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Introduction

Political Economy of Food System Transformation

Danielle Resnick and Johan Swinnen

1.1 Introduction

In August 2022, the *Razoni* cargo ship, laden with 26,000 tons of grain, navigated a narrow corridor of mined waters outside Ukraine's port of Odessa. After Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine exacerbated rising food prices, threatening to plunge millions into hunger, the *Razoni* was the first ship allowed out of Ukraine under the UN-brokered Black Sea Grain Initiative. The ship's journey symbolized the world's dependence on grain from the Black Sea—which supplies 30 percent of the world's wheat exports and constitutes the source of 12 percent of globally traded calories (Glauber and Laborde 2022)—and revealed the vulnerability of countries to dependence on concentrated supply sources (IPES 2022). Moreover, it underscored that food security and food systems are rarely the byproduct of agriculture policy alone but often intertwined with a broad set of political objectives. The impacts of the Ukraine war reverberated far and wide in 2022, amplifying weaknesses in many countries' agricultural and food strategies and generating citizen demands for government accountability. From massive food protests in Tunisia that threatened the country's fragile democracy to the siege of Ecuadorean cities by indigenous groups demanding more affordable food, global unrest reminded the world of the centrality of political economy to food systems at the international, national, and local levels.

Of course, food security and political economy have been closely linked since the early days of history (Swinnen 2018). In many places and times, food shortages triggered political unrest and revolts, from the French Revolution in the late 18th century to the Arab Spring in the early 21st century. Conversely, providing sufficient "bread for the masses" has conferred legitimacy and support for many political rulers and regimes over the centuries. For instance, the dramatic gains in agricultural productivity at the start of the reforms in China increased rice supplies and food security in rural and urban areas and provided popular support for the broader reforms that transformed China into a global powerhouse (Rozelle and Swinnen 2004). Yet, while there have been many studies on the

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political economy of food prices and subsidies and how they relate to hunger, malnutrition, and global food production and consumption, addressing today's food challenges necessitates a broader perspective that accounts for both the growing diversity of actors within the food system and an expansive set of policy objectives beyond just providing sufficient calories.

Consequently, this edited volume delves into the extensive range of political economy factors that affect food system transformation and identifies pathways toward enhancing the political feasibility of necessary policy interventions. The term *food system* refers to the complex web of actors and processes involved in growing, processing, distributing, consuming, and disposing of agricultural commodities, including food but also traditional export crops such as cotton, tea, and coffee. Today, only a minor part of consumer spending on food goes to farmers; the average share is less than 10 percent in rich countries and around 30 percent in many lower- and middle-income countries (Barrett et al. 2022). While agriculture's contribution in terms of employment is larger, it is crucial to integrate the rest of value chain actors and food system participants more broadly into our analyses. A systems lens provides a holistic perspective on these actors, including their interlinkages with one other and with a wider set of development objectives (Eriksen et al. 2010; von Braun et al. 2021).

The focus on *transformation* reflects a growing consensus that current food system objectives must fundamentally expand to improve human and planetary health and resilience (Caron et al. 2018; GLOPAN 2020; Benton et al. 2021; Fanzo 2021; Yates et al. 2021). The rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and obesity combined with stubborn micronutrient deficiencies reflects dietary patterns dominated by ultra-processed foods (Pagliai et al. 2021). Intensive use of fertilizer, pesticides, and herbicides to increase crop output can undermine groundwater quality and create toxic risks to farming communities (El-Nahhal and El-Nahhal 2021; Martínez-Dalmau et al. 2021; Haggblade et al. 2022). Land use expansion often affects biodiversity habitats and greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), worsening the effects of climate change (Lade et al. 2020). These challenges co-exist with a range of other development imperatives, including creating decent jobs for the millions of un- or underemployed, mitigating gender inequalities, and tackling the economic and socio-political marginalization of certain communities. Consequently, there have been a growing number of high-level initiatives to advance food system transformation, including the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit during which 147 countries committed to ensuring their food systems collectively achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Catalyzing food systems transformation entails, at a minimum, policies that improve one objective (e.g., health, incomes, environment) without worsening others, and, at best, advancing progress on multiple objectives simultaneously. Doing so, however, requires anticipating the distribution of winners and losers from certain policy interventions and how those groups might propel or derail

implementation. Such considerations long have been a central focus of extant scholarship on the political economy of agriculture and food policy (Birner and Resnick 2010; Anderson et al. 2013; Pinstrup-Andersen 2015; Swinnen 2018). This volume builds on these insights by applying them to food systems while also extending them to incorporate more interdisciplinary perspectives and diverse methodologies. The applications of political economy analysis in this book encompass input subsidies, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), trade, meat consumption, sugar-sweetened beverage taxes, and ecosystem services, among others. The book's global range of country case studies further allows for probing how political economy factors vary across disparate levels of economic development and political systems.

1.2 The Complexities Underlying Food System Transformation

The need for a political economy lens for the contemporary food system transformation agenda derives from several factors. First, the dynamic, complex, and comprehensive nature of the agenda necessitates concordance and coordination among multiple objectives and actors. Second, due to growing issue linkage, the boundaries of food system decisions are fuzzy, touching on non-traditional areas such as human rights and justice. Third, the influencers on decision making processes are simultaneously more expansive and more polarized due to a growing dependence on social media for information, increased density and discord within transnational advocacy networks, and populist impulses that denigrate evidence-based policymaking. Finally, the norms and institutions of multilateralism have become increasingly stressed in recent years, undermining coordinated efforts to address food system issues that transcend borders and leading instead to a variety of multi-stakeholder initiatives that may lack accountability mechanisms. Each of these issues are discussed in more detail below.

1.2.1 Dynamic and Multi-faceted Nature of Food System Transformation

Food systems are rarely static, but the pace of change for food systems has accelerated in recent decades, with several "revolutions" in livestock, aquaculture, and food retail (Garlock et al. 2020; Reardon et al. 2003; Reardon 2015; Béné 2022). In low- and middle-income countries, agri-food value chains have undergone notable changes, including more expansive food safety standards, greater vertical integration between large processors, supermarkets, and restaurant chains, and more diversity of the food services sector (Barrett et al. 2022). Disruptive technologies have resulted in the emergence of plant-based protein alternatives to meat,

improved food traceability systems, and more targeted use of agriculture inputs (Rowan 2021). In some regions, the Covid-19 pandemic spurred adaptations by food industries that may ensure food systems are more resilient to future shocks (Reardon et al. 2021).

This dynamism in agriculture value chains and food industries holds tremendous opportunities but also engenders a more complex set of political economy considerations. For instance, while traditional political economy dichotomies that contrasted producer interests against those of consumers were always too simplistic, this has become truer in recent decades due to the growth of chemical, finance, insurance, and standards companies in the food industry, among others (Anderson et al. 2013; Swinnen 2015). This has resulted in a more varied set of interest groups, leading to unexpected alliances among actors in some cases and often requiring a broader range of veto players whose concordance is needed to generate policy change. Complicating this landscape is that political parties and politicians are sometimes among these veto players, especially if they are directly involved in agriculture and food industries through, for instance, direct company ownership or seats on company boards (Behuria 2020; Whitfield et al. 2015). For instance, in Maharashtra, India, a majority of private sugar mills historically have been owned by "sugar barons" who are also members of the Congress Party, ensuring that the industry has retained political support despite the negative health and environmental concerns of sugar consumption and production (Lee et al. 2020; Sukhtankar 2012).

Moreover, since food system transformation increasingly is expected to address a wide range of development objectives, it explicitly involves multi-sectoral policy interventions, spanning agriculture, health, environment, trade, finance, and social protection. Coherence across such a broad swath of policy domains not only is challenging but also leads to trade-offs in policy prioritization (Sachs 2015). The sugar sector again offers a case in point. In South Africa, the sector directly and indirectly contributes to the livelihoods of almost half a million people, including many women in deep rural areas (South Africa, Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition 2020). Nonetheless, it is highly water-intensive and contributes to the country's rising obesity levels (Hess et al. 2016; Myers et al. 2017). In 2018, the government through the Ministry of Health adopted a Health Promotion Levy, which prompted food and beverage processors to switch to sugar alternatives. Subsequent declines in sugar production, however, prompted the Department of Trade and Industry to launch the Sugar Industry Value Chain Masterplan, which aims to increase domestic sugar production and retain jobs for small-scale growers through tariff protection (Sikuka 2021; Gabela 2022). In other words, different ministerial and development goals can be difficult to reconcile, and moving toward healthier food systems can sometimes threaten industrial competitiveness and employment prospects for poor populations.

The spread of decentralization initiatives over the last two decades (Rodden and Wibbels 2019) requires policy coherence across scale as well. Local governments increasingly have both greater political autonomy from national authorities and more responsibility for agriculture and health functions (World Bank 2014; Kyle and Resnick 2019; Resnick 2022a). Efforts such as the C40 initiative and the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact have given greater visibility to cities, many of which are forging their own food and environmental goals through deliberative platforms (e.g., food policy councils) that bring together local governments, the private sector, and civil society (Moragues-Faus and Morgan 2015; Cohen 2022). Yet, while such initiatives are important for addressing issues related to food environments and urban agriculture, they are less able to address cross-jurisdictional issues in the food system, such as water consumption, soil depletion, and pesticide and fertilizer use (Cohen 2022).

1.2.2 Issue Linkage and Transnational Advocacy Networks

While agri-food systems are most centrally concerned with improving livelihoods and nutrition, they have become entangled with a broader range of societal goals due to the expansion of transnational advocacy networks and issue linkage. Issue linkage refers to the inter-dependencies among policy domains that might not be immediately apparent. Transnational advocacy networks transcend national boundaries and rely on frames—strategic modes of conveying ideas and norms—to mobilize seemingly disparate groups of people, experts, and organizations for a common purpose (Keck and Sikkink 1999). Some of these advocates on environmental or labor issues have gained greater lobbying power than traditional agricultural interest groups, upending historical forms of policy negotiation and consensus.

Several frames related to food systems have gained resonance among advocacy networks. One is corporate social responsibility (CSR), which focuses on the need for companies to base their value on not only financial considerations but also ecological and social dimensions (Bair and Palpacuer 2015). As part of the rapid expansion of food standards in recent decades by private companies and public regulators to ensure food safety and quality (Swinnen 2015), CSR led to a range of standard certifications to ensure food is produced ethically and to serve as a form of market differentiation to attract consumers (Utting 2015). These standards may exacerbate inequality among smaller and poorer smallholders unable to meet standard requirements, but they can also serve as a mechanism to upgrade poor farmers into higher value chains (Maertens and Swinnen 2009; Swinnen 2018; Hidayati et al. 2021; Barrett et al. 2022). Maier (2021) notes, however, that because CSR depends on an environment of open deliberation that allows for public concerns around issues such as labor conditions or environmental pollution, they have been constrained among businesses operating in authoritarian contexts.

Moreover, as industrial governance in agriculture value chains becomes more complex, so too does the governance of global norms around CSR.

Another frame that motivates transnational advocacy revolves around the "right to food." Development, humanitarian, and nutrition organizations have clustered together in recent decades to elevate access to food as a human right. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights provided the basis for the 1976 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which underscores the right of everyone to be free from hunger. Transnational advocates drew on the ICESCR to legitimate mobilization toward including "right to food" provisions in country constitutions, which more than 30 countries currently have (FAO 2019). However, Jurkovich (2020) examines the imperfect nature of the frame: the right to food varies from traditional human rights norms because the latter largely depends on holding governments accountable while the range of actors involved in the food system—and the structure of international law—complicates enforcement of right to food provisions.

The rights frame has been leveraged by the food sovereignty movement, which emerged through the advocacy of the Via Campesina movement during the 1996 World Food Summit. Sovereignty has been invoked by nation-states for centuries as a justification for protecting national industry from international trade and competition through subsidies, tariffs, and non-tariff barriers and remains one of the top defenses countries use when they oppose a World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling (Sutherland et al. 2004). The food sovereignty movement largely has similar objectives—protecting local production and livelihoods and often critiquing the WTO—but its rationale and organization are qualitatively different from historical antecedents in several ways. First, the movement's advocacy does not center on promoting national sovereignty but often on empowering local communities to define their own food policies and practices as a democratic right (Patel 2009). Second, the movement transcends the boundaries of the nation-state and has allies beyond the farm, including urban-based civil society. Third, the movement goes beyond trade to critique certain scientific advancements, such as biotechnology and large-scale food fortification, as solidifying control of food and agribusiness corporations over smallholders (Nestle 2013; Rock 2022). Although it is not always clear what specific types of policies members of the movement would support (Burnett and Murphy 2014), the movement has expanded citizen engagement in the food system, particularly in the Global South, and has elevated introspection about the potential impacts on the poor of corporate power in the food system.

Overall, the growth and inclusion of civil society actors and transnational advocacy networks fosters richer policy dialogues, expands the food systems agenda, and augments the importance of accountability for policy choices. However, the motivations of such stakeholders are often nuanced and complex. While they may be primarily interested in promoting a broad range of societal goals, advocacy

organizations—like private industry and the public sector—typically rely on mobilizing financial resources to be effective and visible, which can often shape the choice of issues and framings that they target (Arvidson et al. 2018; Resnick et al. 2022).

1.2.3 Populism, Disinformation, and the Threat to Evidence-Based Policymaking

The landscape for engaging on food system policy issues is further mediated by the global wave of populism that began to surge in the 2010s (Moffitt 2016; Plattner 2019; Bauer et al. 2021). The roots of the current populist wave are tied to both demographic transitions and partisan de-alignment whereby traditional class, ethnic, racial, and geographic divides can no longer be easily mapped along a left-right ideological spectrum (Goodwin 2018; Goldberg 2020; Garzia et al. 2022). Grievances with, and declining trust in, traditional parties facilitated the rise of personalistic leaders reliant on Manichean "us" versus "other" worldviews, promising to restore the welfare of the masses and to counter the power of a "corrupt elite." The extremist views pushed by populists, and the growth in social media and non-traditional news networks, have worsened political polarization (Carothers and O'Donohue 2019; Persily and Tucker 2020; Kubin and von Sikorski 2021). In turn, this has created more opportunities for disinformation and bias in the policymaking sphere, reducing the impact of evidence-based analysis on decisions.

The impacts of such dynamics are readily apparent for the food system. Partisan de-alignment means that historical alliances between established parties and particular interest groups, such as farmers, have become weaker in some countries. On the one hand, dislocation, neglect, and decline have affected rural livelihoods and identities in many developed countries, increasing the appeal of populism and alternative movements (Scoones et al. 2018). On the other hand, dissatisfaction with mainstream parties has also favored increased support for green parties, who are now in governing coalitions or national legislatures in at least 24 countries (Bennhold 2019; McBride 2022). Where both these trends have occurred, polarization between environmental goals and farmer interests can be particularly intense.

For instance, in many European countries, the traditional links between farmers, their associations and Christian parties have eroded over time, creating the space for new modes of representation. An example is from the Netherlands where the Farmers Defense Force (FDF) emerged as a new political force in 2019, encompassing agribusiness groups, large entrepreneurial farmers, farm workers, and small-scale family producers. The political movement is guided by a populist discourse that portrays its members as a marginalized underclass due to the

rising prominence of food consumer groups, environmentalists, and animal welfare activists (van der Ploeg 2020). The group relies on large-scale protests and theatrical antics, such as bringing cows to parliament, and questions the government's nitrogen emissions estimates. The farmers have received support from the newly created Farmer-Citizens Movement (Boer Burger Beweging, BBB) party as well as right-wing groups, such as the Forum for Democracy, which declares "there is no climate crisis" (Moses 2022). The FDF helped spur highly disruptive road blockades after the Dutch government announced plans in June 2022 to reduce nitrogen emissions by 50 percent by 2030, and the BBB shocked the political establishment by winning several legislative seats in the Netherlands' 2023 provincial elections.

Opportunities for disinformation and bias are particularly pronounced for issues such as climate change, red and processed meat consumption, GMOs, and genome editing—issues that are especially tied to political ideology and partisanship (Huber 2020). Despite the scientific community highlighting the negative health and environmental impacts of producing and consuming red and processed meat, this message has been filtered through an ideological prism. An analysis of media reports in the US, UK, Australia, and New Zealand revealed that public views on red and processed meat consumption are polarized between "meat lovers" and vegans, with the former viewing the latter as imposing their worldviews and lifestyles on others (Sievert et al. 2022a, 2022b). Michielsen and van der Horst's (2022) analysis of Dutch social media on the same topic revealed that those with right-wing affiliations viewed the anti-meat/alternative protein movement through a populist lens, i.e., driven by a detached and unrepresentative elite that contradicts the preferences of the masses. Similar caricatures have also been leveled at both pro- and anti-supporters of GMOs, particularly in Europe. With the growing sophistication of artificial intelligence capabilities, further possibilities for disinformation on controversial food issues are likely to be on the horizon (Hsu and Thompson 2023).

Data and policy interventions to promote greater nutrition are likewise affected by populist impulses to dismiss evidence and promote misinformation. Soon after his 2019 inauguration, Jair Bolsonaro—Brazil's former right-wing populist president—abolished the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (CONSEA), which was established in 2003 to monitor the country's food security, nutrition labeling, and genetically modified (GMO) foods and had facilitated the inclusion in 2010 of the right to food in Brazil's federal constitution. Bolsonaro claimed the body was no longer useful and dismissed as "lies" data from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization showing that more than five million Brazilians were undernourished (AFP 2019; FIAN 2019). In Australia, an analysis of Twitter accounts of prominent ultra-processed food industry actors revealed that similar discursive tactics have been used by industry to dismiss public health concerns or policy proposals, such as sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) taxes. These include

referring to health experts as "elites" and supporters of a "nanny state," labeling food taxes as "discriminatory" for the poor, and heralding their credentials as job creators for local communities (Hunt 2021). Public relations companies can fuel these divides by flooding the policy landscape with alternative facts via well-placed opinion pieces, sponsored events, and newsletters (Aronczyk and Espinoza 2021).

Partisanship even affects consumers' food choices. Consumer boycotts have long been a way to signify discontent with industry stances while buycotts reward companies for certain behaviors and practices (Copeland 2014). Recent research though highlights the rise in corporate political engagement whereby food industry leaders explicitly take partisan stances that generate consumer preference polarization (Schoenmuller et al. 2022). For instance, Liaukonyte et al. (2022) find that after the CEO of Goya beans expressed support for former President Trump, the company experienced a sales boost in heavily Republican counties in the US.

1.2.4 From Multilateralism to Multi-stakeholderism

The multilateral world order that emerged after World War II was largely based on the norm of liberal internationalism supported by pillars such as trade openness, commitment to rules-based relations, security cooperation, multilateral institutions, and democratic solidarity. However, the retreat of liberal democracy and the rise of populism and nationalism in the US and elsewhere, as well as the growing weight of middle powers (Brazil, India, South Africa, Turkey) excluded from major decision-making, has led many scholars to raise alarm bells about the continuation of this order (Ikenberry 2018; Wright 2021). Sluggish, disconnected, and nationalistic responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and vaccine distribution, stalled multinational peace operations in the Sahel and East Africa, and an inability of international organizations to navigate new challenges, like cybertechnology and artificial intelligence, contribute to questions about the relevance and legitimacy of extant multilateralism (Dworkin and Gowan 2019).

Multilateral institutions, including the United Nations and its food agencies (FAO, IFAD, and WFP), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have been central in inter-governmental negotiations over agricultural policy issues that have interjurisdictional implications (e.g., subsidies, tariffs, climate). Moreover, several multilateral initiatives are at the heart of food systems commitments, including the Paris Climate Change Agreements and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (Lele 2021). However, multilateral engagement has been under strain for some time, most notably with the collapse of the 2005 Doha Round trade negotiations of the WTO over agricultural issues. A more polycentric institutional setting now exists for intergovernmental decisions around food. The forum of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) in 2010 resulted in the club's own declaration on agriculture and agrarian

development (McKeon 2015) while the G20 has also made food security issues a central part of their agenda (Clapp and Murphy 2013). These new sets of actors and forums complicate the prospects of negotiating agreements among countries.

In addition, multilateralism increasingly has been replaced by multi-stakeholderism. The latter relies on individuals representing different "stakeholder" groups, including academia, business, civil society, and government, to arrive at a consensus on relevant issues. As such, its decisions are not necessarily dependent on actions by inter-governmental organizations (Gleckman 2018). Such multi-stakeholderism has become predominant in many spheres, including food systems. Take, for instance, the 2021 Food Systems Summit. Historically, UN food summits, such as in 1996, 2002, and 2009, were multilateral events and nation-states were the featured participants, though they coincided with parallel civil society events (McKeon 2015). The 2021 Summit adopted an explicit multi-stakeholder organization that revolved around national stakeholder dialogues that incorporated views from public, private, and civil society sectors.[1] While this modality increased inclusion and participation to some extent, one of the criticisms of the Summit is that the substantive policy outcomes tied to such broad participation were unclear (Canfield et al. 2021). Indeed, one of the downsides of multi-stakeholderism is that diverse stakeholders are integrated on an ostensibly even playing field despite sizeable power asymmetries that may exist among them. As Gleckman (2018) notes, these asymmetries are different than those between developed and developing nation-states because stakeholders' source of power may be in different domains (e.g., financial, moral, human capital, legitimacy) and also hierarchically ordered (e.g., international NGOs and corporations have more power than local ones); this leads to internal tensions over issues, framing, and actions. Moreover, because participants in multi-stakeholder platforms are not required to report to, or receive direction from, the intergovernmental community of nation-states, they often lack clear and binding rules over rights, obligations, and accountability for decisions (Manahan and Kumar 2021). Consequently, trade-offs between inclusion of diverse voices and implementation of complex reforms can become even more intense.

1.3 Political Economy Drivers of Policy Choices

These debates within the food system, as well as shifting political and institutional dynamics beyond the food system, provide the backdrop to this current volume. Indeed, the book recognizes that food system transformation is not simply the by-product of improved technology and innovation but rather requires also grappling

[1] The UNFSS website notes that 1,676 dialogues were announced with more than 100,000 participants.

with the above, underlying political context. Different political economy traditions and methods are interwoven to uncover various dimensions of food system transformation from global, regional, national, and local case perspectives spanning high-, medium-, and low-income economies. Collectively, the contributions to the book reveal that transforming agri-food systems requires a comprehensive analysis of four, interconnected "spaces" that shape the prospects for policy reform over time, geography, or sector: incentives, mobilization, design, and adaptation. The term "space" connotes both a domain of focus and the degree of maneuver with respect to a particular policy issue (Jackson 2021). Figure 1.1 illustrates these spaces and their relationships with each other.

1.3.1 Incentives Space

The incentives for reform in any policy sphere require considering the costs and benefits of potential policy reforms, different actors' interests, ideas, and values, as well as the structure of institutions in a given context. The distribution of costs and benefits typically reflects the nature of the policy instrument under consideration to advance reforms. Different instruments have disparate impacts on who is affected, for how long, and to what degree (Swinnen 2018). They also though have different degrees of public salience, meaning that some policies, such as income taxes, capture the attention of the public more than others, such as corporate

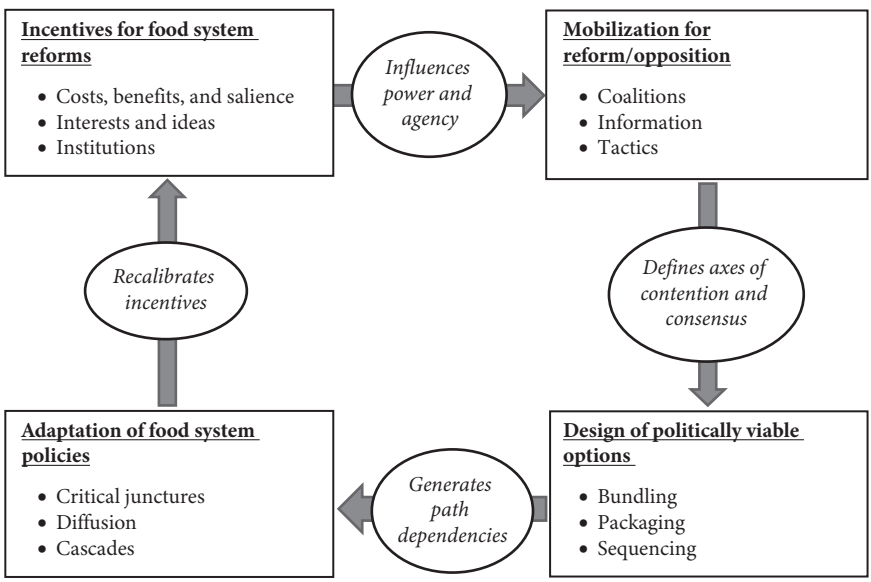

Figure 1.1 Political economy considerations for food system reforms.

governance regulations, because the implications are more readily understandable and more directly felt (Culpepper 2010).

Whether different groups identify a policy issue as salient to them and whether they perceive costs as acceptable or unjustified often depends on their interests, ideas, and values. Vested interests, whether by political elites, private enterprises, or voters, are at the heart of political economy and influenced seminal works on food and agriculture, such as Bates (1981). Interests typically derive from one's place in the political and economic sphere. For example, if profit maximization is the main interest of private sector entities, then they will lobby for policies that support those goals, such as tariff protection (Grossman and Helpman 1994) or against ones that threaten them, such as removing production subsidies. If politicians' main interest is staying in office and winning votes, then they will prioritize policies that maximize that likelihood regardless of potential negative externalities. For instance, despite potential negative environmental impacts and middling efficacy, fertilizer input subsidies have sometimes been driven by politicians' interests to retain support of sizeable voting constituencies (Dionne and Horowitz 2016; Mason et al. 2017).

In addition to interests, which primarily capture how policies may affect these materialist concerns, political economists have long recognized the importance of ideas as drivers or barriers to policy change (Hayek 1949). Ideas affect perceptions of viable and unacceptable policy orientations involving, for instance, the role of the state versus the market, nationalism versus globalism, and nature versus technology. They often derive from inter-subjective understandings of the world based on historical experience, cultural traditions, views of one's identity, and even familial upbringing (Blyth 1997; Abdelal 2009). Such ideas, for instance, can shape consumer willingness to pay taxes on certain foods or to accept GMO or fortified foods as well as influence national governments' decisions about agricultural trade policies (see Schonhardt-Bailey 2006).

Institutions condition expectations about outcomes, thereby influencing interests, ideas, and values, as well as shaping which voices prevail in the policy arena. Organizational institutions, such as business lobbies or farmers' associations, can enhance lobbying efforts. Political institutions, such as electoral rules, constitutions, or regulations, delineate the range of veto players who need to be on board with a policy in order for change to occur (Tsebelis 2002; Olper and Raimondi 2010). Media institutions, including mass media and social media corporations, structure the types of interests and ideas that are communicated to the public, often with a bias toward negative news and "echo chamber" effects that tend to exacerbate fears about food science innovations (McCluskey et al. 2016) and sometimes worsen political polarization (Bail 2021). Global and regional institutions, such as the WTO, Codex, European Union (EU), NAFTA, and others can bind countries' trade, investment, and fiscal policy decisions. The binding effects of institutions has led to a growing debate about whether an Intergovernmental Panel for Food,

similar to that for climate change, is needed to keep governments accountable for their food system commitments (von Braun and Birner 2017; Clapp et al. 2021). Outside of crisis periods, institutions are difficult to reform and typically only change incrementally through institutional layering, which involves grafting new elements onto an extant institutional framework (Mahoney and Thelen 2010).

Collectively, these components of the incentives space can influence the degree of power of different policy stakeholders. Power conveys both a relational dynamic whereby one actor causes another to do something (i.e., power *over*), and an aspirational dynamic whereby one actor has the agency to bring about a particular outcome (i.e., power *to*) (Dowding 1996). The role of relational power in the food system has received increased attention in recent years (Leach et al. 2020; Baker et al. 2021). Such power can be encapsulated by the degree of economic concentration in certain parts of an agricultural value chain, which shapes different value chain actors' access to inputs and distribution of profits. For instance, several studies focus particularly on growing corporate power in the global agri-food system due to numerous business mergers in recent years (Clapp 2021, 2022; Clapp and Fuchs 2009; McKeon 2015), affecting everything from fertilizers and seeds to animal pharmaceuticals to food and beverage industries (IPES 2017). As noted earlier, there are other sources of power among stakeholders, such as ideational power exerted by epistemic communities in the donor, academic, and development communities (Haas 1992). Power can also manifest via decision-making structures within the public administration, such as when certain ministries have more clout and resources than others, and within a country's political settlement when particular elites within political parties exert more influence. At the same time, incentive structures can facilitate certain interest groups' aspirational power, contributing to their agency to mobilize either in favor of food system reforms or in defense of the status quo.

1.3.2 Mobilizational Space

The mobilizational space captures how stakeholders converge and lobby to either achieve their policy goals within the agri-food system or prevent others from doing so. Coalitions are at the heart of many agriculture and food policy reforms. As noted earlier, the range of coalitions related to agri-food system issues is increasingly complex, related to greater diversity of actors along global value chains and the expansion of transnational networks on health and nutrition, labor rights, and environmental justice. Some of these coalitions are complementarity in their interests, such as European farmers concerned about unfair trading practices by processors and retailers (Swinnen et al. 2021). Others may share similar values—such as improved nutrition or market reforms—but disagree over which policy instruments are needed to achieve these outcomes.

Information is a powerful tool for coalitions to advance their positions and, as noted earlier, can be conveyed through mass media and social media tools, as well as dissemination of empirical analyses. Indeed, there has been a flurry of support around evidence-based policymaking over the last decade (Cairney 2017). Improving access to information and awareness of different coalitions' concerns could reveal opportunities for policy alignment. Yet, as noted earlier, sometimes facts and evidence, even from rigorously designed research studies, are accepted or rejected based on how well they resonate with one's values and experiences as well as even one's partisan views (MacKillop and Downe 2022). Moreover, some people may avoid accessing information if they feel overwhelmed with conflicting messages or have strong ideological biases.

Coalitions often use multiple tactics to convey information and their policy positions. These include strategic framing of issue areas that re-formulate the policy problem or policy solution (Chong and Druckman 2007) and downplaying certain facts while highlighting others. To achieve this, some actively work with professional public relations firms (Aronczyk 2022). For instance, in Nigeria, the 2021 Finance Act include a sugar-sweetened beverage tax that reflected a coalition of national civil society groups supporting public health and working with Gatefield public relations and media group to frame their message accordingly.[2] Aggressive media campaigns for and against sugar taxes, well-organized protests against market procurement reforms, and annual flagship reports against food pesticides are just some of the tactics described by authors in this book. In other cases, coalitions rely on "quiet politics" behind closed doors to negotiate concessions from governments (Culpepper 2010; Gaventa 2006).

1.3.3 Design Space

The ways in which different groups form coalitions, employ different types of information, and engage in other strategic tactics collectively define the axes of contention and consensus vis-à-vis the relevant policy issue and informs which policy designs might be most politically viable. The design space elaborated on in this book focuses on three design features: bundling, packaging, and sequencing. Bundling involves concurrently combining several socio-technical innovations in recognition that no single intervention will be sufficient to tackle today's agri-food system challenges. At the same time, this approach has a political rationale since potential opponents to a one-off reform may be otherwise appeased with concessions embedded within a broader policy bundle. Indeed,

[2] See https://advocacyincubator.org/2022/01/19/nigerian-advocates-celebrate-sugar-sweetened-beverage-tax-signed-into-law/.

just like a crowded legislative bill, a policy intervention with multiple, intersecting dimensions becomes more difficult for interest groups to assess how they may be materially disadvantaged by the interventions and therefore more difficult to oppose.

Although a similar concept, policy packaging is more narrowly focused on one particular policy problem, such as reducing meat consumption or increased use of conservation farming techniques. The packaging approach relies on identifying the combination of taxes, regulation, subsidies, and information campaigns that the public would be most willing to accept to tackle that policy problem. There will be variations in acceptable policy packaging across countries due to differing cultural values, policy framing, and trust in government capacity.

Policy sequencing refers to the order in which policies are implemented and the time required to achieve impact. Because mandates for different segments of the agri-food system typically fall under different government entities, policies rarely can be implemented simultaneously. Moreover, some policies are administratively easier to implement than others and are therefore prioritized. Research on policy feedback loops and path dependency reveals that poor execution of certain policy bundles or packages can increase public resistance to subsequent portions of such interventions (Bruch et al. 2010; Lerman and McCabe 2017). If public backlash and (mis)information can gain a foothold, then pro-reform coalitions may lose momentum or fragment.

Precisely because bundling, packaging, and sequencing involve combining multiple instruments in a particular way and/or building pro-reform constituencies from several different groups, they can become hard to unravel. Over time, these configurations of policies or coalitions can become path dependent and difficult to upend, even in the face of new policy challenges and interest groups. Yet, as noted earlier, food systems historically have been dynamic, demonstrating that they can adapt under the right conditions.

1.3.4 Adaptive Space

The adaptive space enables policies to shift as a result of new dynamics across geographies and time. Historically, slower moving changes, such as urbanization, economic industrialization, and technological innovation have reconfigured major agricultural policy decisions by shifting land ownership patterns and the weight of different interest groups (e.g., Schonhardt-Bailey 2006; Swinnen 2011; Samuels and Thomson 2021). In this volume, we focus on other drivers of policy adaptation, focusing on critical junctures, diffusion, and cascades, all of which ultimately reconfigure the original incentive structures. Critical junctures are turning points that may be generated by a shock, such as an economic, environmental,

political, or health crisis (Collier and Collier 1991). For instance, food safety crises have precipitated improved food quality regulation in many countries (Swinnen 2017) while the impacts of COVID-19 and the Ukraine war necessitated shifts in many countries' agricultural and food policies. Critical junctures can also be less dramatic and involve the opening of a window of opportunity due to, for example, a shift in a political administration (Kingdon 1995). Indeed, the emergence of green parties, especially in Europe, has created a window of opportunity to press forward with food system reforms intended to promote biodiversity (OECD 2017).

Policy diffusion refers to the transfer and adoption of policy ideas and options through epistemic communities and transnational advocacy networks and through bureaucrats and industrial leaders seeking lessons about what policy tools have been used in similar settings or for similar issues (Weyland 2005; Berry and Berry 2007; Graham et al. 2013). The growing shift to promoting dietary diversity rather than solely caloric intake, the emergence of models for ecosystem payment services, food fortification, and the spread of sugar-sweetened beverage taxes are just a few examples of policy diffusion across borders. Similarly, despite some of their weaknesses, multi-stakeholder platforms and food policy councils continue to gain greater salience across countries to address food system challenges, especially at the local level (Resnick 2022b).

Another form of policy diffusion includes accountability mechanisms such as citizen scorecards, peer review mechanisms, and corporate transparency metrics (see Lewis 2015; Kelley 2017). Past and current efforts in the arena of food and nutrition security include Hunger and Nutrition Commitment Indices, the Enabling the Business of Agriculture Index, and the Africa Agriculture Transformation Scorecards. The intention of such efforts is to publicize or shame government or companies for good or bad performance, therefore acting as an incentive to improve. As such, these accountability initiatives assume that governments or industries care about their reputations and will be compelled to change their behaviors.

Policy cascades occur when information and knowledge is successively passed on, gaining momentum along the way. Like water, cascades gain their potency from some commanding heights (Braithwaite and D'Costa 2018), whether a strong political executive or agency or supranational body. The African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) initiative on agricultural spending, the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy, or the hundreds of national food system policy dialogues set up via the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) are all forms of policy cascades whereby decisions made at a higher level are anticipated to percolate downward. The efficacy of such cascades can depend on congruence with nation-states' legal systems, regulatory structures, and financial resources.

1.4 Summary of the Book

One or more of the above elements from Figure 1.1 permeates each of the chapters of this volume, which are organized into four parts. Part I examines in greater depth the various components of the incentives space. Chapter 2 by Koen Deconinck nicely sets the scene on this topic by differentiating between facts, interests, and values, noting that the latter is the most intractable for reform efforts. Disagreements over facts can be rectified potentially with more evidence or better communication, and contention over interests can be fixed through bargaining. Yet, disagreements over values can reflect more fundamental differences in cultural background, psychology, and even views on morality. As Deconinck emphasizes, some people attach more value to natural foods, others place a premium on supporting family farms, while still others may find government intervention in food decisions problematic. He offers several ways of dealing with differences over values in the food system, including drawing on deliberative processes whereby citizens with disparate values use various fora, such as citizens' assemblies with skilled facilitators, to discuss their policy preferences and where those preferences originate.

Interests, institutions, and ideas are common dimensions in both Chapters 3 and 4. In Chapter 3, Rob Vos, Will Martin, and Danielle Resnick examine the challenge of repurposing agricultural support policies, especially subsidies. Currently, governments provide over US$800 billion annually in transfers to agriculture, but there are concerns about how such transfers accelerate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from agriculture, exacerbate inequalities among farmers and across countries, and undermine dietary diversity. Repurposing such support was strongly emphasized during the 2021 UNFSS, and global modeling scenarios suggest that repurposing subsidies toward agricultural research and development as well as rural infrastructure would improve productivity and diminish GHG emissions. However, the political economy of agricultural repurposing is the major bottleneck. They demonstrate how interests, ideas, and institutions intersect through four cases of agricultural support policy reform, including failed efforts at market procurement in India, successful shifts to increased agricultural research and development in China, successive reforms of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and unintended consequences of support for the US biofuels mandate.

In Chapter 4, Kym Anderson and Anna Strutt further examine agricultural support policies with a specific focus on how such policies have evolved over time in advanced economies, moving from mostly price support at the border (e.g., import tariffs, licenses and quotas, export subsidies) to increasingly more direct payments to farmers and priced ecosystem services. Anderson and Strutt estimate the contemporary welfare costs of these different supports for agriculture

using a global, economywide Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP) model and compare the costs of those policies to estimates from 2001. They find that full liberalization of the agriculture and food sectors in 2017 would have led to an increase in almost $50 billion globally per year, mostly from tariff removal and then domestic subsidy removal. While part of the benefits from this liberalization would accrue to advanced economies, an equivalent share would also go to developing countries—a contrast from 2001. This means that developing countries are also supporting their farmers much more than at the start of the Doha Round of the WTO, suggesting that reforms via that multilateral institution are increasingly unlikely. However, Anderson and Strutt see some potential in domestic alliances among farmers and environmentalists, at least in advanced economies, to push for policy instruments at the national level that can support both farmer welfare and the environment.

Part II encompasses chapters that more directly focus on coalitions that mobilize for or against reform. In Chapter 5, Johan Swinnen and Danielle Resnick note that coalitions often are viewed as a panacea and were elevated as part of the UNFSS. Yet, historically, political economy analyses of coalitions have defaulted to simplistic models whereby producers' interests are pitted against those of consumers. In reality, processes of economic development and globalization have led to the rise of many more interest groups in the food system, including animal feed supplies, insurance providers, food processors, distributors, and retailers, and sometimes lead to alliances among unlikely actors. Drawing on global examples, they examine vertical, cross-issue, and transnational coalitions. Vertical coalitions occur along the value chains and sometimes result in producers and agro-processors being aligned on certain issues while consumers and food retailers may be united on others, such as food safety. Cross-issue coalitions tie agricultural production to broader concerns about the environment as well as food quality and nutrition and can vary both cross-nationally and sub-nationally. Transnational coalitions refer to those among domestic agricultural and food groups with international organizations, social movements, multinational corporations, and other sovereign governments. Swinnen and Resnick discuss how coalitions formed to push similar policy instruments but for different policy goals (e.g., profit versus planetary health) are often unsustainable. They further explore some of the institutional prerequisites for coalition formation and why some coalitions shift over time.

One area where transnational coalition formation has been relatively successful is with respect to sugar-sweetened beverage taxes. While taxes are a common policy instrument for trying to alter consumption behavior of certain types of unhealthy foods, they are typically opposed by powerful opponents from food and beverage industries. In Chapter 6, Eduardo Gómez addresses this political economy challenge by examining how the governments of three middle-income countries with high levels of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)—India, Mexico, and

South Africa—were able to implement sugar-sweetened beverage taxes despite intense opposition from powerful corporations. He highlights several factors that generated supportive coalitions, including the importance of transnational advocacy in each country as well as governments' interest in generating more revenue from the tax. By contrast, regulatory measures to regulate the soda and snack food industries have been less accepted by the same governments because such coalitions are weaker, regulation is less likely to generate the same level of public contestation and visibility (i.e., salience), and the prospect for generating government revenue is less pronounced.

Beyond South Africa, rising NCDs are also problematic in other parts of Africa, which is rapidly urbanizing and where affordable ultra-processed foods are increasingly available. In Chapter 7, Jonathan Mockshell and Thea Ritter apply the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) to the case of Ghana, drawing on primary interviews with a diverse set of stakeholders in several Ghanaian cities, including Accra, Cape Coast, Kumasi, and Koforidua. In the ACF, actors with similar perception, values, and beliefs form a discourse and advocacy coalition to address a policy problem. Likewise, Mockshell and Ritter uncover commonalities and differences among public, private, and civil society coalitions vis-à-vis ultra-processed foods. Their discourse analysis reveals shared beliefs among all coalitions around high food prices and the need for more regulation. In addition, there are independent beliefs that vary by stakeholder on the motivation of profits, production incentives, and state capacity, as well as divergent policy beliefs across coalitions on public awareness, education, and advocacy. The analysis helps identify opportunities for the types of coalition alignment reviewed by Swinnen and Resnick and a starting point for the types of deliberative approaches discussed by Deconinck.

In Chapter 8 Jody Harris likewise employs the ACF, along with policy transfer theory, and the power cube approach to understand the diffusion of international ideas on nutrition to the domestic policy context in Zambia. Drawing on an extensive number of in-depth interviews in the country, she finds that international advocates pushed a nutrition agenda around stunting that increasingly shaped the country's health and agriculture sectors, displacing national policymakers' priority around food security. This international policy agenda was transferred to the domestic sphere through normative evidence, global social norms, treaty obligations, and funding—and with different forms of power working in different policy spaces shaping each of these mechanisms. Notably, citizen voice is largely absent from these national policy processes in low-income countries, raising important questions about the legitimacy of certain food system agendas and often reflecting asymmetric power relations. Consequently, her chapter calls for explicit analysis of structural power in food policy research and action and suggests existing practice-friendly frameworks that can be used for this purpose.

Part III delves more into design spaces. In Chapter 9, Chris Barrett highlights three benefits to bundling socio-technical innovations for agri-food systems.

First, most scientific, technical innovations—whether alternative protein sources or genetic advances in rice during the Green Revolution—were transformative precisely because they were complemented by a suite of institutional and cultural innovations as well. Second, no intervention can entirely solve food system problems, especially when accounting for diversity in priorities both across and within countries. Third, as noted earlier, bundles help defuse resistance to innovation across risk-averse interest groups by broadening the policy agenda and therefore facilitating the potential for progressive coalitions to unite. This is particularly due to the Kaldor-Hicks compensation criterion, which suggests that innovations are desirable if and only if they meet Pareto conditions, i.e., the losers can be compensated in a way that the winners still remain better off. Bundling can help satisfy this criterion by finding multiple Pareto improvements that provide net gains greater than under just one policy intervention alone. Barrett illustrates his argument through case studies of the success of China's Science and Technology Backyards program, differential acceptance of genetic improvements in rice, and the adoption of Bt brinjal in Bangladesh but not India.

In Chapter 10, Robert Paarlberg demonstrates the role of policy sequencing by examining four important food production innovations that have been favored by scientists but opposed by influential swathes of the public. This includes Green Revolution farming, industrial agriculture, the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides versus organic farming, and genetically engineered crops (e.g. GMOs). In Paarlberg's view, popular critics see these innovations as putting nature at risk, even though agricultural scientists view them as more nature-protecting than the methods they replaced. Notably, while three of the four innovations remain in widespread use despite civil society opposition, GMOs are not; the world's most important food crops, such as wheat, rice, potato, and nearly all fruits and vegetables, are not being commercially grown anywhere today in GMO form. Policy sequencing is one reason because activists raised strong objections early with respect to GMOs, before the seeds were in wide use, and therefore most farmers never had a chance to enjoy and then defend the benefits. Gene-edited crops, a more recent biotechnology innovation, have also met early resistance prior to wide deployment, suggesting a parallel threat to future uptake. However, Paarlberg observes offsetting factors, including the absence of foreign DNA in most genome-edited crops, that may make wide deployment more likely.

Policy packaging is a major focus of Chapter 11 by Lukas Fesenfeld and Yixian Sun. They look at meat consumption, especially in high-income countries, which is viewed as one of the key factors affecting environmental sustainability. Nevertheless, government policies aiming to effectively reduce meat consumption and redesign the food system face potential public backlash given that such policies often intervene in people's everyday life and consumption habits, i.e., targeting the values discussed by Deconinck. Therefore, Fesenfeld and Sun examine the role of public opinion in food system transformation through representative surveys of

almost 5,000 respondents in Germany, China, and the US. They find that citizens' support for policy packages to transform the food system strongly depends on policy packaging, i.e., combining policy instruments to foster innovations and adoption of meat alternatives (e.g., discounts for meat alternatives) with policies to reduce meat consumption (e.g., higher taxes on meat). While drawing on framing tactics can also have positive effects on public opinion, these are much smaller than those of policy design. Fesenfeld and Sun further suggest that policy sequencing of protein alternative options with taxes on meat is likely to create feedback effects, enabling what they term "positive tipping points" in public support for policies to reduce meat consumption; in other words, as the public gains more experience with novel meat substitutes, it further increases public support for taxes on meat.

Part IV examines adaptive spaces in more depth, with a particular focus on implementation of food system reform at local, regional, and global scales. In Chapter 12, Gareth Haysom and Jane Battersby focus on the local level, considering how to enhance urban food governance processes in African cities. Indeed, urban food systems in many African cities are governed by multiple municipal entities with minimal coherence and who often lack sufficient administrative and fiscal autonomy to address the food needs of local communities. Moreover, colonial legacies result in a production bias that still dominates food and nutrition security governance frameworks in the region. Operationally, this results in local governments adopting an orientation toward food availability while disregarding structural and policy food system challenges that impact access, utilization, and stability. In addition, urban food governance activities are complicated by the fact that different scales of government all engage different external actors—particularly multilateral organizations, donors, and transnational civil society organizations—who may advocate redundant or contradictory policy interventions. Such external actors can stimulate the diffusion of policy examples implemented elsewhere, such as multi-stakeholder food policy councils. However, these models are sometimes incongruent with the limited resources, capacities, and functional mandates of African city governments as well as perpetuate some of the challenges of multi-stakeholderism discussed above. Recognizing these issues, the authors advance a framework to help consider more contextually appropriate strategies for governing urban food systems, drawing on examples from Cape Town, South Africa.

In Chapter 13, Alan Matthews, Jeroen Candel, Nel de Mûelenaere, and Pauline Scheelbeek focus on cross-jurisdictional implementation at the regional level, particularly among countries within the EU. The EU is a system of multi-level governance where policy competencies are shared between the Union level, Member States, and regions and local governments, and it acts as a venue for policy cascades. The EU has set ambitious goals for the transformation of its agricultural and food systems in the European Green Deal and plans to introduce legislation on a sustainable food systems framework in 2023. While there has been

widespread support for the expressed policy objectives embodied in these initiatives, disagreements exist on the strategies to achieve these policy goals and on the pace of change. The authors argue that political leadership is needed to avoid the unraveling of these plans for food system transformation, noting that while the EU Commission has provided this leadership in formulating the Green Deal package, national governments more exposed to the vagaries of electoral fortune are often more hesitant. Moreover, while EU food policymaking has for a long time been low in salience and left to a closed policy community, the recent emergence of new players and views marks its rise to the top of EU political agendas. Therefore, a central challenge will be to avoid the spread of identity politics and disinformation, and preventing what Matthews and co-authors refer to as "dialogues of the deaf" and an erosion of basic rules of the game, such as respecting scientific evidence and legal commitments.

Chapter 14 adopts a global perspective to implementing food systems commitments in a world increasingly characterized by multi-stakeholderism. Stella Nordhagen and Jessica Fanzo emphasize that the world is at a critical juncture to move toward a food system that provides healthy diets from sustainable nature-positive supply chains that support equitable livelihoods. At the same time, they observe that there is less than a decade until the SDG deadline and while many commitments and goals have been set to improve food systems, such efforts will have no impact if they are not followed by concrete, near-term action by key actors (including governments, donors, and the large variety of private-sector organizations). Reflecting the essence of policy diffusion, they draw on the growing trend of using data and performance metrics to enhance accountability for progress on food systems transformation at the global level. After reviewing several reports and tracking mechanisms that currently exist for various sub-aspects and outcomes of food systems, they conclude that none is comprehensive enough to address all the diverse outcomes of food systems. Instead, they provide details about what such mechanisms would need to encompass to effectively enhance accountability of public and private sector actors to their constituents.

Chapter 15 by Danielle Resnick and Johan Swinnen provides concluding remarks, drawing together common points from across the chapters relevant to the political economy framework presented in this introduction. For instance, in terms of incentive structures, they highlight the range of trade-offs—between interests and ideas, societal welfare and individual gain, and short-term certainty and long-term risks—that emerge when trying to reconcile different development objectives and policy instruments for the food system. In the mobilizational space, coalitions feature heavily in the volume, especially transnational ones. These coalitions can bolster the efforts of domestic allies through resources and visibility but, due to power asymmetries, can sometimes lead to the imposition of external preferences on local partners. Policy narratives, framing techniques, and provocative marketing are just some of the tactics that the contributors identify such

coalitions employing to advance their causes. Bundling can help overcome political opposition by linking policies that disparate groups support while packaging taps into the right framing to resonate with possible reform dissenters. Deliberate sequencing can facilitate incremental reforms while unintended sequencing may foreclose certain policy opportunities. Finally, certain dynamics in the adaptive space, especially fiscal and food price policy shocks, have helped shift policy path dependencies. Other adaptive drivers, such as policy diffusion and policy cascades, are equally powerful in facilitating reforms but need to be congruent with relevant capacities and institutional mandates to result in effective implementation. The authors further identify several areas for future research to advance political economy analyses on food systems transformation, including how partisan dynamics affect the tactics of negotiation between interest groups and decisionmakers, processes to establish trust to ensure broad reform buy-in, and how to build political constituencies for low visibility public goods, such as agricultural research and development.

1.5 Conclusions

Food holds disparate meanings to so many different constituencies—as a source of profit, a provider of nutrients, and a conduit of cultural traditions—and often epitomizes a vast network of political, financial, and global decisions about how it is produced, where it is sourced, and what it costs. Consequently, while few disagree with high-level goals of a transformed agri-food system, the policy pathways for achieving such a vision are inevitably contested, and the enabling conditions for implementation frequently absent. By bringing together a global group of interdisciplinary and applied scholars examining different political economy elements as they relate to the food system, this book demonstrates how incentive structures, mobilizational modalities, policy designs, and drivers of adaptation intersect and shape the menu of viable options to advance the ambitious transformation agenda.

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