back.”
(Developed, academic).

Findings from the interviews established that underlying this outcome was an evident (and unresolved) tension between the interests of developing countries to create more of a level playing field, and the interests of other member states in maintaining previous multilateral ‘wins’. Competitive exporters such as the US and Uruguay argued that it would be wrong to let countries exceed current bound rates in implementing the SSM, as it would go against existing WTO commitments. However, many developing countries wanted to redress what they saw as unfair binding tariff commitments. Some interviewees commented that member states that were pushing for this modality had low bound rates that had been negotiated in previous rounds – due to their limited capacity for negotiating in their best interests at the time (Shaffer, 2021) – and were concerned that if they could not exceed these rates then the SSM would not be overly useful.

3.1.3 Actors

The G20² was identified by interviewees as one of the most influential coalitions in the 2008 July negotiations. The G20 emerged in 2003, as a coalition of advanced and emerging economies with the goal of ambitious agricultural reforms in developed countries with certain flexibilities for developing countries (Efstathopoulos, 2012). Member countries of the G20 represent a very high percentage of the global population and global trade, and with the inclusion a number of developing countries the success of this coalition

represented a major power shift at the 2008 July Ministerial (Margulis, 2014; Stephen, 2012). One interviewee explained the success of the G20 as due to three reasons – (1) the coalition had good cohesion; (2) put well detailed and thought-out proposals on the table and (3) were good at counterarguments. Brazil was a strong advocate for the concerns of the G20, and became a leading actor in the negotiations.

“The single lesson that emerges from the success of the G20 is that while developing countries, if try to negotiate on their own, they will certainly be cropped by power asymmetries and disadvantages...but if they accommodate each other’s interests and compromise, and try to negotiate as a coalition, then they can take the developed countries head on. For them there is no other alternative. They have to strike coalitions.”
(Developing, Government).

It was also evident from the interviews and the literature that another key actor at the 2008 July negotiations was the G33, a coalition of 46 developing countries established prior to 2003 (Wolfe, 2009b). The group had defensive concerns regarding agricultural trade policies and was a loud advocate for the “special products” exemption and SSM (Hopewell, 2015). The argument for both modalities was to protect food security, rural livelihoods, and rural development, which are primary concerns in most developing countries (Hopewell, 2015). The G33 was instrumental in bringing concerns of developing countries regarding agricultural safeguards to the table. The leadership of Brazil and India within these coalitions pushed them into the inner circle of negotiations, namely being involved in the G7 meetings. Despite the ambition for this highly selective group to consolidate and come to an agreement on certain issues (one of which being the SSM), it highlighted the differing interests and prevalent power imbalances at play. The package proposed to the G7 did not adequately address the issues of many member states, and was subsequently rejected by India and China at the July meeting, bringing the whole negotiations to an impasse (VanGrasstek, 2013).

Other actors that were identified as influential included the US, and in particular the US Trade Representative, Susan Schwab, and Pascal Lamy. Susan Schwab was a strong opponent to the SSM, likely as a result of pressure from US domestic constituencies who were against anything that would restrict trade liberalisation (noting that the focus of the US agricultural lobby has been on access to external markets, rather than trade policy reforms that would impact on US subsidies and protections) (VanGrasstek, 2013). Some interviewees discussed how the US wanted to increase market access in agriculture, particularly in emerging economies such as India and China. The US believed the proposals put forward by the G33 and G20 on the technicalities of the SSM trigger would distort trade and go against pre-existing

² The G20 that emerged in the context of the AoA is not the same configuration as the other known ‘G20’ – the intergovernmental forum for international economic cooperation.

commitments on bound tariffs made during the Uruguay Round (Schwab, 2011). Interviewees identified these as key drivers in Schwab and the US rejecting concessions put forward by the G33, G20 and India on trigger mechanisms for the SSM.

One interviewee identified Lamy as creating a space of non-inclusivity and non-transparency with the formation of the G7. The G7 meetings were a closed/invited space, and the countries invited to participate in this space were at the discretion of Lamy, with majority of countries left out of the negotiating process. Another interviewee commented that Lamy was very rigid, and less willing to compromise on the draft texts. Whilst there were certain criticisms of the use of the G7 from interviewees, others discussed that due to the growing number of member states in the WTO, negotiating at that level with so many actors is near impossible. The G7 was seen as an inevitable necessity in the WTO negotiation processes.

3.1.4 Dynamics of power

This power shift in the relationship between developed countries and large developing countries, represented by the emergence of the influential G20 and G33, was a major reason for the resulting stalemate (Da Conceição-Heldt, 2013; Efstathopoulos, 2012; Wolfe, 2009b). One interviewee identified that in the early days of the WTO, countries such as the US, UK, EU, Japan, and Canada dominated the high table because they were countries with amongst the largest economies in the world (based on GDP). Per capita, these countries were quite similar and as such were at a similar stage of development and had common interests and objectives (Stephen, 2012). As a result, agricultural trade policies made under the Uruguay Round were often weighted unfairly towards their interests and agendas. This interviewee commented that at the 2008 July Ministerial, different countries (such as India and Brazil) were now at the high table due to their growing economies. They had increased trade leverage due to being more significant global markets (Margulis & Porter, 2013; Young, 2010). In addition, with rising affluence had come increased capacity in these countries for engagement with global policy forums. However, whilst India and Brazil had comparable economies to the US and EU by GDP, their GDP *per capita* was vastly different and a big reason for the deadlock (Margulis & Porter, 2013; Stephen, 2012; Young, 2010). Findings from the interviewees indicated that the challenges and socio-economic context of India and many G33 countries are very different to that of the US and EU, and therefore made it difficult to come to an agreement on agricultural safeguards. One significant and very relevant difference was a major contribution of agriculture to the livelihoods of many of India's poor and rural dwellers economy, which was increasingly reflected

by a very vocal domestic constituency. The strength of the US farm sector relates more to the political economy of various US states within the federal system rather than its role as an employment provider, though it remains an important economic sector.

The historical context of WTO negotiations is also important to understand. The pushback from many developing countries was also a reaction to their limited capacity to participate fully in the Uruguay Round, and hence global trade agreements being unfairly weighted towards developed countries (Clapp, 2015). Developing countries were keen to better protect their domestic interests.

“You [developed countries] have the right to stupid things, we [developing countries] want the right to stupid things.” (Developed, Academic).

Developed and agricultural exporting countries had a number of provisions that allowed them to protect their domestic agricultural sectors. For example, the SSG was a mechanism that allowed a select few countries to impose additional tariffs on agricultural products if there was an import surge or price drop, similar to the proposed SSM (WTO, 2020c). The SSG is easier to invoke compared to other safeguard provisions as it does not require a test of injury (Wolfe, 2009a). Developing countries felt it unfair that given their vulnerable domestic agriculture sectors, they did not have equivalent safeguards.

3.2 Case study 2 – 2013 Bali Ministerial: Decisions surround public stockholding programmes for food security purposes

3.2.1 Context and content

After the failed negotiations in July 2008, and subsequent ministerials in 2009 (Geneva) and 2011 (Geneva), many were sceptical leading up to the 2013 Bali Ministerial that it would conclude the Doha Round (Meltzer, 2013). However, with the appointment of Roberto Azevedo as WTO Director General three months before the official commencement of negotiations, there was a cautious optimism that a successful multilateral deal could be forthcoming (Wilkinson et al., 2014). From the onset of negotiations, Azevedo made a greater attempt at transparency and inclusivity (Wilkinson et al., 2014), a marked difference to Lamy's closed door discussions. In an effort to streamline negotiations, member states agreed to focus on a 'small package' built around trade facilitation and certain elements of agriculture (Bellman, 2014). In addition to this, three proposals were submitted by member countries relating to agricultural elements (Bellman, 2014; Wilkinson et al., 2014): two by the G20 on tariff rate quote administration and export subsidies, and one by the G33 on public stockholding for food security purposes (Bellman,

2014). Interviewees identified that the proposal submitted by the G33 became the most controversial and contested at the 2013 Bali Ministerial.

A key issue for food security during the 2013 Ministerial was limits on public stockholding for food security negotiated in previous DDA rounds. Taking this into account, the G33 proposal contained three elements to open up the policy space for public stockholding for food security purposes within developing countries: (1) redefining the outdated reference price, proposing instead to create a three-year average based on the preceding five-year period; (2) defining excessive rates of inflation and having them taken into account when calculating the contribution of public stockholding to the Aggregate Measure of Support (AMS) and; (3) implementing a temporary Peace Clause (Wilkinson et al., 2014). The final element of the proposal, the Peace Clause, was the only part taken up seriously at the 2013 Bali Ministerial.

The outcome of this set of negotiations eventuated in a temporary Peace Clause – an agreement from WTO members to temporarily exempt public stockholding programmes for food security purposes from legal action under the WTO Dispute Settlement Mechanism for a period of four years (Wilkinson et al., 2014; WTO, 2013). The Peace Clause included three additional criterion: exemptions would be limited to traditional staple food crops and existing programmes; strict transparency and notification requirements, with an obligation to hold consultations upon request and; any stocks procured under a programme should not distort trade or negatively impact the food security of other members (Bellman, 2014; WTO, 2013). Whilst a permanent solution was not found, this temporary clause marked the first multilateral trade agreement since the WTO's conception.

3.2.2 Process

An agreement regarding public stockholding programmes was largely on the agenda in 2013 because it was part of the single undertaking that was left unresolved from the July 2008 Ministerial (WTO, 2020a). However, it gained prominence following the global food price crisis in 2007–2008 and 2010–2012, which left many developing countries struggling to deal with ongoing food insecurity and civil unrest (Margulis, 2014; Wise & Murphy, 2013). Leading into the 2013 Bali Ministerial, implementing measures – such as public stockholding programmes – to combat rising rates of food insecurity and hunger was a primary concern of many developing countries (Sharma et al., 2020; Wise & Murphy, 2013). All interviewees discussed specifically the concerns related to public stockholding programmes, and some linked this to the other core issue negotiated at Bali (trade facilitation), which was seen as a bargaining chip by developed countries. Trade facilitation was a keen interest of many developed and agricultural exporting countries. Progress

on issues relating to trade facilitation had been made in earlier negotiations, and was therefore viewed as ‘low-hanging fruit’ in settling an agreement (Bellman, 2014). The literature review and interviews found that prevailing food insecurity and volatile food prices in the lead up to the 2013 Bali Ministerial meant public stockholding programmes were a focal point for many developing countries, who refused to discuss trade facilitation unless their concerns were met.

3.2.3 Actors

The outcome of this set of negotiations was also shaped by the interests of key actors; in particular, India and the US. All interviewees identified India as a present and influential actor in the debates and decision processes, mainly in pushing proposals on agriculture and public stockholding programmes for food security purposes.

“Like a petulant child India dug in its heels, and it just refused to move forward on trade facilitation... and the child that cries more perhaps gets more milk.”
(Developing, Government).

Interviewees noted that food insecurity was a significant concern for India and other developing countries. In the interviews, the priority given to agriculture and food security was attributed to concerns from many developing countries on food security stemming from the 2007 – 2008 and 2010 – 2012 food crisis, and the ending of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)/start of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many farmers in developing countries are poor or low-income, and as such are vulnerable to food insecurity and hunger (FAO et al., 2018; HLPE, 2020a; Sharma et al., 2020). One interviewee identified the high rate of suicide amongst Indian farmers as a factor affecting India's interests and objectives in these negotiations, which was also reflected in the literature (Sengupta, 2006). These ground realities in India, and many other developing countries, made them key and vocal advocates of reforms to public stockholding programmes to protect the lives of their most vulnerable. Interviewees also identified the US as being an active actor in these negotiations, and a main opponent to India and the proposals for public stockholding programs. Similar to negotiations in July 2008 on the SSM, the US was resistant to changing current WTO rules regarding public stockholding programmes. Many interviewees noted the historical dominance of the US at WTO negotiations, and their impatience with the recent focus on development. The US had become increasingly defensive and were less willing to tolerate what they considered to be disadvantages. Similar to the Doha Round being labelled a “development” round, public stockholding programmes was an issue lumped together with trade

facilitation in a bid to get developing countries to the table. This further exacerbated the power issues.

“That is a scathing indictment of the inherent hypocrisy in the system...who start to launch the trade negotiation you give it a cover of development agenda...but when it comes to hardcore negotiations at the table, then it’s pure simple scramble for market access in developing countries. There was not a shred of concern for development thereafter.” (Developing, Government).

Interviewees also noted that the G33 appeared to be more influential in these negotiations on public stockholding programmes at the 2013 Bali Ministerial, compared to the 2008 July negotiations on the SSM. The condition attached to the eventual temporary Peace Clause that limited it to countries with existing programmes, severely constricted the policy space for developing countries who did not have established public stockholding programmes. Interviewees noted that the Peace Clause was therefore restricted to a small number of countries, with many once again missing out in the negotiations.

3.2.4 Dynamics of power

Underlying the focus on a smaller negotiating package was a change in the multilateral strategy. Learning from previous failed negotiations, the 2013 Bali Ministerial focused on two main issues (1) trade facilitation and (2) public stockholding programmes (WTO, 2020a). The changing of Director General from Lamy to Azevedo prior to the commencement of the 2013 Bali Ministerial was a key driver of this shift in strategy. Azevedo was influential in creating a more invited space for participation for all member states, and sought to have greater transparency and inclusivity in these negotiations (Wilkinson et al., 2014). In addition to this, previous Doha Rounds had been heavily criticised for having negotiating texts that reflected the Director Generals’ views, rather than those of the member states (Wilkinson et al., 2014). Azevedo recognised the importance of delivering a multilateral trade agreement to restore integrity of the WTO (Wilkinson et al., 2014).

Outcomes (or non-outcomes) from previous negotiations persuaded people not to expect much from multilateral systems. One interviewee commented that there had been backlash against economic liberalism, countries wanted freedom to create their own trade policies and not be constrained by the WTO, which had proved troublesome and contentious. This resistance to participate at the multilateral level has marked impact for the future of food systems governance.

4 Discussion

Our presentation of the 2008 July and 2013 Bali WTO ministerial cases analysed the influences on the outcomes of two trade policy negotiations relevant to food and nutrition security at the global level. In this discussion, we focus further on how the dynamics of power – specifically what makes an actor powerful and reasons behind shifts in power from traditionally dominant voices to those who typically did not have a voice – was a significant factor in the outcome of negotiations in both case studies. Understanding the political and power dynamics within the WTO can help with more strategic engagement with future food-related trade policy decisions, to improve consideration of and outcomes for food and nutrition security. In this discussion, we deepen the analysis here by focusing in more depth on the dynamics of power and engaging with the wider literature. Although these case studies demonstrate limited success in overcoming still entrenched differentials between developing and developed countries, particularly the sense that the latter were able to continue to subsidise or protect their agricultural producers to a level not enjoyed by others – they do indicate that power has shifted to the extent that the more powerful developing countries, at least, such as India, are able to put their own food security interests forward and ‘dig-in’ to protect domestic producers and beneficiaries of subsidised food distribution schemes.

4.1 Forms of power

The *forms* of power – specifically reasons behind shifts in power and what makes an actor powerful through exercise of overt (visible), hidden or invisible power (Gaventa, 2006) – was a significant factor in the policy decisions in both case studies. Countries were considered to have visible power if they were a larger economy and/or had a vibrant agricultural export market (Hopewell, 2015, 2018; Margulis & Porter, 2013; Stephen, 2012). The process of the single undertaking within the WTO meant that these countries with larger economies and other trade interests were more likely to make sacrifices from their agricultural negotiating position, or were able to push their demands more forcefully by having other sectors of interest to WTO members. Historically, countries such as the US and EU that have large economies and a vested interest in agricultural trade had power and influence on decisions made at the WTO (Hopewell, 2015, 2018; Margulis & Porter, 2013; Stephen, 2012), as well as groups of agricultural exporters represented by the Cairns Group of countries.

Hidden power was repeatedly visible in the negotiations in terms of the agenda setting power of countries such

as the US and the EU; but also in the way that different spaces of power were structured (below) to ensure that particular issues of relevance to more important actors were given sufficient negotiation time. Although food security was on the agenda, its scope was often defined in ways that preferenced the domestic policy approaches of developed countries. The AoA defined food security as a ‘non-trade concern’, which made any negotiations on clauses and mechanisms that would negatively impact food security of vulnerable countries difficult. This perpetuated a dominant discourse resistant to change, based largely on countries identities and designed to reinforce status quo benefiting wealthy nations. Institutional processes also reflect this, with decisions historically being made by a select few behind closed doors. Findings from the interviews and literature show that this process was common up until the 2013 Bali Ministerial. Whilst recognition of the linkages between food security and trade has steadily increased in the WTO since the 2008 July and 2013 Bali Ministerial, the spaces in which negotiations take place has shifted to plurilateral, bilateral and regional forums.

Historically, developing countries (such as India) have been subject to exploitative and extractive relationships based on trade rules imposed bilaterally by colonial powers and the US during the colonial era, and then subsequently in the post-colonial agreements brokered under the GATT (Foreman-Peck, 1989; Thakur, 2013). Coalitions such as the G20 and G33 allowed developing countries to (visibly) claim and create space at the global level. Our findings align with previous work by Cepaluni et al. (2012), who observed that large, issue-based coalitions (such as the G20 and G33) had higher chances of success within the WTO. However, with declining multilateral policy space and a trend towards bilateral and regional deals, creating powerful and cohesive coalitions at the multilateral level will be difficult. The tension between the evident desire of national governments for freedom to forge their own policies without being constrained by WTO rules, and the fact that they are bound to do so if they want to keep participating actively in the global trade system, indicates a hidden form of power setting the global agenda that ensure countries adhere to the invisible ideologies of a particular architecture of international trade.

4.2 Spaces of power

The power and influence of developed countries in decision making signifies a form of invisible power in a *closed* space, as developing countries did not have the credentials to hold decision making power, such as having a large economy or being an agricultural exporter. As the global

economy changed entering the twenty-first century, the growing economies and expanding agricultural sectors of Brazil and India meant they were now welcomed into policy spaces they had previously been shut out of. This shows an interesting intersection between spaces and forms of power. Brazil and India recognised they were now ‘of interest’ to the typically powerful countries, whether because of the size of their economies or because they represented significant domestic markets that were the target of domestic interests for the traditionally powerful countries, and thus claimed their seat at the table. At the same time, they still had to be invited by the Director General to participate alongside historically dominant countries, who were acting as gatekeepers of the decision-making table. This intersection of forms and spaces of power is clearly evident in the constituency of the G7 group convened by Lamy – a former EU Trade Commissioner – as also highlighted by Hopewell (2018) and Efsthathopoulos (2012).

At the WTO, every member state has a veto, and theoretically every country has equal voting and decision-making power. However, in line with findings of Margulis and Porter (2013) this study indicated that despite this, pressure from larger, more powerful countries towards smaller countries and coalitions to stick to the status quo was clearly evident. Additionally, the use of smaller negotiating circles behind closed doors – such as the G7 at the 2008 July Ministerial – further exacerbates power imbalances by creating a closed space for decision making. This lack of inclusiveness means that countries who were not invited were unable to get their interests on the policy agenda, let alone have them reflected in the final outcome. However, progress has been made in recent years to improve the transparency and accountability of these informal meetings. These meetings have the potential to help to facilitate and democratise the negotiating process by creating a space for in-depth and creative discussion, addressing specific issues without the formality of larger WTO meetings (Lamp, 2017). With increasing recognition that trade decisions made at the global level impact population food and nutrition security (Baker et al., 2019), understanding how coalitions can be utilised in these spaces is crucial. The emergence of coalitions such as the G33 and G20 at these WTO negotiations meant that less powerful countries were able to claim and create space at the decision-making table. Their shared use of resources and common objectives meant that these coalitions were less susceptible to pressure by larger, more powerful countries. Whilst little progress was made at either negotiation, the coalitions were able to stand their ground in a claimed space, and refused to move forward on any agreements that was detrimental to their national food and nutrition security.

4.3 Levels of power

Notable in the cases and highlighted by our interviewees was the influence of domestic constituencies in shaping the negotiating space and objectives of actors in the two cases and thus trade policy outcomes at the global level. This highlights the importance of understanding global diplomatic spaces such as the WTO as linked to other levels of power, such as domestic political interests. These linkages were important for creating a space for food security within the negotiations, in the face of disinterest by traditionally dominant actors, because of the ongoing concern for many developing countries with mostly rural and in many cases still food insecure populations (FAO et al., 2018; HLPE, 2020a; Sharma et al., 2020). In the case of India, two-thirds of its population are dependent on agriculture, many of whom are poor, subsistence farmers (Hopewell, 2018; Konandreas & Mermigkas, 2014). This makes agriculture India's most sensitive domestic sector. Given their vulnerability to trade liberalisation, Indian subsistence farmers oppose any measures to increase market access (Hopewell, 2018), which is highlighted in recent protests in India regarding the introduction of three new agriculture laws ('Farm Bill 2020') and have resulted in the repeal of the measures liberalising domestic agricultural markets. With a large number of farmers, they form a significant political constituency and an impressive capacity for political mobilisation (Hopewell, 2018). These domestic pressures strongly influenced India's negotiating stance at the negotiations, but were poorly understood by negotiators from other countries who noted – and continue to note – Indian 'uncooperativeness' and 'intransigence'. These realities of food and nutrition security in India, and for many other developing countries, was a driving factor in the G33 becoming a 'home' for many countries whose domestic agricultural sector was vulnerable to trade liberalisation, who were able to vocalise their domestic concerns at the global level.

The resistance and pushback can be viewed almost as a symbolic statement from the developing countries. Not only have many developing countries historically been exploited by foreign interests through trade (Foreman-Peck, 1989; Thakur, 2013), the ground realities in these countries such as India and Pakistan relating to food insecurity and hunger is too important and serious an issue for any savvy political leader to ignore. Signing an agreement that would explicitly not benefit their most vulnerable would be a grievous injustice that would not go unpunished politically. These concerns of developing countries ensured that the result of the DDA would not be a pre-defined US-EU agreement – similar to the process that occurred during the Uruguay Round. Whilst this ultimately resulted in no 'outcome' of

the negotiation process, the US and EU were also unwilling to move on certain issues that were important for developing countries food and nutrition security. Additionally, a counterpoint pressure was the US' own domestic political pressures stemming from agricultural lobbies in key battleground states, and broader support for preserving the vested interests of the US Farm Bill (Murphy & Suppan, 2008; Schnepf, 2014). This was the thread linking US domestic political spaces to the global space of the DDA negotiations, for US trade representatives such as Susan Schwab.

4.4 Limitations of the study

This study looked retrospectively at two events that occurred roughly a decade ago, and drew on multiple sources of data. One limitation in the bringing together of data with different strengths was the potential for there to be gaps in the data collected. For example, WTO and other policy documents was useful for documenting the process, while the academic literature examined the context and actors that informed these processes. In contrast, the interview data provided insight into relationships and power dynamics which influenced trade policy decisions relevant to food and nutrition security. Another limitation of the study is that interviewees' perceptions of the case studies were inevitably influenced by their position at the time, and it was noted by some interviewees that they had trouble remembering specific details. Despite these limitations, this study provides an in-depth analysis of the two case studies through a process of methodological triangulation. Although the sample size was small, we were able to interview several knowledgeable interviewees, and the use of qualitative research methods was well suited to a power analysis.

4.5 Implications for trade and food systems moving forward

Power dynamics have shifted significantly at the WTO over the past 20 years, with countries increasingly pursuing trade liberalization through regional and bilateral agreements. The declining ability of the WTO to conclude agreements relevant to agriculture has opened opportunities for alternative forums of negotiations in the form of plurilateral, bilateral and regional agreements. These case studies provide valuable insights into future trade and food security engagement, with particular lessons on power and actor interests. As such, the multilateral trade policy space remains important for food systems reform, both with respect to negotiation and norm setting.

Agricultural production is a major element of food systems, and the interface (and tensions) with trade policy are ongoing. Interest in new policy measures to address nutrition and environmental sustainability as well as food security is increasing (Swinburn et al., 2019), as is recognition of the need to address colonial legacies in food systems and their governance (Grey & Patel, 2015; Thow et al., 2020). In addition, the COVID-19 epidemic has highlighted resilience and vulnerabilities in food systems, and impacted directly on agricultural trade (Savary et al., 2020). It has drawn attention to the importance of investments in – and policy for – domestic agriculture and food security in many developing countries, and highlighted the need to address trade barriers and bottlenecks impacting on food security (Kerr, 2020; Savary et al., 2020). These issues will necessarily require engagement with international trade fora, to protect and promote policy space for policy innovation and to address trade-offs (Béné et al., 2019). There is also potential for WTO as a forum for multilateral negotiations to build on its formal recognition of food security as a critical policy issue, to support agricultural trade policy that achieves multiple objectives, in line with the SDGs. Whilst the DDA was never officially resolved, the drawn-out negotiations emphasised that the EU, US, and other powerful economies need to address built-in privileges that the AoA gave them. Such countries were able to enshrine text within the AoA that protected their existing (well developed) agricultural protections at the time of negotiation. Proactive and effective action in addressing these inequalities is lacking, and whilst it may be unlikely that the DDA or a similar multilateral round is ever realised, those advocating for revised multilateral agreements on food ought to be aware of the historical achievements, failures, and power disparities delivered by the WTO and the GATT (Sharma, 2016).

By analysing and drawing lessons from previous food-system relevant trade policy negotiations that were impactful in terms of wider food systems governance, this study can inform strategic engagement in trade policy by actors interested in improving food systems. The findings of this research may also provide insights relevant to engagement in other contexts than the WTO, in which tensions are emerging relevant to food systems. First, the findings of this study can inform engagement in regional trade policy and spaces. Regional institutions are playing an increasing role in trade governance and are similarly vulnerable to large regional actors with agricultural interests driving agendas (Krapohl, 2020; Shaffer, 2021). Second, the study findings may be relevant to engagement in the new multi-stakeholder approaches to global food governance being

championed by the UN, most notably as part of the UN Food System Summit. These approaches have been critiqued as maintaining and reproducing existing power differentials and hampering meaningful change within food systems to address growing food insecurity and global nutrition challenges (Canfield et al., 2021). Reflecting on the power of coalitions built on a human rights agenda to contribute to power shifts in previous global policy debates relevant to food systems offers hope for ongoing global policy change in support of food systems transformation. Ultimately, the WTO members decision to define food security as a non-trade concern in the AoA, and the failure to see how important trade is for domestic food security, has crippled negotiations on agriculture since.

5 Conclusion

Sustainable and equitable food systems are crucial for addressing food insecurity and malnutrition. Achieving this will require strong institutions, including at the global level. Understanding the complex political and power dynamics in the spaces in which trade policy decisions relevant to food and nutrition security are being made, is critical to inform the reformation of food systems governance to improve population nutrition. These case studies of policy change reflect growing resistance from developing countries, who were unable to protect their most vulnerable. They point to the value of coalitions between developing countries, in contributing to shifts in power at the WTO and within the multilateral trade system. Developing countries, notably India, came to the negotiations with the interests of their populations at stake. Agriculture is not like other trade markets; there are potentially devastating consequences of decisions made at the global level to livelihoods and population nutrition.

Addressing current and future food systems challenges requires a coordinated and coherent trade policy approach. The recent 12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO which highlighted renewed attention on engagement across food-related trade policy sectors, reflects an emerging space for a food security agenda within the trade policy space. Whilst there are uncertainties regarding the role of the WTO in trade policy decisions relevant to food and nutrition security, the outcome (or non-outcome) of these negotiations represents a small, positive step towards changing multilateral trade agreements shaping food systems globally towards a rebalancing of global power.

Appendix

Table 2 Glossary

Term	Definition
<i>Agreement on Agriculture (AoA)</i>	An international set of agricultural agreements negotiated during the Uruguay Round (1994) consisting of three pillars: domestic support, market access and export subsidies.
<i>Aggregate Measure of Support (AMS)</i>	A measure used by the WTO to assess domestic support for agricultural commodities.
<i>Amber box</i>	Domestic support for agriculture that is considered trade distorting and are therefore subject to reduction commitments expressed in the AMS.
<i>Applied tariffs</i>	The duty that is actually charged on imported goods. These cannot exceed bound rates but are often ‘applied’ are lower rates than the bound rate.
<i>Bilateral trade agreement</i>	A trade agreement negotiated between two countries.
<i>Blue box</i>	Subsidies that aim to limit production directly linked to acreage or animal numbers.
<i>Bound tariffs</i>	Maximum tariff level for any given commodity set by the WTO. Applied tariffs must not exceed this rate.
<i>De minimis</i>	A minimal amount of (trade distorting) domestic support allowed – up to 5 per cent of the value of production for developed countries and 10 per cent for developing.
<i>Development box</i>	A set of subsidy rules that allow developing countries additional flexibilities in providing domestic support (allows developing members to provide input subsidies to low income or resource-poor farmers, and investment subsidies for agriculture.).
<i>General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)</i>	Prior to the WTO, the GATT was the governing agreement used to promote international trade by reducing or eliminating barriers to trade.
<i>Green box</i>	Covers measures related to general services, public stockholding for food security purposes, domestic food aid and direct payments (non or minimal trade-distorting support).
<i>Most-favoured nation clause</i>	Under WTO rules, countries cannot normally discriminate between their trading partners.
<i>Non-agricultural market access (NAMA)</i>	All products not covered by the Agreement on Agriculture such as manufacturing products, fuels and mining products, fish and fish products and forestry products.
<i>Peace Clause</i>	Provision in the Agreement of Agriculture stating agricultural subsidies committed under the agreement cannot be challenged under other WTO agreements.
<i>Regional trade agreement</i>	Trade agreement between two or more countries connected by a geographical region.
<i>Single undertaking</i>	Most items in the negotiations are part of a whole, indivisible package and cannot be agreed upon separately. All items can be renegotiated until everything in the package is agreed on.
<i>Special safeguard mechanism (SSM)</i>	A tool to allow developing countries to temporarily raise tariffs on agricultural goods to protect local producers when imports surge or prices fall.
<i>Special agricultural safeguard (SSG)</i>	Permits some countries to temporarily raise tariffs on specified imports of agricultural goods in response to import surges or a fall in prices, as detailed in the AoA.
<i>Trade facilitation</i>	The simplification, modernization and harmonization of export and import processes.
<i>Trade liberalisation</i>	The removal or reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers in trade to facilitate free trade between countries.

Sources – Hawkes, C., Blouin, C., Henson, S., Drager, N., & Dube, L. (2010). “Glossary of Trade Terms”. In *Trade, Food, Diet and Health: Perspectives and Policy Options* (p. 299). Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell. and; WTO. (2023). “Glossary”. Retrieved from https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/glossary_e/glossary_e.htm

Authors’ contributions All authors.

Funding Open Access funding enabled and organized by CAUL and its Member Institutions. No funding was received for conducting this study.

Availability of data and material Not applicable.

Code availability Not applicable.

Declarations

Ethics approval This study was granted ethical approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Sydney (2020/267).

Consent to participate Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Written and verbal consent was obtained prior to interviews.

Consent for publication Informed consent for publication was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Conflicts of interest The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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Ellen Johnson is a Research Assistant and PhD Candidate at the Menzies Centre for Health Policy and Economics, the University of Sydney. Ellen's core research area is food systems and nutrition, with particular expertise in policy analysis, trade, food security, and human rights. She is a nutritionist by training and has postgraduate degrees in Global Health and Social Justice.



Dr Anne Marie Thow is Associate Professor in Public Policy and Health at the University of Sydney. Her research uses theories of public policy making to explore facilitators and barriers to best practice public health nutrition policy, with a particular focus on the interface between economic policy and nutrition. A/Prof Thow regularly consults with international agencies regarding nutrition policy, including the World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization.

Prior to her PhD, Anne Marie worked for the Governments of Australia and Fiji on nutrition policy issues. She trained in nutrition and has a Masters in Public Policy (International policy).



Nicholas Nisbett is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies. He has published research on nutrition politics, equity and policy processes, community level drivers of nutrition, social accountability and theoretical approaches to food systems. He has researched, taught and consulted for a range of international and government organisations, including UNICEF, WFP, DFID and UNHCR. Prior to joining IDS, Nisbett spent five years working for the UK government, where he led teams on agricultural trade policy, agricultural policy reform and land and marine based natural resource management. Dr. Nisbett trained originally as an anthropologist and a geographer and holds a PhD in Development Studies.

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