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A Critical Analysis.

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Foreword

I have spent half of my academic education at the Department of International Development of the University of Vienna focusing on the injustices of the global food system–realizing early on that they are perpetuated by little more than ignorant consumption within fixed power structures dictating global policies, or policies with global consequences.
The other half of my academic education was spent on being fascinated by the possibilities of mass media: creating memories that were perhaps never there–making, abusing changing history; producing cultural icons and political symbols–leading the masses; informing a public, criticizing the rulers–emancipating viewers and readers; critical emancipatory education turning ignorant consumption into purposeful living.

The following pages are some results of more than five years of studies and contemplations.

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1. Introduction

A 2012 study by the *Union of Concerned Scientists* found that the US American media outlets *Fox News* and *The Wall Street Journal* were greatly misleading their audiences on the topic of climate change. Their reporting either questioned or dismissed the occurrence of climate change or the fact that it is largely driven by human activities. (Huertas/Adler 2012) The *Fox News* Channel and *The Wall Street Journal* are one of the most popular media outlets in the United States. They are read and viewed by millions of Americans every day in order to be informed about the world around them.

Mass media, such as this television news channel and newspaper, are drivers and mirrors of social and political developments. They are the platforms and settings in which debates about policies and changes are set–where knowledge and definitions are created. They are a setting of reflection about social change, as well as judgments about events, processes and developments, inside and outside certain cultural spheres. They are channels of connecting and communicating globally, informing a global public about global realities. They are the looking glasses through which the North views the South, through which conditions such as poverty or hunger, social or economic inequalities are looked at and evaluated. They are tools to voice opinions, whether consent or criticism, analysis or call for action. Individuals or interest groups with dominant access to media can influence the public by guiding its eye in a certain direction thus creating awareness for certain issues.

Mixed with the responsibility to inform and educate, it is the media's additional job of entertaining, showing people what they want to see. Telling viewers and readers what they're already thinking, what they want to hear and what they are (or should be) interested in, is a process of cultural reaffirmation. By transporting and shaping cultural values, morals and codes of conduct, mass media explain and portray a society to itself or, if coming from a critical perspective, perform a self-examination, –evaluation and -reflection on certain assignments of meaning in a society (Walsh/Platt 2005).

Similarly, the global food system is a force as well as an effect of the globalization process, connecting fields and tables across the entire world. Based greatly on the exploitation of peasant farmers and workers in the global south, as well as the natural environment, it is also a structure systematically increasing inequalities on a global scale. Driven on and sustained by a consumer culture expecting convenience and luxury, flexibility and meritocracy, and an economic ideology of striving for growth and profits, it has vastly expanded throughout the last century (Weis 2007b). Its heart and soul is a globalized system of capitalistic

industrialized agriculture, turning every farm into a business, nature into a production input and food into a commodity, bought and paid for. Only through vast and intransparent commodity chains, monocultures and factory farming has it managed to produce food in those masses and for such low prices to European and North American consumers.

The objective of this paper is to assess the connection between norms and ideals present in the medial discourse of North American and European societies about their relation to and position within the global food system, and existing social inequalities and ecological consequences thereof. Based on the approaches of *Political Ecology* and *Critical Discourse Analysis*, this thesis tries to elaborate on the social phenomena of talking about hunger and the unequal global distribution of food. As critical self-reflection is necessary for social change, social development, creating awareness and a change of values in Western industrialized societies is an important part of the struggle for North-South equity. The way a society reflects on a system of structural inequalities, especially on its role in producing and sustaining these, shows how it will continue to deal with these structures and what it is willing to do to change them. The global system of food production, starvation and hunger, the exploitation of other people and the natural environment is just one example. Media at least theoretically have the possibility to inform their societies about these structural inequalities that they themselves are part of, which they profit from, strengthen, live and consume with, voted for or at least have the opportunity to change.

Problem Analysis

Yet while severe episodic famines occasionally make the news in rich countries, the enduring famine of the 'continent of the hungry' is a near silent one

-Tony Weis (2007: 11)

As the media are such powerful tools, forming the platforms and structures of social and public debate, it is troubling to see their continuous commoditization in the globalized capitalistic system. In praxis this means that the media become increasingly dependent on international businesses and industries via their advertising and sponsorship, since private funding is a significant part of the free market forces of supply and demand. Programs not reaching the expected viewer ratings are canceled. The content has to be popular in order to stay on the air or in print.

The monetization of media production means that its access is more and more reserved for elites. Consequently only they have the possibility to form and influence policies and social

developments using this efficient instrument. In this process, the media gradually lose the democratic and empowering characteristics they used to own when they were potentially available to anyone. Its distribution of influence on production of knowledge becomes increasingly unequal.

This mismatch has enormous implications on the medial discourse, especially about global political issues. Critical voices questioning the system and calling for change and perspectives of minorities continue to stay unreflected as they are denied a real platform for debate. At the same time, penetrant medial illusions support the ideals of mass consumption, materialism and profit.

Due to this populistic media focus the systematic exploitation of farmers through the global food system as well as its chronically unequal distribution in favor of Western consumer cultures can remain in the social unconsciousness and hidden from a great majority of the people, despite the vast expansion and accessibility of global media and communication systems.

Hypotheses

1. Media are mirrors as well as drivers of social and cultural developments. They articulate the political culture of a society, as well as provide a platform for social discourse and debate.

2. Media inform their public and create awareness, are therefore tools for producing knowledge. In a global context, they provide people with a window through which they look onto other countries and cultures.

3. The global food system is shaped through uneven power relations and contradictions. Transnational corporations originating in the US and the EU retain market power over producers in the global South. It continuously produces inequalities and damages the natural environment, while it serves as the basis for Western consumer culture.

4. The commoditization of media production and products in the course of capitalistic developments during the second half of the 20th century contributes to ignorance in Western industrialized societies of inequalities and structural hunger produced by the global food system.

From these, the following research questions develop:

Research Questions

Founded on the case of the 2007/2008 Food Crisis coverage by *The Washington Post* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* how is the global food system portrayed in western print media*?*

Does content and form of discourse in the mass media reflect the hierarchies of power in the global food system?

In what way do mass media critically inform the public on issues of global agriculture and food policies, as well as their role as contributors to structural inequalities?

Approach

This paper draws mainly on two scientific approaches, that of *Political Ecology* and that of *Critical Discourse Analysis.*

The approach of *Political Ecology* focuses on the connection between human conduct and nature, within the socio-ecological context of men and women in their natural environment (Mayer-Tasch 1999: 14). It examines nature in relation to society, arguing that the relationship is always a political and social one, not dividing between the political and the ecological realm, but considering them as one (Latour 2012). Thus, neo-liberalism is not just an economic project, but also an ecological one, changing the "societal appropriation of nature" (Brand 2009b: 3). It assumes that the way a society talks about its natural environment stands in relation to the way it accumulates and consumes it.

The approach of *Critical Discourse Analysis* sees discourse as a social practice and as a social event, operating and operated within social structures, values and ideologies. It assumes that "language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life" (Fairclough 2003: 2). This is an approach dating back to Michael Foucault (1972) as well as neo-gramscians Laclau and Mouffe (1985), who see discourse trenched with power relations and a tool for expressing these (Fairclough 2003: 2, 45). *Critical Discourse Analysis* is, due to its critical element, a normative method, assessing what exists (could and should), based on a coherent set of values and concentrates on understanding the nature of social wrongs, injustices and inequalities. The linguist Norman Fairclough focusses on how language and discourse are influenced by such processes as neo-liberal capitalism and globalization, for example. (See Fairclough 2003: 4ff.; 2010: 7ff., 234ff.)

Critical Discourse Analysis involves on the one hand an analysis of the order of discourse, i.e. the social practices, institutions and organisations from which the disourses, genres and styles

stem, and on the other hand a detailed analysis of the text and its language (including style and genre) (Fairclough 2003: 2f; 2010: 7). This paper will therefore firstly elaborate on the theory of the relations between media (texts) and society, in what ways producing as well as consuming media texts is social practice and under which social conditions and with which expectations texts are produced. Afterwards the practical conditions of text production, under the increasing commoditization of media products will be analyzed. The following section focusses on the social, political and economic aspects of the topic of discourse: food; analyzing how eating and consuming food is social practice and how leading ideologies influence leading tastes (for foods) but also elaborating on the structural phenomena of hunger and unequal access to resources. This divides onto the chapters as follows:

Content

The second chapter, following this introduction elaborates on the interplay of mass media and society, their influences and effects on each other, its functions of mirroring a society as well as controlling political governments. Furthermore, mass media are discussed in the context of Antiono Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, its manifestation through consent in civil society (Gramsci 1978).

Chapter three focuses on the social and anthropological aspects of food. Asking how expectations and values of industrial societies towards their nutrition have changed during the last century, while the developments of the food industry build the basis for the industrial growth the Western world witnesses today (Kaller-Dietrich 2011; Belasco 2008). It will elaborate how consumer's need for authenticity, idyllic nature and tradition has remained while they crave for industrial convenience food at the same time (Belasco 2008).

Chapter four deals with the economic developments of mass, and especially print media in the 20th and 21st century, its continuous commoditization and regulation through markets by supply and demand rather than through policy. It describes the reality of the media business today, gives an overview of the media landscape, elaborates on financial dependences and influences on content through sponsoring, advertising, viewer and circulation rates.

Chapter five examines the global food system, its modes of industrial production, power structures within the commodity chain and on a global level concerning international trade and agricultural policies. Structural hierarchies between North and South on an economic and political level are elaborated and assessed as causes for instability, food insecurity and hunger.

Chapter six provides a *Critical Discourse Analysis* of the newspaper examples: *The Washington Post* (United States) and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Germany) on their coverage of the Food Price Crisis in 2007/2008.

The conclusion summarizes the papers findings, dares to draw consequences, postulates requirements for a change in discourse, media and food policy and considers further questions left unanswered.

2. You Are What You Read - Media and Society

This chapter presents an overview on the different conceptions and theories on the interplay of mass media and society, their influences and effects on each other. The social frameworks, in which the media are embedded, their function of mirroring a society, as well as their role as drivers of social change, are elaborated with a focus on the senders and the content of media. In order to analyze how political and ecological issues are portrayed in media, and to be able to answer whether they inform a public or inspire public debate, it is necessary to elaborate first on the relationship between mass media and society, especially social developments; which is what this chapter will do. Mass media are furthermore discussed in the context of Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony. As this paper analyses the discourse of news and print media, it will focus on the theoretical aspects of the 'traditional' media and their industries, which are print, radio, television and film (Duffy 2009: 3).

2.1. Definitions and Understandings

The definitions and understandings of media, especially mass media are inherently connected to the understandings of mass communication. This applies especially to 'older' mass media such as print, radio, television and film. New digital media such as the Internet and social media only fall under this concept to a certain extent, as they combine elements of mass and individual media (Duffy 2009). Nevertheless, the concept of mass needs to be elaborated first so as to understand on the one hand how the mass of people, the public, the society, addressed by media are influenced; and on the other hand be able to surmise more about the workings and conditions of producing content addressed at a large and anonymous group of people. This will once more help with discerning how information on global political issues is produced and how it could affect the public masses of Western societies.

2.1.1. Mass and Mass Communication

The term 'mass', from sociological perspective, is not just simply grasped as a high quantity of things or beings, in the context of communication it constitutes a multiple or mass of content reaching a large amount of people. It is combined with the concept of a mob, as an "amorphous collection of individuals without much individuality" (McQuail 2010: 56). A mass is widely dispersed, heterogeneous in a social and geographical context, where the members are unknown to each other, lacking an internal structure. Its existence is only temporal and its composition changes frequently. Therefore it lacks self-awareness and consequently does not communicate within itself or act together in a self-organized way, but

rather is 'acted upon' or led by outside forces. In spite of this it is perceived as a homogenous block from outside, with a certain identity and certain functions, and acts homogenously, however irrationally. Nevertheless, its power should not be underestimated. When mobilized, the mass or masses are very important drivers of social and political change. (McQuail 1983: 35ff.)

In the communication process this means that information, ideas, opinions, and culture are industrially mass-produced, distributed and exhibited through technological devices (Duffy 2009: 3). Gerhard Maletzke, professor of psychology and communication sciences, defines mass communication as

> [A]ny form of communication that mediates messages publicly through technical means indirectly and in one direction to a dispersed audience (Maletzke 1963 in Puppis 2010: 32)[1]

According to Manuel Puppis and Marie Luise Kiefer, professors of communication sciences and media economics, this implies a certain number of important considerations: Firstly, that there is no direct contact between senders and receivers of the message. Audience and professional communicators (senders) do not directly interact with each other, as they are separated by social, geographical or temporal distances. And the relationship is non-moral, meaning that the sender is not fully responsible for consequences arising for individual receivers. Further, the communication is one-directional; meaning that media producers cannot receive messages at the time they are sending them and have no knowledge on who exactly receives the content they produce. The opposite applies to the audience of traditional mass media, who can only receive, and not also produce or send content at the same time. The producer of the content is often just as much unknown to them. This does not mean that a receiver is always a receiver and the sender always the sender, but that a person cannot be both at the same time, as it would be possible in a dialogue. When talking about mass communication, one means a serious of monologues of individuals directed at a group unknown to them. As noted above, the receivers are a dispersed group, unaware of each other or the amount of resources they control. Their interests influence the medial system only indirectly as they can only–or at least within 'old' media–choose between the content at hand, so their control over media content is limited. Moreover, the message is standardized and then multiplied to be potentially available to all. It is manufactured professionally, not with

[1] Translated by L.D. from the original: "[…] jene Form der Kommunikation, bei der Aussagen öffentlich durch technische Verbreitungsmittel indirekt und einseitig an ein disperses Publikum vermittelt werden"

individuals in mind, but directed at target groups, an audience to which the content is fitted. (Kiefer 2005: 15ff.; Puppis 2010: 32-44; Baran/Davis 2012: 7)

2.1.2. Mass Media

With the word media/mediation stemming from the Latin word *medius,* meaning *middle* (Askew 2002: 2), media are understood as "(symbolic or technological) systems that enable, structure or amplify communication between people" (Deuze 2012: xii). From this it can be deduced the definition of mass media as "media organisations embedded in society and the public mass communication distributed by them" (Puppis 2010: 33)[2]. They carry texts, signs and symbols, operate in genres and with aesthetics, to which the audience assigns meanings and interprets according to social norms and values. This carrier function implies that media are "rich storehouses of information" (Berger 2012: 55), which manufacture, reproduce, mediate and distribute symbolic messages, information and entertainment all in the form of content (McQuail 2010: 56f; 59). Moreover they are "social phenomena" (Duffy 2009: 3), one of many institutions that operate inside society and play a significant part in maintaining it (Berger 2012: 13). As mass media are connected to other social realms and institutions, they are influenced by social and cultural values, ideologies and structures (Berger 2012; Askew 2002). These greatly influence their work, their success, the expectations and definitions directed at them, which are an important factor to consider in the relationship between media and 'their' society (McQuail 2010: 59f).

2.1.3. Social Expectations and Public Definitions

The process of defining specific media and developing expectations and demands is already an important social process. According to communication theorist Dennis McQuail, these definitions of certain media reflect, a society's political culture, state of freedom and democracy, as well as certain moral values (McQuail 1983: 26f.). At the same time they influence the media's forms of organization, the structure of their work, their codes of conduct and normative standards of work. Society hands them a purpose and functions on which they can be evaluated (Thomas 2006).

[2] Translated by L.D. from the original: "[…] in die Gesellschaft eingebettete Medienorganisationen und die von diesen verbreitete massenmediale öffentliche Kommunikation"

> […] the media and each mass medium in its place and time is very much constrained by a 'public definition' and a set of expectations and norms which grow around them (McQuail 1983: 18)

A mass medium can usually be identified through its material form and technology, formats and genres which are typical for it, as well as its uses, its public perception and institutional setting (McQuail 2010: 25). Subsequently, three perspectives toward a mass medium are relevant: common sense, its perception by users, the working perspective by professionals, and the social scientific analysis (McQuail 1983: 17-19).

Furthermore definitions and differences between certain media depend on technological, social and cultural aspects. These can also be divided into medial and institutional aspects. The first category covers issues such as the manners of use and reception, the genre of content, the appeal or motivations for use, for example. It answers questions as to whether the medium covers a wide range of content or caters to only special interests, whether it requires individual or collective attention, or whether the use or the content limited to a certain space or time. Is the content real or fictional, serious or entertaining? How important is technology in the manner of distribution? (McQuail 2010: 25-45)

The institutional aspects cover the constraints through modes of production as well as the social context and circumstances surrounding their introduction. For example, is it a medium controlled by the state? Are its messages sensitive to political developments? What are the relationships between sender and receiver? Where does the medium stand in the social life of its audience? How complex is the organization of its production and distribution? Do professionals produce it? (McQuail 2010: 25-45)

All these aspects, technology, manners of use, genre and institutional setting and so on, are important to consider when understanding the relationship between certain mass media and their audience, the 'pictures' and the texts they ultimately convey to their viewers and readers, and the choices audiences make, favoring one medium to another. Television and print, as well as the news genre are the most relevant for this paper; they will therefore be elaborated below.

Moreover, these aspects account for the different perception, understanding and expectations of and towards *new digital and social media*, as they are used more actively and individually. The content is not only produced by professionals or experts, but also by recipients, amateurs who have hitherto been on the receiving end of mass media. Most importantly, through message boards, comment pages and forums, they are more inclusive and participatory,

opening the public sphere and broadening the social 'conversation'. What all media have in common, is that they are expected to meet educational, informational and recreational needs (Berger 2012: 16; Duffy 2009: 15ff).

Television

Television is a medium whose use started out to be bound by time and space, but has become increasingly individualistic with the development of recording equipment, mobile devices and around the clock programming and streaming. While it can still be experienced in groups, most often by families or friends at home, but also in public spaces like sports bars, television equipment has become less expensive and is today mostly owned individually. It's content is mostly reality oriented and incredibly versatile, as viewers can have access to over 100 channels at a time, some publicly owned, some private, some exclusive or pre-ordered. They are provided with the most diverse programming to individually choose from. News programs feature mostly serious content and provide information, movies, TV-series or sports programs serve an entertainment function, and talk shows or documentaries feature a mix of both. To most of the viewers, watching television falls under their free time and is associated with leisure or play. The channels are usually localized regionally and nationally (such as *hr*, *MSNBC, FOX, ProSieben*), but some international channels also exist (such as *Al Jazeera, Arte, CNN International*). Viewer choices are still limited by the content provided, but a high variety of shows and recording possibilities offer the chance for very personalized programs. (Prokop 2010: 32-35; Duffy 2009: 2, 203)

Newspaper

The newspaper is used more individually than the television and is more often read in public places, therefore has a more public character. Its content serves multiple interests, from politics over finances to sports and culture, but it is historically specific and perishable (McQuail 2010: 27ff.). It usually appears daily and weekly; the print versions cannot be as up to date as television or radio, but carry more in depth reporting (Tuchman 2009: 134). Because of its politically relevant content, it has a central connection to state and social powers (Jamieson/Waldman 2003) and appeals to politically interested recipients. "Television brings the society together, newspapers appeal to elites" (Meulemann 2012: 192). Unlike the television, which provides all kinds of content, the newspaper provides almost exclusively information and is read only for this purpose (Meulemann 2012: 190ff.) It is Realitiy oriented,

but the seriousness varies with the type, from the political newspaper to the tabloid newspaper and everything in between (McQuail 2010: 27ff.).

The normative expectation of a free and independent press is still very prominent today (Thomas 2006: xiii; McQuail 2010: 30). It carries an innate secular character since it was the first medium to expand the realm of public debate, away from the control of state and church (McQuail 2010: 27). It is dominantly associated with political freedom and democracy, the fourth estate next to judiciary, executive and legislative (McChesney 2009; Thomas 2006). Its history of exposing large business and political scandals manifests the image of an opposition to authority, to business interests and political corruption (Bagdikian 2009: 52ff). Journalistic work is considered to be a public service (Thomas 2006: xxii).

News

News, whether on TV or in the press, is understood to be a free and independent entity, neither corrupt nor out for profit, only after the truth (Thomas 2006: Preface; Manning 2001: 1f.). Since the news media provide and distribute information on whose basis choices are made, it is assumed that they are displayed in their true form, neither constrained nor misrepresented (Manning 2001: 1). The 'noble profession' of the journalist comes with the task of bringing up-to-date information, from near and far, and delivering them to the public. The ultimate goal is to sustain a healthy democracy, to support the political discussion and to provide citizens with the tools to control the political elite and hold them accountable (Manning 2001: 2). They have no personal interests other than truth and objectivity and are willing to risk life and limb for it.

> Their role is to follow truth, without fear or favor, wherever it leads them (Thomas 2006: xiii).

That is what is known today as 'journalist ethics' (Thomas 2006; Manning 2001). Such good ethics and high morals are expected, because news media and the press are perceived as a powerful democratic force, with the potential to bring down political leaders or state governments, simply by shedding public light into dark corners. Moreover, they have the capacity to encourage and inspire reform or change, since they can draw public attention to issues, considered to be problematic (Manning 2001: 3).

> Information is as lethal as bullets or bombs (Paul McMasters in Thomas 2006: xix).

Another issue important to keep in mind, when considering the relationship between news media and society, is that they are perceived by the public to be formally powerless and appear to be messengers or tools without minds of their own (Thomas 2006; Chomsky 2003; Potter 2009). Society views them as its own passive instrument that it continuously applies to itself.

Media Convergence

The development of digital media, especially the Internet and social media, has spawned the trend of media convergence (Duffy 2009: 2), where different types of media are used in combination and support of each other. Traditional media forms such as print or radio are increasingly consumed through online platforms. Today, almost every newspaper has an online edition and the latest news can be read on their websites. Thus the form of medium is not longer necessarily connected to the apparatus it traditionally came with. (Duffy 2009: 2-4)

In summary, the institutional form, its self-image and the experience of its audience are what make up the definition of a medium and in turn influence the genre within texts are produced and mediated. While these definitions are often fragile and incoherent or prone to change with technological innovations, they are always historically and socially bound, molded by social values, political culture and socio-economic conditions. No one, especially not mass media, communicates inside a vacuum immune to social structures. (McQuail 1983: 26-27; Fairclough 2003) They are all bound, in part, within the limits of social ideologies and values, and the way they portray issues and experiences, are never fully free from these social frameworks–which is an important fact to consider for the analysis of the news coverages following in chapter six.

2.2. Social Frameworks

Mass media are embedded fully and completely in society. Modern society and media are closely intertwined; one cannot be viewed without the other. Analyzing and inevitably judging medial pictures of global issues and ecological and social developments, which is the object of this paper, cannot be done if not paying attention to the social environment in which they appear. Effects and influences of mass media cannot be fully captured and their workings cannot be correctly assessed, if their social conditions are not paid their due. Media studies, just as other social sciences such as cultural studies or anthropology, perceive and treat media

in principle and essence as one aspect of contemporary social life, no different then law, religion or certain forms of social organization (Askew 2002: 10). The reflexive influence is a constant one. "The mass media are in society and society is […] in mass media" (Berger 2012: 16,21).

Therefore, it is important to mention that the powers and influences of media described are all potentials and possibilities. They are not necessarily realized, not at all times and not in such extreme or pure forms as anticipated in theory. They are very much depending on political, economic and social conditions, as well as the "knowledge frameworks" (Hall 1980: 130) of the audience. It is vital to keep in mind that the media are not sole actors, an all powerful influence and the ultimate solution for social problems. They have a high potential to cause social change, just as much as other social aspects, so that when combined or coordinated with other social or political powers, the possibility of social change is higher than for one force acting alone.

Society also provides the needed resources of money and time with which the industry matures, not to mention the market conditions, the technological inventions on which the media are based, the necessity and need for communication and information and the subsequent regulations the media have to abide by (Winston 1998: 6-11; Williams 2002). They are part of "the determining limits and pressures of […] societies" (Williams 2002: 38) within which the media respond and emphasize. They however, also often conflict with each other. The moral and ethical expectations of society are not always feasible under certain economic conditions and structures of production. And the absolute truth, expected from the news, is not wanted under certain political, emotional or cultural circumstances. While it is the basis of most democratic societies for the press to have the right to criticize the government and the state, it is not as frequently exercised as anticipated. Self-censorship, due to social taboos or the current political culture, is not uncommon, for example in the United States post 9/11 (Fengler 2002: 49). Deeply rooted patriotism, especially in times of war or foreign crises, could be such a dominant social value, that criticism of the national leadership does not want to be heard by the public. Society has various different and contradictory needs, within which the media must operate, some of them also of an economic nature:

Since the current legal and economic conditions for mass media are dealt with in more detail in chapter four, the basics will be only shortly mentioned here. In democratic societies the right to freedom of speech protects the media. In most democratic countries, like the US,

Germany or the entire European Union, this right is anchored in their constitution, as well as incorporated into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (§ 5 Grundgesetzt für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, § 11 Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union, § 19 Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The media, just as any citizen, are therefore free to publish any content and information they wish, with only very rare exceptions (calling out for violence or denying the Holocaust for example) (§ 130 Abs. 2 Deutsches Strafgesetzbuch: Volksverhetzung). Authoritarian states, however, often use legal methods to control or contain media organisations, from censorship to banning certain media altogether. Private media organisations are treated as businesses, which means that they fall under corporate laws, such as the corporate tax code or certain cartel rulings (Fengler 2002: 46). But in order to operate legally, a broadcasting license is needed, which is granted by state or government institutions (Puppis 2007: 89). Some countries, Germany or Austria for example, have publicly owned media organisations, where content and structure are more closely regulated, they are non-profit oriented (Kiefer 2005: 370ff.) and their financial position is different to private media businesses, as they are financed through public funding (such as GEMA, GEZ). Private media organisations are linked to the economic market and industry, as they need finances for technology, distribution, and production of their content (Kiefer 2005). A big source of funding is advertising, which directly connects the media to the business world (Kiefer 2005: 375f.).

In addition to abiding by state laws that businesses fall under, the media act and work like other businesses and abide by the market laws of supply and demand. They embrace and conform to the ideologies of a global capitalistic economy, such as free markets, creating profits and deciding on cost/value estimations. Their decisions are therefore not only influenced by journalist ethics, but also by business ethics, and their codes of conduct accord to the political economy of national or international business industries. Media organisations accept and work within hierarchies of power between owners, managers, editors and journalists, while being just as much embedded in social structures that affect employment, such as gender inequalities, high cost of education and job training, outsourcing of services, lower wages etc. (Kiefer 2005).

When looking more closely at the economic as well as social demands society produces for media, one finds him or herself dealing with an egg and chicken situation, not really knowing what came first, the technological inventions that change social needs and provide economic progress, or the change of social relations and economic conditions that demand the

technology. The concept of *technological determinism* assumes that technologies are invented due to research and technological progress, and then change social structures and relations, from which new needs and demands arise (Williams 2002: 29f.). In contrary to that, the theory of a *symptomatic technology* considers a technology to be the product of change that is already happening, because social relations suddenly demand instruments for something people need done (Williams 2002: 29f.).

Concerning media technologies, Raymond Williams, as well as Brian Winston, cultural and media theorists, find arguments on both sides and paint a good picture of a circle (Williams 2002; Winston 1998). Both argue for the consideration of the place of the needs within the social formation and a technology's correspondence to the needs of the decision-making groups. Not any need will bring about an invention or technology, which implements itself in society; there have to be certain material and economic conditions as well as technologies that support the development of new inventions. Not to forget that inventors are just as much a part of society as the consumers of such an invention, affected by and socialized within existing values and structures. Anything can be invented, but whether it becomes popular and is used by the masses is another thing entirely. At the time radio and telegraph were invented, communications technologies served the need for an expanding military and commercial system, which were, so to say, economic decision making groups, setting a high demand. At a time of war, the priorities and goals of the military system, translated into decisive and crucial needs and demands. Also, in reaction to the industrial development, which was based again on other new technologies, „the physical 'massing' of the urban industrial revolution" (Williams 2002: 35) built the foundation of the demand for mass media. With the development of dense population areas and the increasing amount of leisure time of the middle classes, emerged a massive demand for communication technologies. As more and more people were leaving farms for factories in mega cities, separating families, the need to communicate over longer distances spread onto the general public. In consequence, the telephone, or later on television, was produced for the mass market. Their invention, however, in turn depended on earlier inventions like electricity and the telegraph. (Williams 2002; Winston 1998: 4ff.; Duffy 2009: 15)

The invention of print media also occurred in reaction to a social and economic demand. For Williams it was a response to an expanding political, economic and social system, which was in crisis. The centers of political power had no way to communicate to the sudden masses of citizens, and the expanding trade system had no means of knowing what was going on in

other, more distant areas of their branch. Moreover, these expanding societies developed a need for social perspective, orientation and organization that did not exist to such an extent before. Additionally, two world wars broke out, creating the ultimate demand for international news and making the newspaper a „universal social form“ (Williams 2002: 34). It served the need for transmitting more than short commands or data; it delivered news from outside and background information faster and more up to date than school education and in bigger volume than the military telegraph. And at last with the manifestation of democratic systems, the newspaper served the requirements for election campaigns and political competition. (Williams 2002: 34-38)

These technological developments within social history still supply no answer to the egg and chicken question, but they underline the importance of the relationship between action and structure (Manning 2001: 19ff.). And it becomes easier to see how the production of media content is situated right in the middle of social ideologies and power structures, neither objective nor immune to them. While the media are part of society, formally and informally linked to other institutions, limited through laws, and influenced by social values or codes of conduct (Berger 2012; Duffy 2009), they are still important social forces, with the capacity to influence social developments, the latter of which will be occupying the rest of this chapter.

2.3. Media and Social Change

This sub-chapter will investigate more closely the relationship between media and social change and social development. As will be elaborated later in chapter three and five, the global food system is in dire need of change and alternatives, and as the underlying question of this paper is: what and how can mass media contribute to this goal? –the following pages will try to shine a light on the theory of instigating change by informing and creating awareness through media.

The relationship between mass media and social change is comprised of three interrelating elements: The technology of communication, the form and content of the medium and the social structure, meaning the institutional organization, and the beliefs and values within society (Puppis 2010: 27).

The third element concerns the issues already elaborated above, that media can stimulate change and accelerate the demand for their services, but are equally molded by social change, political and cultural values (Askew 2002; Puppis 2010: 29). But no matter which side is

predominant, the media serve an important role in the functioning of a society, as they contribute to the climate of a free public (Puppis 2010: 15). Furthermore, media technologies, whether mass or individual, have become a resource that society has grown greatly dependent on, just like oil or coal. This social phenomenon described by many media and cultural theorists as the "information society" (McQuail 2010: 104), implies that the most important resource, is information. Mark Deuze, professor of telecommunication researching in media culture argues, that society recreates and develops itself particular to the media of its time, which consequently add to the cultural flavor (Deuze 2012: xv).

The second element emphasizes, that the form and structure of a communication or medium are tightly bound to their content. McLuhan was the first to realize that "the medium is the message" (McLuhan 1968: 7). Content does not develop out of coincidence; structure influences conduct which influences performance (Puppis 2010: 28f.) Media analysis therefore solicit over who (communicator) says what, in which channel (content and form), to whom (recipient) with what effect (Puppis 2010: 27). Consequently the social effects of mass media vary accordingly to the system of ownership and control (Lazarsfeld/Merton 1965 in Puppis 2010: 27).

The first element, technology of communication, concerns the phenomena of media being able to serve as "extensions of our senses" (McLuhan 1968: 3) through the provision of certain channels relating us to our outside world (Deuze 2012). Deuze argues that, as they mediate most of the experiences and communications people have, they depend, in part, on media to help them make sense of the world and shape their perception of it. They provide experiences and information people could not acquire on their own and supply a massive amount of supporting evidence to the experiences they already have. The knowledge acquired this way shapes their understanding of people, events, objects and organizations. (Deuze 2012)

Through visualization and abstraction of persons or moments, and their repetition of them, mass media supply recipients with cultural and social icons, common images and, collective memories upon which a common ground for social relations can develop (Haustein 2008; Assman/Czaplicka 1995). They serve as mirrors of a society, as windows with a view upon others, and as voices through which people can make themselves heard. These three features, as well as their implications and consequences of deforming, reproducing and changing how certain matters are perceived by a public, will be elaborated closer below, revealing how medial texts, their forms of discourse and the portraits of the issues they produce, are always directly connected to the society they stem from.

2.3.1. Mirrors

The mass media operate on the meso-level of a society, which means that the media producers take up interests, opinions and perspectives from individuals on the micro level and spread the information further onto the entire audience (Manning 2001: 3). This way, many seperated pieces of specific individual information are collected and summarized, like a finished puzzle making an entire picture visible to everyone. Individuality is turned into a generality (Faris 2002: 79). Certain social values, beliefs or ideologies as well as the (political) culture of a society or nation are selected from others. Cultural and social attributes are crystallized and objectified in this way and can suddenly be seen where they were blurred before (Shohat/Stam 2002: 118). When it comes to establishing collective memories or national histories, Susan Sonntag argues that people remember actual events or people less and less, but more their visual fixation of them. A large part of national and cultural history is constituted by the reruns and repetitions of videos and pictures delivered by the media in an abstract and framed form (Sonntag 2003). Lydia Haustein elaborates that national heroes and cultural icons are always developed though a mediated distance, which is filled by the visual images of the person, in order to make the individual more abstract, simpler and more symbolic (Haustein 2008).

> [A] Concentration of cultural particles and relics to one core, with which the force of reminiscence creates future, where other forms of social bonding have become ineffective (Haustein 2008: 118)[3]

Television and film are the means through which a population learns of its society (Bagdikian 2009: 49), where people recognize themselves, their values, their opinions and their lives in the stories that are told and accept them as true. Their own ways of life, their culture is held before their eyes and repeated back to them. Media play an important part in the objectification of society and express its social logic (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 198; Dabringer 2009: 12). As they always adapt to their audience and its expectations to a certain extent, they show them what they want to see, tell them what they want to hear and display a reality they can relate to (Knapp 2005) and later on reproduce.

[3] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Zusammendrängen der kulturellen Partikel und Relikte zu einem bildnerischen Kern […] welcher, mit der Kraft der Erinnerung, Zukunft gestaltet, wo Bindekräfte traditioneller Gesellschaftsformen wirkungslos werden […]"

> These [news] reports, especially those of a concrete nature, are the daily facts from which the audience is expected to draw appropriate conclusion about the question "What kind of society am I am member of" (Postman/Powers 2009: 210)

As the social and cultural values and the political culture of a nation influence the workings and content of the media, they are mirrored in them just as well. So it follows that the state, structure and organization of the medial landscape serve as an indicator for the level of freedom and democracy present in a country (Bertelsman Stiftung 2013; Freedomhouse 2013). No matter if drivers or products of social change, they are the means by which people learn of social change (Duffy 2009: 49)

Furthermore this mirror metaphor emphasizes the formal invisibility of the media already mentioned earlier. When looking into a mirror, people only see themselves and not the object or the process of reflecting them.

2.3.2. Windows

Due to this technology of communication and distribution of information, the media stand between people, and everything beyond direct contact and perception, they mediate most of their life world and "[people's] sense of the real is experienced in media" (Deuze 2012: xvi).

This applies to their environment, to people far away, to other cultures, to politicians, the scientific realm, events that are happening far away or took place a long time ago and much more. "[…] the mass media are for most people […] the primary source of images of social reality and materials for forming and maintaining social identity" (McQuail 2010: 4). What is not carried, delivered or mentioned in the news, often remains in the unknown, in the social unconscious, and does not exist for the public. The lenses and frames journalists use, influence and shape what the public understand, perceive and believe about the world (Jamieson/Waldman 2003: xii) Communications technology provides contact over longer distances, temporal and spatial. Receivers acquire ethnographical knowledge and cross-cultural understanding through CNN and MTV, come into touch with different lifestyles, cultures, religions, while remaining safely in their homes (Faris 2002: 79; Askew 2002: 1). Even information close to them is delivered through media, as these connect different types of discourses (Fairclough 1995: 13): scientific, political, artistic, economic etc. and are closer to centers of power than their recipients (Jarren et al. 1996; Thomas 2006).

For political and democratic processes, this means that the media are what connects the government with the governed, the state with its citizens. In this manner, the government and

its people can communicate with each other (Thomas 2006). Almost everything recipients know of politics and the political process is mediated through news media. Journalism translates political events into public knowledge (Jamieson/ Waldman 2003: xii). Therefore it is difficult to discuss and debate about democracy and the political sphere, without at least considering political news.

> For any society that seeks to achieve a substantial degree of democratic participation, the structure of the communications system is integrated with the function of the political system. (Price 1995; 23)

2.3.3. Voices

When speaking of distribution of information and communication, it refers to not only to hearing and seeing others, but also speaking and showing oneself to them. For those who want to send information, the media is there to take up their opinions, processes and distributes them in a much wider radius (Steininger 2007: 121). This assumes that everyone who has information or ideas to contribute has access to the (news) media. Theoretically at least, they communicate content and opinions, and ideas in order to influence others (Manning 2001: 1). Groups or individuals who seek to mobilize, to gain supporters and awareness for their goals and opinions, and want to articulate them, use the media, but become dependent on them just the same (Jarren et al. 1996: 14-18). Social media has made this possible like no other form of media before, where it is very easy to express, display and share ones identity and experiences with an entire virtual community.

From a political perspective, media voice the intentions, plans and interests of the rulers, just as much as support, dissent or criticism of the ruled. They articulate political problems and social issues, evaluate and define them (Puppis 2010: 45).

Moreover, if one accepts it as true, that 'the medium is the message', one has to realize that with the use of the medium people do not only receive the carried message, but also articulate the preferences and expectations they direct at it. A medium signifies and means something more than just the message it carries, but expresses its 'public definition'. Whether one reads *The New York Times* or the *Daily Sun*, tells others something about who they are and what they look for in a medium. One communicates whether one prefers entertainment or information, conservative or liberal opinions, the latest stock values or sports results. When consuming a specific message in a specific form, one chooses them over other messages and

other forms, expressing values, interests and tastes. This applies to all consumption goods, as elaborated more in chapter four, and media are no exception to this. In a social sense, we are what we read, watch and hear. (Dabringer 2009; Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000; Baran/Davis 2012: 3-6; Carter 11.10.2012)

2.3.4. Deformation

These descriptions addressed above, media as mirrors, windows and voices, while useful to assess media's effects, are not entirely correct and should be considered with caution. The mediated experiences that reach the audience are changed, concentrated and limited. The media do not only send, but also interpret, filter and reproduce information, always displaying it in a certain context. The realities they communicate are subjective to the standpoint and perspective of the journalist or camera (Faris 2002). The act of framing and drawing lines, including certain content, while excluding another, focusing on one perspective and blurring out the rest, means that the audience's view is always managed (Jamieson/Waldman 2003: xii ff.). Media producers and journalists take up the position of gatekeepers as they regulate the flow of information to the public sphere (Manning 2001: 11; Berger 2012: 172) and guide the receiver's attention. Certain strategies, stereotyping, simplification, reductionism and filtering for example, can lead to a distortion of reality (Askew 2002; Faris 2002). While social and public expectations set the frame for what is newsworthy and relevant, for example the proximity, suspense, controversiality or the emotional value of a story (Staab 1990), the journalists, editors and producers decide on and define information within these categories. As show times and size of articles are limited, they must prioritize between information, assign a certain level of importance and cut out information that they assume is not new to the audience (Postman/Powers 2009: 209f.). Especially television news produce a mass of facts without connecting them to complex problems they are based on. The underlying social causes, the consequences of policies such as social conflicts stay often unreflected and shrouded. A certain level of knowledge is presupposed, content that is assumed to be general knowledge or common sense is taken for granted and complex issues are only explained up until a certain point. (Chomsky 2003; Baran/Davis 2012: 107ff., Fairclough 2003: 55)

> Representation is compromised because it holds a complex relation to reality– sometimes contradictory, sometimes laced with desire, fear, sometimes jeopardized, filled with resistance (Faris 2002: 81)

Instead of mirroring all aspects of society, only few patterns of behavior and values are emphasized, others stay ignored (Powdermaker 2002: 162; Hedges 2009).
Additionally, reality oriented content is presented with tactics, similar to fictional storytelling, adding suspense through music, stimulating emotions through spectacle and victimization, and if fitting, a struggle of good against evil. These strategies are all the more effective, if the audience is thoroughly 'primed' by Hollywood fairytales. (Shohat/Stam 2002: 139-141; Hedges 2009).

Note:
As mentioned in the introduction, this is a message and sender based analysis and it cannot go into the study of audiences and receptions as well. However, it is necessary to mention just shortly the concepts of *decoding*, *forms of discourse* and *reading levels* (Prokop 2010: 132,135ff), which take into account that the reception of the text by the audience is subject to their own interpretation, preference and values. So the content is not received in the exact same manner it was sent, the intentions and strategies of media producers may work to different effects. (Berger 2012: 90ff.; Prokop 2010: 132ff.)

2.3.5. (Re) production

Out of the functions of communication and the deformation of the realities mass media communicate, it follows that they take a role in producing certain relations between the people they connect, as well as reproducing values, ideas and messages they carry. First and foremost they are producers of the public sphere, of a platform where opinions, debates and interests are carried out.
Since the medial system is located in between people, groups and organizations, functioning as middlemen and -women between the outside world and us, it constitutes a space in between, that develops and thrives on the information the media provide and everyone shares. This space, this public sphere, is where society talks to and with itself, where ideas, opinions, facts, news and assumptions are shared. It is a virtual place where people come together to communicate freely and rationally, where anyone can participate as sender or receiver (Habermas 1989 in Manning 2001: 4). It is the place where many individual private people come together as a public (Habermas 1989 in Manning 2001: 4), where "the public experience of [a] lifeworld [...] is constituted" (Manning 2001: 5). It is an intermediary system, a network, located on the meso-level, between each individual and a public mass,

between citizens and the government, the scientific, the private and the political realm. The information, the opinions and ideas are processed, synthesized and organized into theme specific public opinions (Steininger 2007: 121; Kiefer 2007: 42).

According to Jürgen Habermas, a sociologist who was one of the first to theorize on the public sphere, it already existed before news or print media, it existed in the public places where people came together, whether in church, town meetings for royal proclamations, theaters or cafés to have rational debates. Print media was responsible for expanding this sphere vastly, making it a virtual place, less controlled by the church or political powers and where there was a smaller degree of social exclusion (Habermas 1989 in Manning 2001: 4). Its secular character, situated between church and state, and its regular appearance, transmitting news that was up until then only available to the military, state institutions or internal trade networks allowed a more equal access to the public debate (Williams 2002: 34; McQuail 2010: 28). The few cents to buy a newspaper was a low cost of entry into the public sphere (Habermas 1989 in Manning 2001: 4). And as it normally allowed identifiable sources to be disconnected from the produced articles or news pieces (McQuail 1983: 20), people could express their opinions without fear of persecution.

Paul Manning, a scholar of media and journalism studies, calls this "democratization of communication" (Manning 2001: 5) and argues that it changed the form of literary, social and cultural communication, serving a changing political climate as much as commercial business and the bourgeois class (Williams 2002: 34; Manning 2001: 4).

Thus, the public sphere is closely connected to theories and models of participation, of civil society and democracy (Kiefer 2007: 43). It stands as a market of ideas and opinions (Steininger 2007: 121), where public debate takes place, where interest groups or political parties can express their agendas, and where a public opinion is negotiated and then articulated opposite the political elites or government (Jarren et al. 1996; Berger 2012: 176ff.). Democracy, which includes the process of opinion building, is highly dependent on the public sphere, which in turn needs to be free and independent from government (Kiefer 2007: 42). The political process starts with the definition of a problem, which takes place in the public sphere, in the civil society and the media, it is then taken up by the politicians and parties to develop a solution (Puppis 2010: 45).

And finally, a public sphere structures the interface between private experience and public power (Manning 2001: 5). A distinct private realm develops outside its borders and the two are kept separate from each other (Manning 2001: 8). Society continually renegotiates where the lines are drawn between what is private business and what the public is allowed an

opinion on. Where exactly they lie is again a matter of social values and political culture and varies between each cultural realm and epoch.

When working within certain social structures, relations of power, values influenced by ideologies and abiding to the codes of conduct set by these frameworks, one automatically reproduces them. This applies to perhaps none more so than to mass media.

> It is their [the media's] function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society (Herman/Chomsky 2002: 1)

Understanding media as a tool that society applies to itself, implies that social structures, power relations, ideologies and values, the media are embedded in and carry, are reapplied onto society.

By showing the audience what is relevant, newsworthy or of public interest, they shape its perception of relevance or news and reproduce their expectations according to what they have seen so far (Postman/Powers 2009). Since, as already mentioned before, people's own ways of life, their cultural and social values are reflected and repeated back to them in a concentrated form, they consume these along with the content and messages mediated.

Recipients are socialized within this public sphere, were social problems are defined and articulated (Jarren et al. 1996: 13f.), where certain structures of debate and discourse are enforced, through which power relations and ideologies transpire. "The [program] formulas themselves reflect the structure of power that produces them and function to preserve and enhance that structure of power" (Gerbner 2012: 239). A lot of media production is based on "taken-for-granted assumptions" (Tuchman 2009: 139), on social and cultural common sense, which stays undiscussed and is thus manifested.

Mass media inform people about how the world works and they learn to think inside the categories and with the values that are shown to us day by day. They identify themselves with the people on screen (Shohat/Stam 2002: 138), take on the cameras opinion as they see everything according to its point of view, the rest remaining obliterated (Shohat/Stam 2002: 142).

Closely connected to the expansion of a public sphere that transports values and belief systems, is the manifestation and strengthening of a national or cultural identity. With the expression of a common language and common values, which is made possible in the public

sphere with the help of the media, a collective consciousness can develop and thrive, which allows a national identity to manifest itself and upon which a nation state can be built (Shohat/Stam 2002: 118). Representing selves just as much as representing others produces commonality, as differences are reiterated and strengthened. This forges communities and imposes "a unitary topos" (Shohat/Stam 2002: 119), especially when working with stereotypes and essentials (Askew 2002: 157).

As the media underlie the forces of the social dynamics, they are embedded within capitalist ideologies, such as strife for profits, competition and organizing interests (Wilke 2005: 69). Accordingly they promote and reproduce mass consumer economy and culture (Williams 2002: 28), especially through their direct connection to and dependence on advertising, which promotes almost nothing but mass production and consumption. The logics of capitalism and the need for more things are seldom called into question and alternatives are rarely considered (Baran/Davis 2012: 109). This comes with a complementary emphasize of passivity (Williams 2002: 28) and a distraction from problematic realities. Passively consuming media content, which is often the case for entertainment programs can lead receivers to eventually passively consume many other things, like clothes, food, news or social developments (Meulemann 2012: 190, 199; Hedges 2009: 50-52).

Movies and TV shows also provide audiences with fantasies to escape into from the depressing realities of every day life. Anxieties and worries through the growing feeling of isolation and loneliness are what create the demand for these "collective daydreams" produced on the assembly line (Powdermaker 2002: 162-163; Hedges 2009). They give audiences the illusion of companionship, so that they feel less alone, along with serving them hope for a happy ending and the American Dream on a platter (Powdermaker 2002: 162f.; Knapp 2005).

2.3.6. Change

According to Richard Layar (2006), who has done studies on happiness, the more TV a person watches, the wealthier s/he considers others and the poorer und unhappier s/he feels (Scheub/Kuschel 2912: 126)[4]

The processes of deformation and reproduction, as byproducts of mass communication, force us to contemplate on the implications for our social interactions and formations. Owing to the 'extension of our senses', our perceptions of time and space, of ourselves and others and our environment change to a certain extent. As do the scale and form of our societies. (Askew 2002: 2; Williams 2002: 28f.; Deuze 2012: xi-xv).

First and foremost, receivers, as part of the mass audience that is acted upon, are changed by the technological possibilities they are provided with, as well as the social values, ideologies and cultural identities reproduced on to them. Deuze argues, that receivers are influenced by the workings of the tools and instruments they use, because they grow to become a part of them, fused with everything they do and the relationships they uphold. People become sensually and emotionally connected to media. They grow used to the services they are provided with, depend on them and the knowledge on how to use them becomes "paramount to the human condition" (Deuze 2012: xi). Moreover users develop their identities, as well as socialize with and around these increasing possibilities of communication. They are "established in our sense making practices of the world and our role in it" (Deuze 2012: xiii).
Deuze argues further, that as they are the "primary definer[s] of our reality" (Deuze 2012: xiii), the way 'we' see and the way 'we' express ourselves is changed through and with the media 'we' use. Since 'our' senses are extended anywhere anytime and 'we' are continuously exposed to mediated world, 'we' feel always attached and connected, never completely alone and live a more or less symbiotic life with the media. Consequently 'we' become lost in the overwhelming amount of information 'we' receive and have trouble deriving any value from it, 'we' become numb, lose 'our' sense of ego and individuality. (Deuze 2012)
More so, an increasing amount of time is spent with and around media and other social processes become less relevant to receivers (Williams 2002: 28f.).

[4] Freely translated by L.D. from the original: "Je mehr Fernsehn ein Mensch schaut, desto reicher schätzt er laut dem Glücksforscher Richard Layard alle seine Mitmenschen ein und desto ärmer und unglücklicher fühlt er sich selbst" (Scheub/Kuschel 2012: 126)

Besides the technological possibilities changing who people are and how they perceive themselves, the content they are served with, stereotyped and essentialized, influences their identity. As they identify themselves with the icons on screen, are socialized with the actions they take, the opinions they have, the goals they follow and the values they carry. More so, they accept and absorb the conduct they see rewarded and learn to shun the actions that are punished. The audience members find role models in the action heroes who save lives, the romantic women who get married at the end of the movie and the rich and famous stars that live in villas and wear designer clothes (Hedges 2009). Their personal lives, real experiences and social networks interpenetrate the mediated world, melting together into one (Sreberny 2004: 84).

Advertising influences consumption, columnists or news commentators influence opinions and movies influence emotions and values (Powdermaker 2002: 162) and these three, emotions, opinions and consumption are tied closely together, again influencing one another. "The cultural environment in which we live becomes the byproduct of marketing" (Gerbner 2012: 239). The receivers take up and measure their looks, their goals, their behavior, and their lives against what has been performed for them. Not to forget that they are lead by stereotyped behaviour, according to certain gender, age and ethnic 'roles', to which they feel themselves expected to conform. And their demands and needs adapt accordingly, ceasing to be tied to necessities, but to social expectations and constructions of value (Illich 1993).

Consumption and material possessions are assigned increasingly more meaning; receivers think progressively more in stereotypes and categorize themselves and others within them. Hollywood being the most prominent actor, as it "mass-produces apolitical mindsets, conformism" (Askew 2002: 157) and the „profound emptiness and materialism" (Askew 2002: 157) are camouflaged by pseudo-deep romance and life changing happy ends. But all media, in one way or another, deliver consumers to advertisers and work with stereotypes and essentials when forming the 'national conversation'.

According to Deuze, technologies do not only alter the receiver's self-perceptions and desires, but also their relationships with others, events and objects; in short: the reality they perceive. They shape their relationships to others and to society as a whole. "Media and life co-evolve in ways governed by the many mixed and altogether messy ways in which machines and humans co-create each other" (Deuze 2012: 68)

First and foremost, their conceptions of time and space are changed. As media reduce real experiences into stories with a beginning and an ending, with a climax and a conflict,

organize and group the past, action, and events–in short: life– into a such a code of narration, receivers will eventually take up this code and recount their experiences accordingly. The same goes for spatial views and perspectives, usually the central perspective most often used in TV and film, as "the eye succumbs to the will of the camera" (Vertov 1979: 30)[5] and the receiver takes in its position, witnessing the action from a certain directed point of view. The receivers' eyes get used to this central perspective and become trained to look a certain way. (Prokop 2010: 50ff, 65ff.)

As the Media can bring past into present, distant to near (Shohat/Stam 2002: 120), daily and so easily, so that viewers cease to appreciate and grasp the geographical and social distances that separate them. TV news offers them „the conquering gaze from nowhere" (Haraway (1989) in Shohat/Stam 2002: 138) and "the power to see but not be seen, to represent while escaping representation" (Haraway (1989) in Shohat/Stam 2002: 138). Receivers are provided with information and knowledge from far away, without having to move, to give up comfort or information about themselves. They can be in the middle of earth's hot spots all the while staying at home in a secure and sheltered position and danger, war or violence are in a little box or on paper, two-dimensional, more and more insignificant (Shohat/Stam 2002: 138). The "asymmetries [...] between experiences of television and the experiences of war" (Shohat/Stam 2002: 142) or poverty, or hunger and misery, for that matter, become ever greater and audiences become numb to the threats, the danger, the pain and suffering they are exposed to.

Apart from the ability to be virtually everywhere, and at various places at once, audiences have, through recording equipment the possibility to preserve their experiences, their history and themselves. This applies to the family video camera for the individual life as well as to news programs, shows and videos, which collect and archive social history and social action. (Deuze 2012: xv, 14)

Owing to the mediated relationship to other social realms, as well as the political or the scientific, the receivers' perception of them changes too (Williams 2002: 28). To the public, for example, the practice and display of politics seem to be one and the same (Jarren et al. 1996: 9). News generally shows or informs people of things that happened, decisions that were made, records that were broken, discoveries that were achieved, but hardly ever mention the absence of them, that someone or something was unproductive. Connections, consequences and influences between social realms often remain unelaborated (Markinkowski (1995) in Jarren et al. 1996: 17-18). This gives the viewers and readers the

[5] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Das Auge unterwirft sich dem Willen der Kamera."

feeling that a realm, a group or institution is homogenously active, enjoys a relatively high degree of independence and owns a certain amount of power and influence. The administrative political system, the state or government, for example, is displayed as the most active player and protagonist (Markinkowski (1995) in Jarren et al 1996: 17). The state owns the medial image of the planner, steerer and controller of society, who owns all responsibility and regulates social life (Markinkowski 1995 in Jarren et al 1996: 17). More than that "[t]he imbalance between issues important to corporate hierarchies and those most urgent to the population at large is obscured by the neutralist tone of modern news" (Bagdikian 2009: 57).

As mentioned before, receivers identify themselves with people they see and hear in the media, perceive them as normal and what everyone should be like. But it does not stop with the person and their possessions or career, but also includes the relationships they have, they way they talk to each other. The 'normal' family, 'normal' mothers and fathers, with the 'normal' marriage and the 'normal' divorce are shown daily. This changes how audiences perceive and what they expect from social institutions and relationships. (Gerbner 2012: 237; Williams 2002: 28)

And of course just as the display of one's own culture is ridden with stereotypes and condensed values and identities, the more so are the representations of other cultures, always partial to the perspective of the senders, often located in the western cultural realm (Askew 2002: 9). The one incident or situation displayed, the one individual interviewed, stands as the prime example for this particular social or ethnic group. It becomes a generality, becomes 'typically German', 'typically African' or 'typically foreign'. This once more distorts the perceptions of certain cultural realms that are not one's own, but also the perceptions of 'otherness' and 'normality' all together. By representing others and otherness, difference is reproduced and reiterated, cultural, ethnic and racial categories are manifested and institutionalized (Askew 2002: 157).

In summary it is unwise to speak of true realities, experiences and opinions that are distributed and delivered, but of pseudo realities that are produced by the media in masses, slightly distorted and concentrated (Chomsky 2003: 38; Berger 2012: 102ff.). They do not only change the basic perceptions of reality (Williams 2002: 28) of single and separate individuals, but of an entire mass audience, shaping ideologies (Berger 2012: 172), narrowing and cultivating public debate (Baran/Davis 2012: 107). These media realities influence the "common consciousness" (Gerbner 2012: 239) of a society, form the "cultural mainstream" (Gerbner 2012: 239) and gradually marginalize alternatives to the established system.

With such subtle and important powers, mass media could be used as tools by certain groups, parties or individuals to achieve certain means. This aspect will be focus of the rest of the chapter in order to understand how mass media place themselves within political and economic power hierarchies, and to figure out whether their messages reflect and reproduce or unveil and question them.

2.3.7. Tools

Because they can produce, emphasize, concentrate and change the public's perception of reality, the media can be used as tools to be applied on society, for all types of agendas and interests. Whether they serve to manifest power and hegemony, or drive revolution and social change is a complex and intensely debated issue, which will be elaborated here in the context of power structures in the global food and media system.

Media studies divide between two opposing approaches, the political-economic approach and the technological-deterministic approach (McQuail 2010: 95ff.; 101ff.). The former understands media to exist "for the sole purpose of facilitating the reproduction of existing social relationships" (Askew 2002: 8), while the latter sees media as tool used to undermine existing power structures, social relations and instigate change (Askew 2002: 8).
The political-economic approach was developed to a great extent by Frankfurt School theorists and is mainly influenced by several Marxist and Neo-marxists theories, such as *structural, historical* and *material determinism* (Kunzmann/Wiedmann 2005). It places its emphasis on power structures, born in political, economic and historical conditions that greatly influence culture, including media production and is a classical Marxists theory of *base* and *suprastructure* (Kunzmann/Wiedmann 2005: 169f.). The media are in this context conceptualized as means of producing information owned by the dominant classes to be used as they see fit (Candeias 2007: 20). The realities of power hierarchies and unequal political and economic conditions are consequently masked in media representations and contribute to supporting the status quo (Askew 2002: 8). According to many Marxists, a great amount of power lies with the media producers, and the concept of ownership, due to political and economic conditions, is the key factor concerning the social power of the media (Askew 2002: 8; Berger 2012: 172). Texts are packed into a dominant code, produced so that only certain kinds of interpretations are made preferable and most obvious, leading the audience to certain messages and meanings (Prokop 2010: 18,34, 40ff.). Manning directs attention to an

unequal access to news media as well as a "hierarchy of credibility" (Manning 2001: 15). The theoretical assumptions that everyone has the possibility to contribute their ideas and opinions to the public sphere, in other words serve as a news sources, fall apart when considering the close connection of the media to social powers and authorities (Manning 2001).

The technological-deterministic approach, lead by media enthusiasts such as Marshall McLuhan or Harold Innis, understands mass media as means to setting the conditions for social change and lead to new developments in culture and society, rather than be influenced by their values (McQuail 2010: 101). Especially McLuhan saw technology in general, media in detail, as unpredictable forces, instigating changes and processes that could not have been foreseen by the producers and inventors (Baran/Davis 2012: 272ff.). Those that use the media for their purposes become dependent on them and need to fit their communication strategies to the formats of media production and communication (Jarren et al. 1996: 14,18). It is assumed that anyone can use mass media to mobilize, gain supporters and awareness for their goals, that they can help to diffuse and break down traditional structures and values, and support spontaneous change from below, serving grassroots movements (Askew 2002). Gerbner argues that a larger diversity of sources is the most effective way to increase content diversity (Gerbner 2012: 243). As seen in the development of new media, digital and social, a higher diversity of media forms and content, of opinions and ways of expression, have accompanied them (Duffy/Turow 2009: 16). As media have the function of educating and creating awareness, the effect of their diversity is in general considered to be positive, supporting social development and social change (Kiefer 2005: 139), because "in the end, it is public opinion that rewards or punishes [...]" (Thomas 2006: 9). And it is never precisely that which senders and their text want to communicate. The interpretation of media content and text is subjected to the social, cultural and intellectual situatedness of the recipients–one text always has more than just one meaning, which is produced in exactly the moment of consumption. While it is possible that readers take in the dominant or *preferred* code of the text, they could also negotiate its meaning or interpret it in a completely oppositional and critical way. Texts can be decoded objectively and rationally, but also subjectively and emotionally–with, as well as against the dominant code, read with, as well as against the grain. (Prokop 2010: 129-139)

These two approaches consequently differ on the mass media's role within political struggles or power structures, whether they strengthen those already powerful or those fighting to achieve social and political leadership.

2.4. Media and Cultural Hegemony

How media can serve as tools to gain political power and ideological leadership, through the influence of public opinion and cultural values is an important aspect when considering consumer cultures, international power structures and global inequalities, of which many remain ignorant. As the objective of this paper is to perceive how and why such vital ecological, political and economic issues such as injustices in the globalized food system are mediated this sub-chapter will take a theoretical look at the place and intention of texts, asking under who's power the media stand.

Antonio Gramsci's theories on cultural hegemony, ideological and moral leadership fought out in the realm of civil society and public opinion, highlight the relevance of the public sphere for the purposes of achieving and maintaining political and economic power. Mass media play no trivial role in this.

2.4.1. Power Through Civil Society - Antonio Gramsci

Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxists and one of the most important theorists on hegemony, power and civil society, still influences many social and cultural theorists today. Imprisoned by the Mussolini regime for his political work in the Italian communist party, he wrote important parts of his work, *The Prison Notebooks,* in captivity. (Gramsci 1971)

Gramsci adopts to a certain extend Karl Marx's theory on *economic* or *historical determinism*, where the latter differentiates between the economic modes of production, called the *base* or *suprastructure* on one side and the cultural and political system, defined as the *suprastructure* on the other. To Marx, the *base*, understood as economic realities that have evolved through history, influence the *suprastructure*, the relations of power in the current political realm. Therefore a class or interest group wanting to achieve political power and leadership of a state must do so by changing the existing relations of production and conquering the economic sphere. (Kunzmann/Wiedmann 2005: 169f.).

Gramsci, however, locates the sources of power somewhere else than just within the economic realm, the *base*. Firstly, the line he draws between *sub-* and *suprastructure* is not as strong and as fixed as in orthodox Marxism. He sees an interconnectedness as well as a reciprocal influence in certain contexts between the economic and political/cultural realm (Candeias 2007). But more importantly, he divides the *suprastructure* once more in two realms: one being the realm of the state, of government, of political action, were power is exercised through force, domination and coercion and the second being the social realm,

where private and cultural organisations operate, and where power is exercised through leadership, manipulation and by consent of the subaltern groups (Gramsci 1971).
This leads directly to Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which means ruling with the consent of those that are ruled (Gramsci 1971: 271). To him power stems not only from economic domination or political authority but also from social, ideological and moral leadership.

> […] there can, and indeed must, be hegemonic activity before the rise to power, and that one should not count only on the material force which power gives in order to exercise an effective leadership. (Gramsci 1971: 59.)

The entire complex of stately power is therefore to Gramsci the political society and the civil society, "hegemony protected by the armor of coercion" (Gramsci 1971: 263). This is what Gramsci means by the "integral state" (Gramsci 1971: 56), the state within a state or "trench and fortress" (Gramsci 1971: 238). When the governmental political power would be attacked or fall apart, the inner structure of civil society would be left to reveal the cultural hegemony (Gramsci 1971: 238).
It follows that a ruling class cannot achieve and manifest its power through economic means alone, but also through ideological means outside the political institutional realm of the state, in the private, cultural and social realm. It first needs to acquire cultural hegemony in the private realm of civil society, before taking control of political power and government.

> A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal conditions for the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to 'lead' as well. (Gramsci 1971: 57f.)

From this the concept emerges that civil society is the sphere where hegemony is exercised as well as contested over (Simon 1982: 26). It is just as ridden with power relations and struggles for domination as a battlefield, as the economic or the political governmental realm.

In order to gain cultural hegemony, the ruling class or group must make their own particular interests to look like ethical, ideological, and political positions, which will serve in the interests of all, not just them alone, and so inspire a "national-popular collective will" (Gramsci 1971: 130). It needs to surpass the realm of their own interests, what Gramsci calls

the “economic-corporate” (Gramsci 1917: 131) and particularistic phase, and move to the ethical-political phase, where all arguments, all struggles are brought to a general and universal level with a moral and political character. And consequently the interests of the public need to be *remade,* redefined and remodeled. This does not work without making alliances with other social groups or even absorbing other movements or parties. This means that some economic and material interests of the ruling class need to be compromised, and the demands of the masses are heard, so that they can be mobilized. (Gramsci 1971)

This occurs mainly through parties, which are the expression of a social class or group in the civil society; and especially through the party intellectuals or “organic intellectuals” (Gramsci 1971: 3), who have been produced within and alongside this certain class or group and who’s function it is to direct and organize interest and ideas and communicate, or mediate them. They are therefore the link to the popular masses and to the “traditional intellectuals” (Gramsci 1971: 6), who also mediate, communicate and organize ideas, but who do not develop alongside a certain class or group, and who are situated (at least theoretically) between social forces. They consider themselves to be autonomous and independent and are impervious to social and class struggles; existing continuously throughout history, no matter which group or class is in power. He describes journalists, who are men of letters, philosophers and artists as “the ‘true’ intellectuals” (Gramsci 1971: 8). As a strategy to achieving dominance, Gramsci names the ideological assimilation and conquest of the *traditional intellectuals* and the development of as many *organic intellectuals* as possible. As almost all intellectuals operate within the civil society, they are a key factor in establishing cultural hegemony and the more intellectuals subordinate to a social group, mediating and organizing their ideas, the easier it is for this social group to manifest ideological leadership. (Gramsci 1971: 3-14, 56)

This leading ideology or intellectual order, which ultimately illustrates the political-ethical ideas and world views of the leading class or group, are closely tied to and expressed in their "entire system of beliefs, superstitions, opinions, ways of seeing things and of acting” (Gramsci 1971: 323). This includes language, which to Gramsci is the a “totality of determined notions and concepts” (Gramsci 1971: 323) and expresses a culture as well as a conception of one’s world (Gramsci 1971: 325), as well as “common sense” (Gramsci 1971: 322), which he describes as the unconscious and uncritical form of thought and the generic way of perceiving the world particular to a certain period or popular environment (Gramsci 1971: 322, 330). “Common sense” concerns the “generally held assumptions and beliefs” (Gramsci 1971: 323), often diffuse and uncoordinated, the everyday banalities, what is

contemporarily considered as general knowledge. It is taken as given or for granted within this one socio-cultural realm, and remains beyond debate - ideas and systems of belief that are not actively lived or thought of, but done 'naturally', out of habit or reflex. Criticizing this *common sense*, pulling it into the obvious and changing it, is an important part of the struggle for a new popular ideology.

2.4.2. Producing Hegemony with Media

The mass media are therefore realms of public debate, public discourse and instruments of redefining interests, establishing a public opinion and manifesting cultural hegemony. "They are the center of struggles for power and control in any society" (McChesney 2009: 61). They are the tools with which knowledge is produced and hegemony is contested, "means of intellectual production" (Candeias 2007: 20)[6] in a "public arena" (Baran/Davis 2012: 259), where various class views are fought out. Consequently, those who assimilate the media, subordinate the intellectuals of journalism to mediate their own ideas and transform their own economic interests into a political ideology or place particularistic debates on a universal level. "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (Marx/Engels 1974: 64). Thus their ruling ideology and their cultural hegemony is manifested. The production, reproduction, and distribution of media content is managed by the ruling social group, not by force, but through influence, economic or political, so that it delivers a picture that fits accordingly to their interests and intentions, carried inside the dominant code with which the text is produced (Laitinen/Rakos 1997: 237; Prokop 2010: 40ff). The certain ways in which content is articulated, through explanatory frameworks, certain points of identification or 'objective' presentation–in short, through the conditions of production and the format of the content–the relationship between receivers and the senders is regulated. A certain way of decoding the messages becomes more suitable that others, more obvious and preferable. Audiences are not forced, but lead to understand the content in a specific way and recognize certain meanings. (Prokop 2010: 18,34,40ff.)

In this way mass media reproduce, manifest and distribute, what Gramsci calls *common sense*, as common conduct, norms and values are repeated in movies or talk shows, and news are presented in common reference frames, which become natural, apolitical and more difficult to be called into question. The audience is affected and influenced subconsciously and so is their code of conduct or code of consumption. Thus, capitalistic values can be easily reproduced through media. (Baran/Davis 2012: 260ff.)

[6] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Mittel zur geistigen Produktion"

> […] media do not function in the manner of the propaganda system of a totalitarian state. Rather, they permit – indeed, encourage – spirited debate, criticism, and dissent, as long as these remain faithfully within the system of presuppositions and principles that constitute an elite consensus, a system so powerful as to be internalized largely without awareness (Herman/Chomsky 2002: 302).

These theories and concepts of cultural hegemony through civil society no longer remain within the borders of a national society or political state. In times of continuing globalization they can be applied to a global society, global intellectuals and globally operating mass media organisations. Moreover, this aspect has become increasingly important, as a growing number of issues, such as the ecological and social aspects of the global food system, carry global relevance, are globally influenced and have global consequences.

2.5. A Global Perspective

With many subjects of globalization and international development, global power hierarchies play a significant role. In the case of the global food system, which this paper especially focusses on, the power structures between the North-Western industrialist societies and the countries of the global South are significant considering the social and ecological implications and the injustices constantly reproduced. As seen in the sub-chapters above, media always play a role in constructing power structures, more easily sustaining than weakening them. Mass media's role and placing within these global power structures are one of the most vital matters for global social development, for change. And it assists greatly in the analysis of medial pictures, portraits and texts, to know where the senders and producers stand within these hierarchies.

What people perceive and understand as media, as well as their general affects and influences is similar in all cultural realms. However, media presentations are still interpreted through a persons own cultural value system (Duffy 2009: 16). And yet it cannot be contested that the forms and methods of mass media production were developed almost exclusively in the Western cultural realm (Askew 2002: 9; Shohat/Stam 2002; Faris 2002). They evolved and matured in the Western economic and political structures, and are subsequently tied to capitalism, mass production, mass consumption, and mass society (Askew 2002: 9; Faris 2002: 78). Especially film and photography, as well as newspapers to a certain extend,

developed along side the industrial revolution in a capitalist environment coined by competition and profit (Faris 2002: 78; Faulstich 2004). Hence, media production was an industry from the start, a Western industry subordinate to Western methods, forms and perspectives. Shohat and Stam elaborate that industrial film evolved parallel to consumerism, nationalism and also colonialism–'the Scramble for Africa', along with the occupation and enslavement of other nations, and it developed in those countries that controlled alien territories, the imperial and colonial powers (Shohat/Stam 2002: 117). They go even further in declaring that this "imperial power shaped the uses to which the technology was put" (Shohat/Stam 2002: 120). Thus not only the ideas of the ruling class of capitalists and industrialists, but also colonial and imperial ideals shaped the forms of mass media.

And while these "codes of Western filmmaking" (MacDougall 2002: 150) are applied to local customs and ideas in other cultural realms, mass media remains a Western practice (Faris 2002: 78). Faris elaborates that, even when the content focuses on other cultures, the West remains the only subject, the only eye, the South remains the object, silent and viewed upon (Faris 2002: 80). As already mentioned, the methods and styles of media production are culturally partial, stereotyping and essentializing, and then exported into other cultural realms with other contents (Askew 2002: 9). And while content and message might change according to cultural values, form and methods of production, the tools remain saturated with Western capitalistic and imperialistic ideals. Apart from this, the "monopolistic control of film distribution and exhibition" (Shohat/Stam 2002, 120) exercises hegemony, as Western and capitalistic ideologies, values and social structures are exported.

Subsequently eurocentrism and Western social superiority are reproduced (Shohat/ Stam 2002) and "photographic explorations [...] ultimately sustain and reinforce dominant Western ideologies of Self and Other" (Askew 2002: 73). Thus, mass media can be viewed as tools for cultural, economic and media imperialism, for a global cultural hegemony of the global leading social class, 'the West'.

In light of these correlations and links between media, public discourse, power and ideology, the relevance of producing and mediating text, and with this, molding the public sphere and public consciousness can hardly be overestimated. Serving as "psychological windows into what has happened to our culture" (Hedges 2009: 8), media content reveals and affects a society's attitude towards injustice, inequality, suffering, poverty and hunger, as well as its

role in perpetuating these. As mass media are the tools through which people are informed about such issues as global agriculture, food policies, hunger and humanitarian crises, it cannot be denied that they serve a vital role in forming a public opinion on global political and ecological issues, from climate change to trade agreements. The way that the global food system is portrayed in Western print media has an influence on global politics, policies and development and it is important to keep in mind that the picture is always a reduced one, influenced by social ideologies and power relations. It is therefore important to take a closer look at the medial picture of global agriculture, hunger crises and food altogether, as well as elaborating a society's relation to and consumption of food.

3. You Are What You Eat - Anthropology of Food and Consumption

Just like the content of media, the content of plates is influenced by political and economic realities, social and cultural values, a person's sense of self, while at the same time expressing all those components. The development and expansion of industrial capitalism and the subsequent change of social values has led to an expansion of tastes and the contents of Western plates have become evermore convenient. Considerations for the globalized effects of unlimited consumption have in turn been diminished.

Since chapter two has proven that the mediation of something is closely connected to the ideology of it, it is significant to examine the social values of food and consumption, before analyzing and judging on the medial picture of the global food system, which is in part driven by global consumption patterns. This chapter will examine the social value of food, how it has been transformed in many minds from something natural into a consumer commodity that could fulfill any wishes. It addresses the issue of Western consumption patterns contributing to the structural inequalities–later elaborated in chapter five–and demanding the globalized system of industrial and commercial agriculture, which is in dire crisis at the time of the news coverage analysis in 2008; and will try to prove that consumer culture of convenience is part of the problem. It is useful to discuss the social and anthropological aspects of food consumption, as tastes for food are just as much a part of popular culture and are influenced by what people see on television or read in the paper.

3.1. Consumption and Society

The following paragraphs elaborate on the phenomena of consumption, which is, contrary to its assessment in economic logic, more than just market participation, but social and cultural practice, expressing and manifesting one's identity and relation to the world. As will be shown, it is situated right in between the influence of a number of social forces: politics, religion, education, economics and also media. The development of certain tastes and fashions as well as consumer cultures, parallel to leading ideas, will be examined. This includes the social values and ideals concerning food, relevant to its medial pictures, and its relationship with and placing within other social and economic developments.

The words consumption or to consume stem from the Latin word *consumere* (cum sumere), which means to absorb, use up, and *consummare* (cum summa) which means to add up, to complete. The consumption process is therefore understood as the absorption of an object by

a subject, usually a person, resulting in the destruction of the object and the completion of the subject. (Dabringer 2009: 8).

Cultural anthropologist Néstor García-Canclini defines consumption as: "[…] the ensemble of socio-cultural processes in which the appropriation and use of products takes place" (2001: 38). It is part of the cycle of economic performance, consisting of production, distribution and consumption, and ultimately justifies its preceding stages, in economic as well as social terms (Dabringer 2009: 8f.). And most importantly, it is a necessity. A biological and a social one, as it is a praxis through which people constitute a relationship with the world (Dabringer 2009:11; Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 175).

> Consumption is the meaningful use people make of the objects that are associated with them. The use can be mental or material; the objects can be things, ideas, relationships; the association can range from ownership to contemplation (Carrier 2004: 128)

As people assign certain symbolic meanings to the objects they consume, consumption is not only an economic performance, but also "a complex form of conduct within society bearing many different dimensions" (Dabringer 2009: 7)[7]. It is a form of social participation. Consumers invest not only money, but also time and energy while socially interacting with others, and thus constitute social relationships (Dabringer 2009: 7, 12f.). Regular consumption gives people stability and security, especially when involved with social institutions and rituals, i.e. the turkey dinner on Thanksgiving or the Fourth of July fireworks for example (García-Canclini 2000: 46).

Most importantly, consumption is a non-verbal form of communication (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 176). By absorbing a symbolic object, social messages are sent and received; opinions, desires, tastes are expressed, and the social message of the object is internalized (Dabringer 2009: 12). Hence, one's own sense of self, one's relationship to one's environment, one's wishes, political standpoints and social standing is manifested through the food one consumes and also converted into an economic demand (Dabringer 2009: 6; García-Canclini 2001: 42). From a social perspective, we are what we eat (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 173).

[7] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Konsumieren als ein komplexes Agieren in Gesellschaft mit vielen verschiedenen Dimensionen […]"

3.1.1. Food and Society

As mentioned above, the regulatory aspect of consuming gives us stability. Like rituals, a regular meal allows us to find a common point in a world that is becoming increasingly segmented and complex. Through consuming food one finds a sense of belonging, gains a point of orientation and feels safe (García-Canclini 2001: 42-44/Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 40). One of those places is the dinner table and the family meal, which carries an immensely important social function. It is where people have come together since the invention of cooking. As they used to gather around the fire to eat, talk and socialize, they come together today at the kitchen table for meal times. It is one of the most important places of social exchange, of communicating with each other, of growing up with. (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 29-40)

Historically, values, norms and codes of conduct have been transported through everyday tasks at home, including the kitchen and the dinner table. An institution that carried out socio-communicative and educational functions, the daily dinner society was a social call, a meeting, where politics were discussed, where tasks were assigned and problems fought over. It was a place where several generations came together to talk and exchange perspectives. It was therefore also a place where family hierarchies were expressed, through seating arrangements for example, and it stabilized old structures of value. The dinner table was the first place where people behaved in what is called 'a civilized manner', where there was no violence or shouting allowed, let alone running around or standing up during the meal. It was the first time and place were people 'behaved themselves'; developed and obeyed certain rules. Table manners therefore were the first social rules, the first type of civilized behaviour and the first of what is today called 'manners'. (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 29-40)

More than that, practical education is passed on in the kitchen and at meal times. Techniques of culture, behavior around others and in a community, are taught. Not to mention cooking techniques, what food to prepare, which types of food are considered ordinary, which types are special and rare, to be saved for holidays and feasts. A great amount of religious education is transported through rituals when eating and cooking together, i.e. eating kosher or saying grace. (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 29-40)

Furtmayr-Schuh, a scientific journalist, is therefore correct in calling the kitchen and the dinner table "a culture building institution" (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 54)[8].

[8] Translated by L.D. from the original: "[…] einer kulturbildenden Institution"

3.1.2 Food and Identity

Whether individual or collective, identity is manifested and expressed by everything people buy and consume, not just food. From music or clothing, to cars or furniture, all material things consumed by anyone tell others, who he or she is (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000). As mentioned before, people express their relation to the world through consumption; their lifestyle, their ethnicity, their social status, their gender, their age etc. (Dabringer 2009: 14-16) In short: their identity; here defined as the "attributes, which identify an individual as a unique personality and different to anyone else" (Dabringer 2009: 15)[9] and highlight similarities between people who affiliate themselves with the same group (Dabringer 2009: 15). Food is actually one of the more subtle forms of identification, and therefore considerably underestimated.

As basic necessities and requirements can be satisfied in a number of different ways, it comes down to choices and priorities (Dabringer 2009: 119), all highly symbolic. By choosing one food over the other, pasta over steak, organic over conventional, they express their opinion on pesticides, animal cruelty or workers rights. They signalize the world around us, to which group they belong to, and what interests they have (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 175). By making choices and setting priorities, people express values.

In the case of food, it is not simply the what, but also the how, meaning food practices, dinner protocols, preparation techniques, cooking styles, meal times etc., contributing to the culture of a society. Warren Belasco, a historian and food studies scholar summarizes this under the term "cuisine" and points out that 'we' all "use food to speak with each other" (Belasco 2008: 15). Whether 'we' twist 'our' *Oreo Cookie*, nibble at it or dunk it in chocolate milk, whether 'we' eat 'our' popcorn sweet or salty fixes boundaries, says something about who 'we' are and who 'we' are not, where and how 'we' grew up.

Even more, the way people eat becomes ritual, tradition. It is fixed simply out of principle and when eating certain food, they are taken back to certain places or people they connect these rituals with (Belasco 2008: 23ff.). Very often these connections are made to mothers or grandmothers, who have for centuries shown their love and caring through cooking and baking. Thus, people tend to cling to food that is 'just like grandma used to make' because it reminds them of the love and care they used to receive. (Belasco 2008)

So, no matter what types of food people choose, they inevitably express part of themselves individually and declare them to be a part of a collective identity, whether national, religious, family, gender or political, and at the same time create a division to other groups. Food

[9] Translated by L.D. from the original: "[…] Eigenschaften, die Individuen als einzigartige Personlichkeiten und als different zu allen anderen ausweisen."

consumption is a "marker of differences" (Dabringer 2009: 14), as well as of social status, can create, express, and constitute distinction and split society into groups (Dabringer 2009: 13,15). Choosing not to eat or to consume–certain things–sends a message just as well, often one of rebellion, boycott or resistance against someone or something. It still shows others who you are, who you wish you were, or who you think you should be. (Belasco 2008).

Thus, "the social identity of a person develops through the use of consumption goods" (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 173)[10]. One gets to know oneself through one's consumption choices, and passes this knowledge on to one's environment (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 174). More importantly, while people use this social practice to display themselves and their identity, they also consume and reproduce certain symbolic meanings, distinctions and differences, as these objects, along with their messages, become part of them and their entire culture (Dabringer 2009: 15). These symbolic meanings, identities and consumer cultures are all social values in one way or another, and in turn influence the medial pictures of food and consumption and deserve special focus.

3.2. Consumer Cultures

The following part addresses the social phenomena of consumer cultures, and tries to assess in what way consumption is culturally situated, and how leading tastes are tied to leading ideas, power structures, hierarchies and public perception. Especially in relevance to the Gramscian *common sense*–habits, which are not consciously considered or thought of, the question arises whether a medial picture, a form of public discourse and a lack of critical discussion could manifest consumption cultures which are unsustainable and outdated.

3.2.1. Expression of Social, Political and Economic Structures

Cooking is a language through which society unconsciously reveals its structure
(Lévi Strauss 1978: 459)

This chapter has so far argued that through consumption identity is expressed. In order to express oneself correctly through the consumption of a good, however, there needs to be consensus and agreement on the symbolic meaning of the object. The display of identity,

[10] Translated by L.D. from the original: "[…] bildet sich die soziale Identität eines Menschen durch den Gebrauch von Konsumgütern."

status, or distinction only works when everyone assigns the same meaning to the consumed goods. (García-Canclini 2001: 40)

Certain status symbols vary between social and cultural groups and over time, for instance, like caviar and champagn*e* are symbols of wealth and elitism in Western societies, meat and *fast food* symbolize richness and exclusiveness in many Asian societies. García-Canclini argues that even within the same societies and cultural realms, hegemonic and subaltern groups consume differently and assign different meanings to cultural and consumer goods (García-Canclini 2001: 45). What people express with their consumption, what is understood by others depends therefore on the social and cultural environment, on contemporary popular ideology (García-Canclini 2001), on what Gramsci calls *common sense*. It can be summed up by the term consumer culture.

What certain types of food symbolize, what is in fashion and what is out, what meanings people assign to certain objects, and what they expect from them or what they need, depends greatly on social and economic forces and frameworks (Dabringer 2009: 12). It is important to keep in mind, that all processes of production, distribution and consumption take place within society and social contexts (Dabringer 2009: 8), people do not consume inside a vacuum, but within the social and cultural realm they live in, under certain conditions, with certain limitations (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 179f.). They choose between tools at hand according to socially fixed patterns, norms and ideas, as well as economic possibilities. They choose as individuals, but also as members of a social, cultural or political group (Dabringer 2009: 11). As with everything in society, this involves structures of power. García-Canclini views consumption also as a conflict of the distribution of commodities (García-Canclini 2001: 38).

These differing social structures influence the development and evolvement of people's need to consume goods (Dabringer 2009: 12). "The way in which goods are socially demanded, used and consumed stands in direct accordance with the development of social relationships and identities" (Dabringer 2009: 10)[11]. Illich argues that how people define wants, needs, true requirements or necessities and where they lie correspond to their economic and social development (Illich 1993: 53). To him needs are historically bound phenomena and social habits (Illich 1993: 49f.). Thus, the commercial value of a good is also its social value (García-Canclini 2001: 46).

[11] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Die Art und Weise, wie Güter gesellschaftlich eingefordert, gebraucht und verbraucht werden, steht in direktem Zusammenhang mit der Ausbildung sozialer Beziehungen und Identitäten"

Consumption as part of a culture is the objectification of society and expresses its social logic (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 198; Dabringer 2009: 12). The worldview of a society or culture is integrated in its system and structure of consumption (Dabringer 2009: 20). Consumer culture is not only part of and influenced by social relations or contemporary popular ideology, but also expresses social values, social priorities, or political and economic conditions of society. "The rationality of social relations is constructed in the appropriation of the means of symbolic distinction" (García-Canclini 2001: 40).
And consuming within certain structures, values and codes of conduct and abiding by them, not only expresses, but also strengthens and supports them. The conduct around and the use of certain objects create social attributes, which in turn produce structures and support existing relationships (Dabringer 2009: 10). These social consumption habits carry a certain function for social classifications and conducts (Dabringer 2009: 12).

> Group affiliations, egalitarian economic structures and power relations build a framework of values, which regulates and controls the adaptation of 'new' cultural goods. And so the regulation of needs through society proves to be a strategy able to […] sustain social norms. (Dabringer 2009: 12)[12]

3.2.2. Needs, Tastes and Ideas

The transformation of thirst into a need for Coca-Cola (Ivan Illich 1992)[13]

As people's needs, expectations, assignments of meaning are so closely tied to social and economic structures and relations of power, they ultimately also change according to social and economic developments. The leading tastes are closely tied to the leading ideas (Dabringer 2009: 13).
García-Canclini argues that consumption is always subordinated to the social environment and especially to social elites (García-Canclini 2001: 43). Martina Kaller–Dietrich, professor of history and Maria Dabringer, a consumption anthropologist, both name countless examples of how elites have made tastes popular, such as the aristocrats in pre-modern India who

[12] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Gruppenzugehörigkeit, egalitäre ökonomische Strukturen und Machtbeziehungen bilden einen Rahmen von Werten, der die Adaptierung von 'neuen' Kulturgütern reguliert und steuert. So erweist sich die Regulierung von Befürfnissen durch die Gesellschaft als Teil einer Strategie, die gesellschaftliche Normen […] erhalten kann"
[13] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Die Transformierung des Durstes in ein Bedürfnis nach Coca-Cola" Interview in 1992, cited in Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 180

determined the clothing fashions, or the royals of 17th century Europe who made coffee with sugar a very sought after drink. The very first cookbooks were actually written for the households of the feudal lords (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 27). Only industrial production made these products affordable to the masses, but their desire for it existed already before that. (Dabringer 2009: 12; Kaller-Dietrich 2011)

In spite of who or what initiates social change or change of needs, Illich argues that modern development has lead to an extension of people's needs and an extension of what they define as needs (Illich 1993: 50). Needs are not the same as true necessities or actual requirements anymore, there are new understandings and definitions of what people need or require. While it has always been about more than just nourishing their bodies–people have always 'needed' to feed their culture, identity and soul just as much as their mouths–wants and limits used to be a common part of people's lives. Today, these 'needs' are challenges to be met by technology or industry (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 181; Illich 1993: 51). And they have become unlimited. Simple people suddenly become "the needy" (Illich 1993: 48)[14].

Consuming in masses is taken for granted, rarely questioned (Dabringer 2009: 23). It has become *common sense* to many. Needs have become expectations, expectations on the functioning of entire systems, impersonal systems, systems of technology, services or security (Illich 1993: 42). Institutions are created to organize consumption, i.e. advertising, organisations for consumer protection, food labeling regulations, garbage and waste management (Dabringer 2009: 22). Most grownups today are dependent on things like cars or fast food. Illich calls these dependencies needs (Illich 1993: 49).

And while today, to many people, certain food still symbolizes something and they still express their identity with it, food itself has become a low priority consumer good. While at the same time, mass consumption inspires irrational wishes and needs (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 170), leading consumers to harbor "food illusions" (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 107)[15]. More and more people would like to, or have to, spend their money and time on other things. To them food is supposed to fulfill its function: getting them full and tasting good, while taking up as little time and money as possible, but also fulfill their cravings at any time or place, not matter how irrational the demand. To many people, eating has become a "necessary evil" (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 49)[16] and a lot less social. While cooking shows gain top viewer ratings, not even half of the German population regularly cooks, 20 % even admit that they never cook (Scheub/Kuschel 2012: 15). Many have become convenient with their food, a

[14] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Bedürftige"
[15] Translated by L.D. form the original: "Nahrungsillusionen"
[16] Translated by L.D. form the original: "notwendiges Übel"

credo that assigns it almost no social value. Convenience is a consumer culture with important global influences and a very relevant historical development, as it has needed global inequalities in order to be made possible.

3.3. Convenience

The following subchapter explores how the consumer culture of convenience eveolved within Western societies and how it has been tied to historical social and economic, especially industrial developments. It asks how and why it has become a leading taste as well as a leading idea, and to what extent it is sustained by a deeply rooted ignorance and lack of global awareness in the public discourse about food.

Furtmayr-Schuh argues that modern mass consumption marks the third turning point in human nutrition–due to the growing population, the industrialization and urbanization process. While gaining independence from the forces of nature and diets became more diverse, needs expanded into expectations. (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 25, 34)

Many would consider it the marker of progress of civilization: maximum output for minimum input–noticeable through the growing amount of choice and varieties of food, the labor and time saving technologies and cheap products for the masses. These enable many to invest their time and energy into other, more important things, such as education or political activism at best. Supporters argue, for example, that women's emancipation was made possible and is continuously supported by convenience food and new kitchen technologies (Belasco 2008: 59), while critics elaborate how meritocracy has left no time and energy to give food the attention and priority it deserves (Nestle 2003).

What really came first, convenient technologies or time pressure, is difficult, perhaps impossible to answer, but what can be deduced, is that the process of capitalistic industrialization changed the social conception of the dinner table, the family meal and general food habits considerably. Fixed working hours and the separation of place of work and home lead to the general phenomenon of social separation between free time and working hours, the former associated with home, the latter with factory or office, thus generating different eating rhythms. People ate early in the morning before going to work, then had an assigned lunch hour at work eating cantina or boxed food with their coworkers, and then dinner later at night. When more and more people joined the work force, there was less time to prepare food, let alone grow it. Subsequently many, especially urban kitchens became more

and more dependent on anonymous food markets and convenience food. (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 34)

> In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the proportion of women with children who entered the work force greatly expanded and many people began to work longer hours to make ends meet […]. (Nestle 2003: 19)

The population growth and urbanization process, which followed the industrialization, lead to the development of population-dense areas and mega cities, separated from the country where food was produced. Therefore more food had to be transported for longer distances and had to be conserved for longer periods of time (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 58). White bread, for example was developed, because the separated grain could be conserved longer. The rest was given to the animals, which incidentally started the process of feeding grain to animals. (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 58ff.) Society started to outlive an increasing division between people living in the countryside, growing up around food production, and people living in cities, knowing less and less about where their food actually came from.

Today, school and working hours, social commitments and recreational activities have priority over cooking and eating together (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 37). Especially shift workers have no regular meal times, let alone with their families (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 51). The continuing drivers of convenience are understood to be the aging population, the amount of women in the workforce, the increasing work hours, the lowering of wages, the breakdown of traditional mealtimes and the high number of single or two person households (Buckley 2008: 4).

> Convenience overrides not only considerations of health but also the social and cultural meanings of meals and mealtimes. Many food products relegate cooking to a low-priority chore and encourage trends toward one-dish meals, fewer side dishes, fewer ingredients, larger portions to create leftovers, almost nothing cooked "from scratch", and home-delivered meals ordered by phone, fax or Internet. (Nestle 2003; 19f.)

When considering the choice of foods, the aspect of comfort and convenience is very important. Especially in families where both parents work and in single parent households it is decisive that food can be brought to the table quickly and without too much effort. People

living alone, who have no interest in cooking an elaborate meal just for themselves, a large part of the aging population, who simply lack the energy, or young adults, who just moved out of home and are simply uninterested in food, are the most frequent consumers of convenience food (Buckley 2008: 7-11). They ask for food that fits to their flexible and individual lifestyle. The time spent to select, buy and prepare the meal needs be cut short in order to make room for other, more important, tasks–work, school, sports ect. This is how slogans such as 'ready made' and '5 minute dinner' have become common on most packagings.

This expectation of convenience does not only affect the process of distribution, but also the production of food. It has become the ultimate goal of food processing industry to produce most of the same food people have always craved for in a more convenient form. Food is nowadays technically engineered by chemists, physicists and designers in order to fit people's lifestyles and awaken their curiosity. Afterwards sprayed with pesticides and fertilizers to grow quicker, bigger and better. It is designed to meet their every need, whether they want the extra vitamins and nutrients, need the food to stay fresh longer or want to lose weight. The additives, artificial flavors, preservatives, emulsifiers or sweeteners can help them with that, and they have become an everyday part of industrial societies. (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993)

Since the uninvolved convenient customer is more into looks and less into content, supermarkets and producers need to take care that their food really looks tasty and fresh. Bread should feel soft, veggies should have bright colors, apples are sold best when red and shiny, sugar is added to canned food, so that it tastes more "natural" and the drinks need to be extra cold (Belasco 2008: 22). Whatever one might wish for, the demands are expected to be met.

What had hitherto separated food from other consumer goods like clothes, toys or electronics were its natural attributes and components. It could not be unlimitedly consumed or stored; it grew and developed according to the laws of nature, depending on climate, season and geography. The growth process took time, care and patience, meaning that its productivity, speaking in economic terms, had limits. Not to forget that consumers of food also have natural limits. They cannot consume infinite amounts of it, their body sets them boundaries and they are eventually full. But they also have to consume it; eating is an absolute necessity for their bodies to uphold their functions and for them to keep up a healthy life.

Technology and industrial production have managed to eradicate all natural aspects of food and the market is now able to treat it just like any other consumer good. It has, through a highly mechanized and labor divided food industry, emancipated men and women from the

laws of nature (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 36). It follows, that consumers, no longer have any perception of how food is produced and processed (Belasco 2008, 57), they have lost the understanding of what food actually is, or what it should be. Western societies are not used to limited amounts, to their specific wishes for taste or freshness remaining unfulfilled.
If anything, food is treated like a recreational product that can be fitted to people's needs perfectly, not limited by laws of nature or necessities for bodily functions (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 101). A product, like any other, that should solve problems of the market, instead of feeding people (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 119), while farmers have been reduced to factory workers. With a low social standing, they are perceived to be uncivilized and primitive. Today, biotechnologists and engineers receive the credit for the heroic task of feeding us.

> […] as food is progressively transformed into a highly branded, packaged and despatialized commodity, and severed from time, space and culture (or season, landscape and meaning), it shifts for many into the moral unconscious (Weis 2010: 317)

Owing to the great social and geographic distance between the consumption process and the production process of food, also called "delocalization of the food system" (Dabringer 2009: 18)[17], the connection of the product consumed, and to its production process is lost, and subsequently eating and consumption habits tend to change. And ironically, the greater the distance between the sectors of consumption and production, the greater becomes the consumers desire to come back closer to the original way of life. (Dabringer 2009: 18)

3.4. Authenticity

The following part tries to highlight the hypocrisy and inconsistency of Western consumption, again due to a lack of knowledge and self-criticism within public conversations about food. It is an excursion on a newly developed taste for authenticity, which developed in contrast and tries to stand against the ignorant consumer culture of convenience, yet has still been incorporated into industrial and capitalistic structures, supermarkets and fast food chains.

A longing for authenticity began, at the end of the last century, when people in industrialized countries had too many goods and lifestyles to choose from (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 184) and became overwhelmed by the massive supply of consumption goods

[17] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Delokalisation des Nahrungssystems"

(Dabringer 2009: 22). In a world run by technical utopianism, highly mechanical product chains, mass produced goods that can be conveniently reached from anywhere, many feel themselves longing to go back in time a little, to when things were run a little slower, when foods were more traditional, made with love, care and individually for each customer. Due to the increasingly complex social world in industrial and mass consumer societies, people long to live more in harmony with nature and the environment. It is what many believe to be an ideal world, the lost paradise (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 185, 167).

In a Western understanding, authenticity means, to discover the meaning of life through one's sense of self, to be in touch with one's historic roots and origins. It is a marker of quality as well as of distinction, usually connected with originality and individuality. It is a symbolic meaning people assign to certain goods and is just as much a part of consumer culture as status symbols or gender stereotypes, therefore influenced by their social environment. (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000)

In a globalized world, where cultural realms come ever closer to each other and everything seems to be 'Westernized', in a time of trends, fashions and mass consumption, authenticity becomes ever harder to achieve. Consequently it is organized as a commodity, so that it can be more easily acquired, bought and paid for. The product lines in the supermarkets, like *Organic Valley* or *Wild Oats*, the family vacations on farms out in the country, the arrangements for 'dropouts' who want to live closer to nature, bear witness to such a phenomenon (Dabringer 2009: 17ff.).

Through the consumption of organically produced foods, or ethnic meals in foreign countries, people want to re-establish a symbolic connection between them and the simple natural life, their roots, and manifest their authentic selves (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 173). Especially foreign or ethnic products symbolize originality, as much as a thirst for knowledge and cosmopolitanism (Dabringer 2009: 18f.). So, for those who would rather get 'back to the roots', whose mass consumption weighs heavy on their conscience, find an easy remedy in the looks of individuality, authenticity, and organic production on many food products in the supermarkets (Roseberry 2005; Belasco 2005). Organic and Fair Trade labels, of many different types, all with different sets of rules, create more confusion than information for the customer. The marketing effect is great however, because people believe that a certified label makes production and consumption immediately more responsible (Belasco 2005: 228ff). When the certification is missing, the package design and material can help out, for example, being wrapped in unbleached, recycled brown paper, instead of white shiny plastic.

> Whiteness meant Minute Rice, Cool Whip, instant mashed potatoes, white sugar […] white collar, […] bleached cotton, white wash, white trash […]. Brown bread on the other hand, may have had a shorter shelf live, but at its peak it seemed hardier, more resilient, more full of innate character (Belasco 2005: 221)

TV ads tell the romantic, idyllic stories of the farmers, who have a good life thanks to the manufacturers who buy from them. Who take their work seriously, who love their animals and whose only goal is to make good tasting and healthy food. The connection from farm to fork is openly displayed (Huffington Post 2012).
Although, as this unique, original style of consumption usually comes at a higher price, living the authentic life is luxury, usually reserved for the wealthy class of industrial societies (Braidenbach/Zukriegl 2000: 169).

Consumption, taste and cuisine are products of cultural and social values, of underlying ideologies, of *common sense* and current fashions, influenced by many social and cultural factors, including mass media. What this chapter has proven is that food consumption is just as trenched with power relations as language and the production of medial content and that this expanded need for convenience food is just as much a reflection of social structures and leading tastes, influencing and influenced by the way people talk and mediate about food.
24-7 supermarkets, abundance, developed through and at the same time helped along the expansion of capitalistic structures. All the while unlimited consumption has become the all-agreed upon assumption of industrial societies, is has reached a state so fixed in many people's minds that it seems to be beyond debate and negotiation.
What can also be seen from this chapter is that it is necessary to critically inform a public on issues of global agriculture, food policies, and especially their role in contributing to structural inequalities within this food system. As Belasco describes identity, convenience and responsibility as three conflicting aspects, especially responsibility and convenience (Belasco 2008), most believe that they can have it all; many are socialized to believe, that this is possible without having to give up convenience or laziness, that one can still be authentic while eating strawberries in winter, that technology is the exact remedy to take them back to the days without technology. This is a very resilient form of postmodern schizophrenia, due to an increasing lack of information about the global food system, a lack of critical debate, a lack

of alternatives, as well as the overwhelming abundance of food everywhere, whether in cooking shows, magazines full of recipes or fast food commercials. Still, most people do not know how irresponsible their eating habits have become; that it is not so comfortable to really be green–and it is their attitude that needs to change in order to make a difference. One of the largest drivers of structural global inequalities is the illusion that everything can be made right without having to change anything. Mass media contribute to this ignorant attitude towards food and agriculture, but can also help to change it. Whether they do is the objective of the *Critical Discourse Analysis* performed in chapter six.

> […] the deceptive efficiency of industrial capitalist agriculture and its manifestation in cheap, bountiful food have long overshadowed the instability and inequalities of the system (Weis 2010: 317f.)

4. Global Media Commodities

Since media content is increasingly commoditized, treated as a product to be sold on media markets and as media organisations more and more function as profit driven businesses, it is essential to examine how this changes the conditions of producing media content, and in turn how this affects the meanings, codes and messages within the texts, so as to better understand the medial portraits of global ecological and social problems. As chapter two has discussed in detail how ownership, institutional settings, production conditions, and format are irreversibly connected to content, they are all part of the form of discourse, part of the way global issues are portrayed and discussed in media–in short: the research topic of this analysis. This chapter focusses on media production from an economic perspective and gives an insight into the conditions under which media texts are produced. An overview of market functions, productions risks and revenue streams will be given before elaborating on the consequences for journalistic work and content, when economic logic takes over. All this is an important part of figuring out the form of discourses, power structures and influences within mass media and their products.

4.1. Economic Logic

In order to understand media organizations fully, it is important to understand that they are businesses and industries as well as social institutions (Kiefer 2005: 16). They are embedded in the national economies, produce jobs and contribute to the GDP just as much as they are part of society fulfilling social functions. They are an economic factor as well as a social factor (Kiefer 2005: 17ff). As will be shown in this and the following sub-chapters, an economic logic behind the production of media texts, will inevitably also inhabit the code and message of the texts, the form of discourse and the assumptions the texts. These texts will then be less likely to engage alternative logics when discussing social, political or ecological issues, such as globalized industrial agriculture.

Incidentally, the social contributions of mass media organizations, "manufactur[ing] a social and political world" (Bagdikian 2009: 51) do not go hand in hand with the economic ideals of efficiency and profit increase. Tensions arise between "media as profit maximizing commercial organisations and the need for the media to provide the basis for informed self government" (McChesney 2009: 61). The function of positively influencing public debate, broadening and opening political discourse, objectivity and social responsibility of the media are all normative concepts, which are not included in economic parameters of supply,

demand, value and preferences. So, the concept of the media altogether providing a public service is not completely compatible with the concept of economic liberalism and individualism, especially not if the public service of the media cannot be deduced from the individual preferences of the media consumers (Kiefer 2005: 71). Economic logic focusses on the individual and his or her preferences, it assumes that this individual acts rationally and measures costs and value of his or her behaviour. For economists, individual behaviour is the point of reference for collective behaviour and social phenomena (Kiefer 2005: 74). Thus, if individual consumers do not specifically ask for objectivity, a broader debate or unbiased information, and are not willing to pay a higher price for it, in other words demand it, the media market will not supply it. Within this reasoning, 'the public' only demands and needs what the individual demands and needs. But nevertheless, as elaborated in chapter two, a broad and diverse public debate is necessary for a well functioning democracy and working political system, which the media could provide indeed. Media organizations become schizophrenic, being torn between their social obligation and their economic interests (Kiefer 2005: 20). Many media experts and scholars argue even further and speak of a subordination of social and political functions under economic interests, cost efficiency and profits (Kiefer 2005: 20ff).

As the globalization process – the increasing interconnectedness of economies and societies all over the world – influence governments, social institutions and industries, media businesses are part and parcel of this development. The radius of distribution expands, content is channeled via satellites and international frequencies, programs and shows are internationalized to be sold on international media and advertising markets, suited for international audiences (Kiefer 2005: 26). The production of international content requires networking, international alliances and globally operating businesses (Kiefer 2005: 27). For all this, a substantial amount of investment is needed. Global expansion and technical innovation such as multimedia and satellites are impossible without the economic potential and profits they are anticipated to generate (Kiefer 2005: 28). Consequently, the internationalization of media production is accompanied by increasing commercialization, privatization, deregulation, and liberalization (Kiefer 2005: 23ff.). In order to keep up with the global competition, media enterprises have to make profits more than anything.

"The logic of the market has penetrated to unprecedented depths of the modern newsroom" (Klinenberg 2009: 149). Media organizations and their editors suddenly have their own, self-centered interests; they become egoistic institutions, no longer selfless social and public servants (Jarren 1996 in Kiefer 2005: 18). Content, whether information or entertainment, is a

product to be sold and profited from, to be made available on media markets (Kiefer 2005: 18). "In the media world, *product* means news, entertainment and political programs" (Bagdikian 2009: 40, original italics). Production efficiency is to be increased by producing at lower costs and succumbing to the preferences of audiences and advertisers (Kiefer 2005: 23). Robert E. Babe, professor of communication and media studies, points out that "the capacity to communicate, to package and diffuse information means power [...]. Power, however, is not a primary concern for most mainstream economics [...]." (Babe 1994: 55). Social structures and power relations are all but forgotten when economic logic sets in. The embeddedness of media organizations in society and its influences and effects onto it cannot be translated into a price; neither do they fit into the categories of supply, demand, cost, and value. The market is therefore not the ideal institution to encourage or support the media's public service function, on the contrary. It does "not suffice to induce […] journalistic independence." (Baker 2009: 93) and does not consider the relations of power involved with producing and using media discussed in chapter two. And yet market behavior is expanding into more and more spheres where it does not belong traditionally.

4.2. Economics of Media Production

The first freedom of the press is not to be a business–Karl Marx 1842[18]

In order to sufficiently understand the difficult compatibility of mainstream economic models and media production argued above, it is helpful to analyze media content from an economic perspective, to view it as a product with costs and values, supplied and demanded. In doing so, this chapter will show that media products vary from other 'typical' industrial products like cars or toasters in several ways, and that the market is an insufficient instrument in distributing information with which awareness on important issues is to be created and which are to introduce a critical debate into the public conversation.

A base principle within the standard market model – where goods are sold at marginal costs and based on only a few external effects the production can react almost instantly to market expressed preferences–does not apply adequately to the production, distribution, and consumption of media products (Baker 2009: 91). As they are public and credence goods, with several important external effects, their conditions of marketability are significantly different to those of, for instance, a bottle opener. And as they are, to a certain extent, a

[18] Rheinische Zeitung 1842, cited in Hardt 2000: 92

service and immaterial goods, their cost structure is different to that of let's say a pencil (Baker 2009, Kiefer 2005). Under these conditions economists often speak of market failure (Kiefer 2005: 83).

Nonexcludability and Nonrivalry

First and foremost mass media can be described as public goods, as they lack two very important characteristics, "excludability" and "rivalry" (Kiefer 2005: 135)[19]. *Nonexcludability* is a concept that applies mostly to immaterial media products such as broadcast television, radio or Internet websites, and refers to the difficulty of reserving the use of these products for paying consumers exclusively. Excluding non-paying consumers, i.e. free riders, from enjoying these products is very difficult, since access to radio or terrestrial waves, just like the air we breathe or the ocean, cannot be easily restricted and are thus consumed by an unlimited amount of recipients at the same time. Due to this circumstance, there is no incentive for anyone to pay for these products, as they are available for free.

This dilemma, however, only applies to certain media; media carriers, such as hard copy newspapers, as well as CDs or DVDs for instance, are material products where both seller and purchaser can secure ownership. (Kiefer 2005: 134-137; Baker 2009)

The other category, that of *nonrivalry*, applies to all media content and describes the phenomenon that one person's use of or benefit from the product does not affect the use or benefit of another person (Baker 2009: 91). As content is immaterial, it is not diminishable through use. The same newspaper article can be read many times over, and again by someone else, after I am done; this does not apply to a hamburger, the air or water (McChesney 2009: 66). The competition on the demand side is therefore diminished, since the product is indestructible. It can become rare, when few copies of it are in circulation, and the medium carrying the content can be destroyed, but remaking a copy or recording is not too difficult when the first blueprint is still intact.

Subsequently the primordial input and production effort goes into the making of the first copy, or blueprint. These are known as "first copy costs" (Baker 2009: 92). The production of more copies is relatively simple and inexpensive, depending on the elaborateness of the medial carrier. The same goes for the distribution of the content, as it is an immaterial good. If the distribution is inherent in the production of the medium, or if an infrastructure is already established, provided for instance by the state and free to use, the distribution of larger quantities of produced goods will not add much to the production costs (McChesney 2009).

[19] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Auschlussprinzip", "Konsumrivalität" (Kiefer 2005: 135)

Television and radio again serve as a good example here. The airwaves are publicly owned and can be used for free once a broadcasting license is obtained, and the technology to send one program or song could be used to send it one hundred times more over, to thousands of receivers, with negligible additional input. Certain copyright fees have to be paid however (Alton 2006). A newspaper enterprise has printing as well as delivery costs, which are still relatively low compared to the 'first copy costs', however, the same principle that overall costs do not expand when serving more consumers, applies here too. (McChesney 2009; Baker 2009)

So up until the infrastructure or the printing press capacity reach their limit and are exhausted, the more goods produced, the cheaper their specific costs become for the producer. Their average costs fall drastically with the rise of quantity. It is profitable for the media enterprise to produce in masses without any increased risks. (Baker 2009: 92)

The immateriality of media content poses a number of implications and problems. First of all *nonexcludability* and *nonrivalry* of the media products make it possible for consumers to use as well as reproduce or copy the content free of charge. This gives them a low incentive to pay for the product, it loses its value if can be so easily obtained. Producers who sell fewer copies have a higher average cost and thus, a lower profit margin. In reaction to this, the concept of copyright was established so that intellectual property could be legally protected (McChesney 2009: 66). This allows media enterprises, artists, authors or businesses to privatize content. Only the owner is then allowed to reproduce, distribute, change or publicly perform the content or give allowance to do so, usually against a fee. The ownership of an idea itself cannot be secured however, but rather its manifestation or expression, the "creativity in the choice and arrangement of words, musical notes, colors and shapes" (WIPO 2005: 5). A news story can therefore not be exclusively owned by a newspaper or a TV-news program, but a catch phrase, a melody or a name can be. (WIPO 2005)[20]

Nevertheless the pricing mechanism of media products is more complicated and difficult to determine. Due to the minimal costs of increasing production quantity, the marginal cost, the cost of producing the last product, is very low. Charging it would not cover the input costs and therefore be unprofitable. The average cost of television or radio for example is very

[20] The issue of copyright laws and regulations is a vast and complicated one, and has gained a lot of attention in recent years due to a manifold of new distribution technologies. This paper cannot discuss this subject in detail. *The World Intellectual Property Organization* (www.wipo.int) offers more information on the issue and it is discussed further on www.kulturrat.at.

difficult to determine, let alone to charge. While, whether determinable or not, it might surpass what consumers would be willing to pay. (Baker 2009: 91ff.)

Fixed Costs

As mentioned above, media production is faced with a high amount of fixed costs and overhead charges, compared to such as the staff of editors, journalists and technical personal, long term contracts with news and photo agencies, licenses for picture material and rent, to produce the first edition of a newspaper. The 'first copy costs' make up 57 % of a newspaper's revenue, the employment of staff alone adds up to 39 %. This means that media production is tied to a great amount of risks. The initial investment, just to produce the blueprint of the product, before it becomes a material good, makes up the considerable overall risk. The start-up costs, and therefore the market entry barrier, are very high. (Kiefer 2005: 170, 174ff.)

Service

The high amount of fixed or first copy costs is in large part due to the fact that media products are considered to be a *service* (80 %) and only partially a material good (20 %). Services are characterized by their immateriality, the invariable production for foreign use and the fact that they are, at least in part, consumed at the same time and place they are produced, called *uno acto principle* (Kiefer 2005: 133). Thus, production is firmly tied to human labour and time, which is the most expensive production input. New technologies can help with these high costs to only a limited amount. Recording technologies, for example can separate the consumption from the production process and turn the service, the concert for instance, into a material good such as the compact disk or videotape. The mass production and reproduction of this service, with a larger potential audience, the mass media, are many times as productive as a classical concert or a theater performance. (Kiefer 2005: 165ff.)

Credence Good

Moreover, the demand for media products or services is very difficult to estimate, as their quality is only very subjectively attained, there is constant pressure for new innovations and creative ideas, while at the same time the life cycle of the products is very short (Kiefer 2005: 177ff.).

When viewers' preferences towards a news product are information, education, wise opinion or good argument, they long for something they cannot really define or control from their perspective. They cannot tell if their needs have been met, their preferences served in the best manner (Baker 2009: 94; Kiefer 2005). Such a type of product is known as a credence good, contrary to a search good or an experience good, where the consumer can tell right away or after use of the good, what value it has to them (Kiefer 2005: 141). A bottle opener for instance, serving the function of opening bottles and also looking pretty, can be tested on these functions almost immediately. By glancing at it the consumer can tell if it is pretty, and by testing it on a bottle, it can be seen if it an can open one. It is therefore a search good. When watching the news or reading a news article, which serves the function of providing information, true and unbiased information, the recipient cannot tell just from watching or reading, if the content just received is true or not. He or she has to trust the producers of the news piece, believe that they are telling the truth. "Media are very complex bundles of goods where the conditions for rational consumption only scarcely exist" (Kiefer 2005: 85).[21] The same goes for education, medical treatment or mechanical repairs. Unless one is an expert, one cannot obtain the quality of the good purchased.

In the case of information content, the producers have knowledge about the good, which the consumers can almost never completely obtain in order to perceive its value (Kiefer 2005: 85). Thus, the market mechanism of preference based consumption and demand does not fully function, as consumers cannot completely know if their preferences have been met and cannot make a rational consumption choice based on a cost-to-value estimation (Kiefer 2005: 141f.). This motivates media enterprises to establish a reputation that will appeal to audiences or target groups, for example, as an independent news source, so that readers can trust it to deliver unbiased and objective 'truths'. However, it still always remains a matter of trust. (Baker 2009: 94)

Moreover, quality and value means something else in every media genre. While it is associated with objectivity, fast and well-researched information to news producers and audiences, it means high resolution and special effects to fans of actions movies and film makers (Rau 2007: 214f.). So the preferences and expectations directed at media products are more diverse then those directed at a toaster, for example (Baker 2009: 94). Programs are expected to address many different target groups at the same time, in order to receive the required ratings (Prokop 2010). While *The New York Times* meets the expectation of informing its readers, it does not fulfill the preferences of those who want to be entertained,

[21] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Medien sind, [...] sehr komplexe Güterbündel, bei denen die Vorraussetzungen für rationales Konsumverhalten kaum gegeben sind"

except perhaps on the comics page, but it informs the financial business woman just as much as the Broadway play enthusiast, as is features theater reviews as well as financial news.

Limited Consumption

Further, Meulemann argues that while entertainment can be consumed unlimitedly, consumption of information has limits. Information, which is reality based, is limited to reality. Events that take place are limited to the world that they take place in. Especially when it comes to news, the distribution is tied to the current time, to the day and the hour they happen. Repeating them several times becomes boring for the viewers. A movie, a TV-show or a novel, that is fictitious, can be enjoyed several times and their reruns or new editions are profitable. (Meulemann 2012; 187)

External Effects

What can additionally cause the standard market mechanisms to fail is a high number of external effects of a product or good (Kiefer 2005: 85). External effects are values, influences or functions that are induced by the product, but were not intended initially, are not included in the price and potentially affect other people outside the transaction (Baker 2009: 92; Kiefer 2005). Concerning media products, a well-informed public and a well-functioning democracy are positive effects. Propaganda, distortion or control of information can be viewed as negative external effects (Baker 2009: 92f.; Kiefer 2005). All the effects and developments discussed in chapter two, such as the production of a public sphere and public opinion, can be viewed as external effects of mass media.

These unusual economic features of media products ultimately lead to what Kiefer calls "the economic dilemma of cultural production" (Kiefer 2005: 165)[22]. In a capitalistic system, industries and businesses need to grow in order to survive. In other words become more productive and efficient. Industrial sectors, such as those producing toaster or bottle openers can do so with technological advancements, with better and faster machines, which can replace human labor to a certain or full extend. This does not apply to the 'cultural sector', to the performing arts, literature or news journalism, in short: any media content. Creative work will always need humans whose wages make up the largest part of the production costs. And as the costs of living rise, so do the costs of labor. Incidentally the 'cultural sector' produces slower economic growth than other sectors of production. In order to overcome this dilemma,

[22] Translated by L.D. from the original „Das ökonomische Dilemma der Kulturproduktion"

the sector of performing and applied arts, uses a number of strategies to reduce the costs of labour. People working in such a branch are mainly freelancers, with short-term contracts, very low wages and limited social securities (Griesser 2006).
The media industry, which can and is willing to produce in masses, tries to cut out the human labour where possible by developing better and cheaper media and distribution technologies, by producing as industrially as possible, and by distributing and reproducing content in large quantities (Kiefer 2005: 165f.). All in all, precarious working conditions are a new standard in media and cultural sectors (Griesser 2006), and at the same time every mass medium is forced to procure additional incomes to keep their business. As these flows of finance and revenue streams usually mean flows of influence on content, it is worth taking a closer look.

4.3. Finances and Revenue Streams

Due to all these factors diminishing the productivity of the medial sector particulated above– the dilemma of low productivity, higher inputs than outputs, low consumer motivation owing to low excludability and so on–the media business is far from profitable when selling only content, information or entertainment. In order to stay in business, media enterprises are in need of a second source of revenue, which is selling advertising space to other corporations or private individuals, also called classifieds. The providers of this extra revenue usually gain influence on format and content of media text, ultimately impacting forms of discourse, meanings and messages. It is important to keep these parties in mind, when analyzing how an issue such as the global food system is portrayed, from which many large and powerful transnational corporations stand to gain their profits.

Advertising revenue is a considerable and indispensable source of income for all media enterprises around the world, although there are certain variations in magnitude. In 2012, global advertising spending summed up to $ 501.5 billion, 40.4 % of which went into television, 18.9 % into newspapers closely followed by the internet with 17.8 % and magazines with 8.8 % of the share (ZenithOptimedia 2013). This amounts to 200.4 billion advertising dollars into television and $ 94 billion into newspapers. U.S. newspapers made $ 25.3 billion in advertising revenues in 2012, which is 65 % of their total revenue (NAA 2013). German newspaper revenues are to a lesser percentage based on advertising, however, the share is 40 % from advertising, which added up to € 3 billion in 2012 and 52.8 % through circulation, roughly € 5 billion (BDVZ 2013).

Thus, in order to understand the media markets and business decisions it is important to keep in mind that media enterprises sell two kinds of products. One is advertising space, for which they can demand a higher price once the higher viewership or circulation rates rise. The other is content, the media product, which unquestionably delivers them higher profits the more products they sell.

The two product markets are irreversibly tied together, the first becoming all the more profitable with the rise in popularity of the second. For Baker, media businesses "sell media products to audiences and sell audiences to advertisers" (Baker 2009: 93). Customers of media enterprises are the viewers and readers as well as the advertisers. Interests, preferences and demand affect the supply of content, and the subsequent value of the media product is the combined value for audiences and advertisers. Media producers maintain multiple allegiances, and the influence tends to flow in favor of the higher and direct purchaser, which ends up being the advertiser (Baker 2009: 93). And while the media product is often a credence good to the recipient or reader, it is an experience good to the advertiser. The latter can tell very well if the content has displayed them in a positive light or not. (Baker 2009: 94ff.)

Incidentally advertising does not necessarily mean ads, positive stories or favorable mentions. Articles or reports have to make sure not to shine a negative light on their advertisers. This also means no negative mentions about them directly, on their industry or their interests. (Baker 2009: 95; Steinem 2009)

And while advertising has become a dominant force in media production, the pressure to lower costs, usually of labour, due to *dilemma of cultural production* elaborated earlier, is also an influential aspect to consider, as they directly impact the media pictures audiences receive.

4.4. Cost Reduction

Reducing costs of media production ultimately means cutting out expensive steps within the production, in order to increase the profit margin. However, the social and political value of these steps, beneficial and useful to stimulate public debate– producing critical information for instance–often remain unconsidered. A number of developments in the past twenty years have changed the circumstances of media production immensely and in one way or another, they all have to do with the media enterprises' goal of increasing productivity.

This includes the deregulation of media markets, which have helped along the development of media giants and conglomerates, almost all of them publicly traded, which, thanks to vertical integration, produce everything from chain papers to feature films. These international

companies have relieved family owned newspaper organisations honoring journalist ethics more than profits and market expansion. This is accompanied by the destruction of the separation of management and editorial responsibilities. Not to forget the development of new digital technologies, which put older 'traditional' media under financial pressure, and the advertising and audience markets shift toward them. (Klinenberg 2009: 146f.)

As discussed above, the service of producing content, especially news content, is strictly tied to labor, time and space. If news is not distributed fast after it comes through the news wire it loses its value and viewers switch the channel. But time is also needed to research, report and write the story, as well as seriously reflect on it (Klinenberg 2009: 151). If a journalist can be on location, can get interviews, direct accounts from persons involved or video footage, he or she can get more accurate information and a more in-depth story of what happend and the report sets itself off from the competition. This is less often the case when the newspaper needs to rely on secondary sources or correspondents from other news networks, who feed the same information to more than one news organization. News categories, such as hard or soft news, up-to-date or developing news depend, apart from the level of importance, very much on the moment in which the news event happens and how long it takes until all the facts are collected (Tuchman 2009).

Due to the developments of technical innovation, which reduce the input of time and space, the relations of costs have changed and labor is the most expensive part of producing content (Kiefer 2005: 31). Hence in order to increase productivity and efficiency according to market logic, the staff is the first factor to be reduced, in order to lower costs efficiently. The ones remaining have to serve higher demands, be more flexible and respond well to the "pressures of time and space" (Klinenberg 2009: 147)

According to Klinenberg, a professor of sociology who studied the workings of multimedia enterprises common today, journalists can and have to move between the different media due to vertical integration and media convergence, and meet the demands for these several media at once. As the journalists need to become flexible laborers, to increase efficiency and productivity, so does their content – adaptable for television, print, radio, and Internet. While rigid production and distribution schedules as well as printing deadlines have always dominated the work hours of news journalists, 24-hour TV news and instant Internet updates have eliminated the news-day nowadays. There is always breaking news now, news

production and consumption is a constant one, a production of culture that requires serious and independent thinking cannot keep up with. (Klinenberg 2009: 149-52)

So in order to save time, more and more journalists rely on Internet and web information, or the press releases and comments from official spokespeople. News that has already been ready made for them, is easier and faster to gather up and reproduce, rather than writing a story from scratch. (Klinenberg 2009: 152f.).

Saving money and resources through reusing or reproducing content material on a larger scale and in a wider radius for example, becomes easier with an increasing size of the media company. The development of large transnational media corporations has aggravated to the domination of global markets by only a few companies influenced production, content and formats of media texts, and ultimately the ways in which global issues are portrayed.

4.5. Concentration of Media Ownership

Chapter two, which deliberated on the issue of powerful senders and distributors of media content, of producers and encoders of media texts, argued that those who control and influence mass media could be able to use them as tools in order to lead audiences to certain readings, interpretations and messages. This next part assesses the reality of media ownership and control, of market dominance, power structures and hierarchies of influence over forms of public discourse and mediation.

Cartel rulings on ownership rights focus on how homogenic the goods produced or services provided are. The rulings forbid the ownership of several homogenic corporations, such as newspapers, or TV channels, but it is legal to own a newspaper, a TV channel and a movie studio, for example. (Kiefer 2005: 88)

These various media branches of each conglomerate then support and promote each other's products. The magazine promotes the movie of the related movie studio or a book of the related publishing group. The stars of a TV series appear as guests on shows of a related television network and so on (Bagdikian 2009: 50).

Bagdikian, a journalist of many years, mourns the loss of media diversity in such a country as the United States, which has such a unique multiplicity of local self-government. While each community makes its own decisions on education or land use, media content has been

increasingly centralized for an entire nation, proud to be as diverse as it is. (Bagdikian 2009: 48)

The Top 30 Media Companies worldwide are dominated by North American and European Companies. As *Google (1)* leads this rank, but does not produce any media texts, only provides search engines for videos or websites produced by others, the biggest content producing media corporations are *The DirecTV Group* (2), *News Corporation* (3), *The Walt Disney Company* (4), *Comcast* (5), *Time Warner* (6), *CBS Corporation* (9), *Viacom* (11) and *Bertelsmann* (7), who together generated $ 136.5 billion in revenues in 2011. They all own several media channels, newspapers, publishing companies, radio stations, and movie studios, and are therefore multimedia enterprises. (ZenithOptimedia 2013)

These companies control about 80 % of the media market in the U.S. alone (Thomas 2006: 133). "This gives each of the [...] corporations and their leaders more communications power than was exercised by any despot or dictatorship in history." (Bagdikian 2009: 48)

The biggest, most influential and most watched U.S. television networks are owned by media conglomerates: *Fox Network* is owned by *News Corporation*, *American Broadcasting Company* (*ABC*) is owned by *Disney*, *National Broadcasting Company* is owned by *Comcast*, *Cable News Network* (*CNN*) is owned by *Time Warne*r. *Bertelsmann* in turn, owns the *RTL Group*, one of the largest broadcasting and production companies in Europe, as well as *Random House Publishing* (Free Press 2013). *ProSiebenSat.1 (28)* is the largest television producer in Germany and also owns television and radio stations in eight other European countries (ZenithOptimedia 2013). More than that, *The USA Today*, the largest selling daily newspaper in the U.S. is owned by *Gannett* (16); *The Times*, *The New York Post* and *The Wall Street Journal* are all owned by *News Corporation*; *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune* and *The Baltimore Sun* are all owned by the same company, *Tribune*. (Free Press 2013; ZenithOptimedia 2013)

More than that, in order to efficiently produce for international markets and foreign national markets, it is necessary to cooperate with the otherwise competing businesses on certain productions. The four companies *News Corporation, Viacom, Walt Disney* and *Time Warner* shared 141 joint ventures in 2009 and in 2003 employed 45 interlocking directors (Bagdikian 2009: 51).

All these factors and measures taken to improve productivity, in other words increase profits, such as procuring additional incomes by selling advertising space, reducing costs by reducing wages and creating conglomerates, expanding into other markets, has had a strong impact on the format and content of programs, shows and articles, with a series of implications and consequences for senders as well as receivers. These are vital developments when analyzing the material produced under such conditions–material which informs a public about global issues of ecology, politics, and economics, most of all inequality.

4.6. Implications

The overall financial pressure to increase productivity, as well as the competition for audiences, viewers, and circulation ratings, influence format as well as content of television programs and newspapers. It is vital to consider these consequences closer, so as to later be able to include them into the analysis of forms of discourses and portraits of the 2007/2008 Food Crisis amidst the system of globalized industrial agriculture; and to better understand and judge why these issues are discussed the way they are.

4.6.1 Format

As media businesses are profit oriented, their interest is to sell the most products, and therefore need to conform to audiences and their mass preferences, which they can later sell to advertisers. Not all or any preferences, however. Media businesses are confined to react to the preferences that viewers and readers can express on the market by tuning in or out. In order to sell the most products, they consequently serve mass markets more often then niche markets. (Rau 2007: 209-211)

One way for a media enterprise to reduce the 'first copy risk' to a minimum is to copy or reproduce a format or show which is already popular. A prime example for this are casting shows such as *American Idol, America's Next Top Model* or reality-TV formats such as *Big Brother,* which were duplicated all over the world, achieve the highest ratings and are awarded with prime time slots in each country. Producers faithfully conform to viewer ratings and bestseller lists of what is most watched and read, and then the most popular shows (or books) are imitated (Bagdikian 2009: 50) This ultimately leads to a loss of diversity in programs: "thousands of media outlets carry a highly duplicative content" (Bagdikian 2009: 50) and as the diversity of formats and production-modes, and therefore textual codes, become more limited, so does the diversity of messages to be sent (Prokop 2010: 92).

On the other hand, when sold within the same national market, a media product needs to differentiate and separate itself from its competition, be unique and individual. As Baker, a professor of communications law argues, copyright protection that is awarded for "unique expression" (2009: 97) makes it easier for a novel or fictional movies to be protected, but harder for reality-oriented products such as news media. Television news programs invest more money in anchors, who have a unique and outstanding personality, and newspapers invest more in "a unique and flashy presentation" (Baker 2009: 97) in order to individualize themselves and stand out. (Baker 2009: 97)

Due to technical innovations, the entire media process from production to consumption, can be individualized (Kiefer 2005: 31). The media react more to the individual needs of more fragmented target groups and produce different print editions for different city areas (Klinenberg 2009: 153). Furthermore the distribution becomes more flexible and can be arranged more freely, conforming to the audiences' needs. A newspaper can now be read on paper, online via a website, or can be downloaded onto a smart phone, a tablet computer or an e-book. Zerdick et al. call this process "mass-customization" (Zerdick et al. 2001: 144) of media consumption.

An absolutely balanced news or information product, with high moral standard and which is objective, displaying nothing but the truth is in economic terms considered to be a credence good. The readers, unless they are experts on a subject, cannot or only with difficulty determine the quality of a newspaper article or news report (Kiefer 2005: 141ff.). And yet as Fengler, a scholar of US American journalism explains, reliability and objectivity are still the most important image factors of a news medium. Trustworthiness generates a highly emotional relation between the recipient and the medium, it constitutes confidence and loyalty, and thus usually a high circulation. Serious and political newspapers often try to use an image of higher moral standards and journalist ethics to stand out from their competitors. A Pulitzer Prize winning author can help keep up a newspaper's reputation (Klinenberg 2009: 152). Apart from competing for mass audiences, they try to appeal to the intellectual and elite groups in order to be part of their conversations. Its high circulation rate is not the only reason why *The New York Times* is considered to be one of the most important newspapers worldwide. It has a very influential readership and has established itself in the market niche for the democratic liberal elite. (Fengler 2002: 80-85)

When considering the finding in chapter two, that format, production conditions influence codes, which influence meaning, messages and content. The impact on the latter has to be considered more closely.

4.6.2 Content

In the age of consumer capitalism, corporations use the media to advertise and create desires for their products. Nowadays everywhere "big business has appropriated media technologies" (Askew 2002: 8) for their purpose of making profits and use the media products' "capacity to persuade on issues related to the advertiser's corporate interests" (Baker 2009: 94). Financial pressures on print media businesses, which cannot generate enough revenue from print sales, increase the need to appeal to advertisers more than ever (Duffy/Turow 2009: 166).

Most significantly this regards not just the sale of actual advertising space but the influence of the content of articles or reports as well. "A portion of the advertisers' payment often goes into having the editorial content better reflect the advertisers interests." (Baker 2009: 93) Whether in women's or men's magazines, influential high end newspapers or tabloids, it is considered part of the routine to hold editorial meetings with advertisers or marketing personnel present and have them participate in editorial decisions (Klinenberg 2009: 156). Advertising has an influence on most of the content we read today (Steinem 2009: 166).

Marketing and advertising experts can afford to conduct extensive research into what consumers want, and then make the according changes in order to meet these preferences and expect the media's support. This results in a wide range of methods, from newspaper advertorials to Internet articles where the ad is connected to the story (Klinenberg 2009: 156). 'Soft' cover stories, which stay away from controversial subjects that might criticize any business interests, or self-censorship on any 'problematic' articles are common to almost all media content (Steinem 2009: 166ff). When considering the text of the ads themselves, the imagery, as well as the assumptions and implications are a problem, as they work almost exclusively with ethnic and gender stereotypes, as well as materialistic and superficial messages (Steinem 2009).

While it is understandable that advertisers follow audiences, this only applies within the limits of their profit making interests of target groups that are considered to be good customers and of content that supports consumer values. There is simply no incentive to produce ads for people that cannot afford to buy the products or seem not to be interested. Texts that are all together more critical of consumption and superficialities, empowering readers beyond their purchasing power instead of reducing them to their looks, have trouble being funded by

companies that profit from exactly those methods. It is no secret that especially degrading stereotypes of women are used as a tactic to motivate consumption through low self-esteem. Gloria Steinem, journalists, feminist and political activist, adds that this behaviour applies more immensely to women's magazines and products than to newspapers and political magazines, and argues further that this has to do with a general disrespect advertisers have towards women (Steinem 2009: 178). Magazines and shows producing content outside of the beauty and fashion mainstream, like the feminist magazine *Ms.*, have immense trouble getting advertising, as they do not produce articles on how to apply makeup or succumb to superficialities and gender stereotypes in their content (Steinem 2009).

> [...] women's products–like women's magazines–have never been the subject of much serious reporting anyway. News and general interest publications, including the 'style' or 'living' sections of newspapers, write about food and clothing as cooking and fashion [...] ignoring the contents of beauty products that are absorbed into our bodies through our skins, and that have profit margins so big they would make a loan shark blush (Steinem 2009: 178)

Most important and most consequential for the production of content, is that recipients cannot, or only with difficulty, distinguish the quality of a media product, especially of information content such as news, and so they are less willing to pay a higher price for a high quality media product. This gives producers low incentives to invest more for high quality content and leads to a reduction in content quality in the long term (Kiefer 2005: 339). As an example, Rau refers to a study done in 1999, which sees a correlation between populistic display of information content and the amount of advertising finances (Rau 2007: 215). Things have not improved since then:

> […] news reports [...] become mini-dramas complete with a star, a villain, a supporting cast, a good-looking host, and a neat, if often unexpected, conclusion. (Hedges 2009: 16)

The number of investigative and in depth serious stories has dropped immensely in recent years, because the content, the reports, the articles have to be produced in a short amount of time. Exploration and investigation make an article or a story progressively more expensive without the guarantee that readers are willing to pay more (Klinenberg 2009: 152). More than

that, the fact that reporters have to rely so much on Internet information means that they are more susceptible to misinformation (Klinenberg 2009: 152). But all this saves time, labor, and money, is in short more efficient in producing content. As the creative work, the labor of producing content is the most expensive factor, content is very often reproduced, repeated, bought from another media enterprise and then reused (Kiefer 2005: 31).
The range of content topics also changes over the course of commoditizing media. "Crime, local scandals, entertainment, all events that are easy to cover have become more prominent in the [...] news" (Klinenberg 2009: 152). In order to attract the most viewers and readers, the topics and genres are chosen, which are found by many people to be the most interesting and which directly concern them. International news topics dropped from 45 % in 1970 to 13.5 % in 1995 in U.S. TV news, (it spiked up in the 9/11 aftermath, but dropped back down to the same level in 2002). When international stories are covered, the need to localize them, to present them as relevant to the local target group is dire (Klinenberg 2009: 155). Moreover, if the content is too difficult to understand, people will stop watching or reading. So in order to pick up the biggest audience, the lowest point of common knowledge is taken as the basis for a report or story. This is called lowest common denominator content. (Rau 2007)
This results in a majority of simple, 'close to home' stories or articles, in a simple language that many can easily understand.

Along with the tendency to reduce investigative and in depth reporting due to high costs, and the reliance on Internet sources, comes the incentive to reduce the variety and diversity of sources all together. Interviewing many people, from different backgrounds would be too time-consuming. For the coverage of big institutions, getting their press releases and talking to one of their spokespeople is more efficient (Klinenberg 2009: 153). Subsequently not only audiences, but also journalists become, in part, "passive recipients of news" (Kumar 2009: 445). And along with this comes the tendency to regard and to not question these official sources as people of authority. They are treated as the most credible and reliable sources of information on the subject (Kumar 2009: 445f.), instead of a person with a distinct perspective and an agenda. The most popular, already powerful and influential people will be interviewed, because people will turn in to see them–what they have to say, what is important to them will be in the focus (Bagdikian 2009: 56).
A similar development is that of celebrity culture, the high amount of media covering famous actors and actresses, models or athletes, wealthy business people or royals. Those already rich and famous, for whatever reasons, beauty, talent, power or wealth are kept in the limelight,

their lives cover the front pages and top stories. The 1 %, who Chris Hedges calls "the American oligarchy" (2009: 26), who disproportionably control the most wealth, are constantly watched, followed and idealized by the other 99 %. They are made and kept important. (Hedges 2009: 20-28)

The sociologist Chris Rojek (2001) calls this "the cult of distraction that valorizes the superficial, the gaudy, the domination of commodity culture" (cited in Hedges 2009: 37) through which the audience is compelled to forget the real and pressing political or social issues that apply to them. Bagdikian mourns that "[t]he major news media fail to deal *systematically* with the variety of compelling social needs of the entire population" (Bagdikian 2009: 57, original italics); that problems are mentioned, but never long enough to really inspire a debate or contemplate alternatives and that those who fall outside of the mainstream framework offering alternative solutions are dismissed (Bagdikian 2009: 56f.; Kumar 2009: 445)

Information management strategies or "spinning the news" (Thomas 2006: 57) developed within many governments, including the United States, involves diverse methods and strategies such as restricting the access to information or locations, withholding data, releasing only comfortable information and serving the press half-truths. It influences the production of content considerably. Informing the press on very short notice about planned military actions or requesting that the journalist experts be excluded, occurred often during the George W. Bush presidency and during the second Iraq War, as well as restricting access to battlefields, allowing only 'embedded' journalists on sites and forcing them and their articles to stay under military supervision. Not to mention tightly controlling press conferences, releasing unconfirmed or false information to induce speculation or speaking hypothetically in order to confuse audiences. (Kumar 2009: 442-450; Thomas 2006: 59ff.)

As Peter Teely, a press secretary of Bush Sr. said: "You can say anything you want during a debate, and 80 million people hear it, if it turns out to be untrue, so what? Maybe 200 people read [the correction] or 2 000 or 20 000." (Teely in McArthur 20.03.2003). Some media enterprises gave themselves up voluntarily: "Bush advisers Karl Rove and Mark McKinnon met with the heads of Viacom, Disney, MGM and others after 9/11 to discuss how the media could 'help' the government's efforts" (Kumar 2009: 444). Either as an apparent payback for the U.S. government's protection of their interests, for example with the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which allowed more freedom for media concentration, or for the possibility to get their feet into the door of Middle Eastern media markets (Kumar 2009: 444), support was

given wherever possible. Members of conservative think tanks in support of the war on Iraq were booked through media agencies to come on as 'experts' on 'Middle East and foreign affairs' on several U.S. TV shows and writing for prominent newspapers (Kumar 2009: 450).

> The modern presidency, however, seems especially to believe that trust cannot be placed in the hands of its citizens by giving them objective facts. Thus 'managed news' has become an art form – the symbol of the 'imperial presidency' – and results in the attempts to present all information in a controlled environment. (Thomas 2006: 59)

As news always remain credence goods, when it comes to function and values of objective information, the entertainment value of a media product is easier to obtain. Movies, TV-shows and novels are experience goods when it comes to their entertainment function, we can tell immediately afterwards whether we liked a movie or a book, whether it entertained us or not. (Baker 2009: 95; Kiefer 2005: 142)

Kiefer elaborates that serious, informational content such as documentaries or scientific programs become economically unattractive compared to entertaining content (Kiefer 2005: 31). More money flows into the production of entertaining and fictional media products. When the program has an informational and serious function, as is the case with news, producers use a variety of strategies to increase suspense or sensation, in order to create infotainment, rather then just information. News footage is dramatized using background musical scores, with color graphics or special effects like holograms (Klinenberg 2009: 156). Most popular media channels use sensationalism instead of seriousness to compete for audiences. There is a strong trend going towards depoliticizing mass media and reaching the recipients on an emotional level, instead of appealing to them on moral or ethical grounds (Umfahrer 2005; 44). As Roger Ailes, the president of *FOX News Channel* and media consultant for several republican presidents said:

> If you have two guys on a stage and one guy says, 'I have a solution to the Middle East problem', and the other guy falls in the orchestra pit, who do you think is going to be on the evening news? (Ailes (1988), cited in Bogus 1996: 936).

All in all: the material with which a public informs itself of important global issues, hunger, food crisis, environmental disasters, climate change, development or social change is up for improvement. However not through market forces, as this chapter has evidently shown them to be inadequate. Similar to education or health services, information and communication goods i.e. news media and journalistic products are valued higher in social terms as in economic terms. Their functions for society are more valuable than each individual may be willing to pay, since their value and external effects are hard to estimate or foresee, as these increase and develop on a long term scale. They are goods for which a rational individual, thinking of his or her own interest, performing a cost to value estimation, will be unwilling to procure a demand, but which are essential to the collective. As discussed in chapter two, informational and journalistic services are fundamental to a functioning democracy. Here, the social optimum and the market optimum contradict each other. Economists define these types of goods as *merit goods*. (Kiefer 2005: 85, 150)

The free market has spoken and said: Fuck you. (Colbert 2013)[23]

As it can be seen, following market logic and individual consumer preferences, giving people what they want and doing it in the most economically efficient way makes it difficult for journalists to do their work properly and the quality of the news content suffers. As production conditions become more similar to each other, lead by profits and ratings, produced by just a small number of large global companies, aired almost everywhere throughout the Western world, the diversity of messages and meanings to be encoded in medial texts are reduced and limited. Because, as mentioned in chapter two, most audiences associate mass media use with leisure and free time, viewers or readers are not interested in difficult or exhausting topics. The masses want to be picked up where they are, instead of being challenged. They want to be informed and entertained without putting in a great amount of effort on their part. As this chapter has deduced, the market demand for high quality information content is simply insufficient for the mass media to have an incentive to produce investigative serious stories on a high intellectual non-populistic level that deal with a global or international issue. Consequently the diversity of forms of discourse is reduced, the medial pictures become less critical and less open toward alternatives, much less telling their viewers

[23] Episode of "The Colbert Report" from Dec. 18th 2013, Video: http://www.colbertnation.com/full-episodes/wed-december-18-2013-keanu-reeves

and readers to change their behavior, calling out their responsibility for injustices in the world–who would tune in to see or hear that?

The American historian Daniel Boorstin calls this “the mirror effect” (Boorstin 1961: 255) and political journalist Chris Hedges argues that a society, which surrounds itself with things already known and popular, repeating the same topics and people back to it, constrains its horizons rather than expands them. It is encompassed by a wall of mirrors, that it cannot see, but still confine it to its present state. (Boorstin 1961: 255; Hedges 2009: 47-49)

People lose perspective, don’t think outside the box and stop looking for alternatives to current ideologies, habits or consumer cultures.

5. Global Food Commodities

The average American consumes roughly 2 kg of meat per week, the average European 1.5 kg (van de Sand 2013: 31), while spending roughly 10 % of his or her income on food. The average person living in the global South spends up to 80 % of his or her income on food (foodwatch 2011: 6). Approximately half of the globally produced food is thrown away, which would be enough to feed the population of the hungry twice (Thurn/Kreuzberger 2011).

This chapter gives an overview of the characteristics of globalized industrial agriculture that gives way to these astonishing extremes of hunger amidst luxury, convenience and waste. A global food system that in 2007/2008 is once again in crisis, constantly unstable and in dire need for alternatives. Based on capitalistic logic and commercialism, it is maintained and supported by Western consumerism, treating food just as any other commodity, demanding it cheap and flexible.

The overall structures of the global food system, such as trade, production processes and agricultural policies will be elaborated as well as the hazardous social and ecological effects, also unequally distributed. It discusses the structural inequalities between North and South and gives a more detailed portrait of the power hierarchies within the global food chain in favor of transnational corporations; so as to later compare it to the information given in the news coverages of *The Washington Post* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* and to adequately analyze and judge the portrait they supply to their readers.

While food is, within economic logic, a very marketable product, characterized through a very high rivalry of consumption, as well as its high excludability, the ownership of food can be very tightly secured with its purchase and consumption can not be shared. Moreover, it has to be consumed, regularly, which guarantees a demand and a high value. It is therefore highly profitable to some, to treat food just like any other economic commodity and to commercialize the production of food–agriculture.

Agriculture, just as any production endeavor, comes with a certain amount of fixed costs, such as land, labour and seeds at the minimum, not including fertilizer or pesticides, and relatively high risks, since weather conditions are an important production factor, upon which the producer has no influence. Consequently as with all commercial production enterprises, in order to increase productivity and reduce the vulnerability of one's business, one needs to produce in masses. Due to the economies of scale, producing food in masses reduces the

average cost of each unit, and therefore makes food cheaper and incidentally affordable to the masses.
A priority can easily be set on quantity instead of quality, since most people have almost no feeling for health or nutrient effects of food, and they can only tell after tasting it, whether it satisfies their preferences. Food can be classified as an experience, in cases of health effects, even a credence good. The rationality of food consumers is tied to the information they receive while buying the product, usually displayed on the packaging (Engels et al. 2010: 50).

While a moderate and continuous demand for food is easily secured by human nature and biology, a massive demand has to be socially created and developed. For one through the expansion of needs for convenience products, as argued in chapter two; but more so through urbanization, the coupling of grain-fed livestock with the meatification of diets, as well as the combination of a demand for mobility by cars with the conversion of food crops to biofuels. Capitalistic logic remains inconsiderate of how the food is actually consumed, and also by whom. As long as a price can be obtained the market continues to function. The food will follow the profit.
Only 47 % of the globally produced grain is directly used for food. The rest is used for animal feed, biofuels or other industrial products (Scheub/Kuschel 2012: 21). Meat remains one of the main competitors for human food as around 34 % of grains go in to animal feed (van de Sand 2013: 11) and its production volume has increased 500 % since 1950 compared to the doubling of the world's population. The production of biofuels, consuming approximately 40 % of U.S. American corn, increased 400 % between 2000 and 2009 (van de Sand 2013: 32ff.).

This gigantic demand not only calls, but screams for large-scale industrial factory farming.

5.1. Industrial Production of Food

What's good for business is good for America (Marion Nestle 2003: 179)

As addressed in chapter three, many convenience consumers in Western Europe and North America do not know where there food comes from and how it was produced, how unnatural and industrialized the process has become. How these food commodities are grown,

engineered, processed and distributed will be disclosed in the following sub-chapters as to understand the power hierarchies und structural inequalities within this system that should be part of the public dialogue in mass-consumption societies.

Producing industrially, with a higher input of machinery and chemicals, increases productivity and makes the output more dependable and planable, at least in theory. The harvest is not as susceptible to the laws of nature and machine labour is faster than human labour. Plus, without the input of wages that in general rise with the costs of living, a sufficient amount of input is saved and can be invested otherwise. This is the heart and soul of industrial capitalist agriculture. And while it is not the only production module around the world, however vastly growing, most of the food consumed in Europe and North America is produced industrially. (Weis 2010)

Today, genetically modified seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, specialized monocultures, cash crops–food produced only to be exported elsewhere–and slaughter factories all contribute to this efficient mass production of food. More animals are held in smaller cages, fed with pharmaceuticals and high protein grains, only to grow and be slaughtered more quickly. Cattle which is raised in a confined enclosure and fed with high energy soy, growth hormones and pharmaceuticals, gathers more mass and can be processed faster than cattle which is left free to roam on grass land. Larger inputs of water and energy, not to mention unethical mistreatment of animals can be externalized from the price of food. (Weis 2007b: 18ff.; Weis 2010: 316)

Not just animals, but also land and crops are subjected to more intensive cultivation: Seeds and plants are genetically engineered in laboratories to grow larger and more resilient to pests or draught. These GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms) are then patented and controlled by the large corporations that develop them. Further specialization in monocultures, massive cultivation of one crop is common instead of diversification. (Then/Tippe 2012; Weis 2010)

This requires a large input of fossil fuels to produce the indispensable agro-chemicals as well as supply the vast machinery of factory farms and large transport vehicles. This ties the food system ever closer to oil prices and other industrial sources. (Weis 2010: 316ff.)

All these production technologies to increase efficiency require the food producing business to reign in large profits, in order to be able to reinvest in the initial costs of fossil fuels for machinery, engineered super seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. Due to this phenomenon, agricultural production is increasingly commercialized. To make profits is now the primary function of a farmer, feeding people is only secondary. Producing in masses requires a large

amount of land, water and machinery, only larger businesses can afford. Smaller businesses that only reign in smaller profits are put under increasing pressure to either expand, sell, or be swallowed by a bigger, 'more productive' business, benefiting from its economy of scale. (Weis 2007; Fuchs et al. 2009; Scheub/Kuschel 2012: 13-36)

5.1.1 Commodity Chains - From Genetic Seeds to Supermarkets

Other ways of reducing risks and increasing productivity are division of labor, vertical integration and global expansion. A vast international market stands between consumers and producers of food–the farmers somewhere under the Southern sun. Commodity chains, that circle the world, tradesmen and women, speculators, processors, scientist in laboratories, supermarkets, and vending machines provide consumers with everything they could possible wish for, in several colors, wrapped up to go and at a reasonable price.

Large agricultural corporations move part of their production to countries of the global South, where wages are lower due to lower costs of living and where labour or environmental regulations are more lax than in industrialized countries. This is where large cash crops are grown on large monocultures, harvested by locals but fed to well paying customers in Europe or North America (Maxwell/Slater 2004; 22).

Other companies specialize in agro-chemicals, such as fertilizers and pesticides, complimentary genetically modified seeds (mostly patent protected), livestock pharmaceuticals or farm machinery. Known as agro-input TNCs (Transnational Corporations), these businesses step into the commodity chain as suppliers for farmers, turning them from contributors to receivers of agricultural innovation. The dependence of food production is shifted from natural to corporate processes. (Weis 2007b: 13, 29)

Other businesses vertically integrate producers through contract producing, in order to keep prices low, externalize risks or pass on higher productions costs. (Maxwell/Slater 2004: 22). Time and money for storage is saved by designing the delivery system to be as flexible as possible, to serve the needs of retailers and consumers; the shelves are always full and the food is always fresh, thanks to sophisticated "long-distance sourcing and distribution networks" (Weis 2007b: 14). Large retail chains such as *Wal-Mart* or *Tesco* work with local as well as international producers, so as to be as independent as possible. (Wiggerthale 2007: 9,14; Maxwell/Slater 2004: 22)

Large food processing companies rely on new design technologies in order to refine, purify, enrich and cultivate food in laboratories. All to intensify taste, create diversity where there was none before, and increase shelf life. A bag of potato chips, toasted, oiled and seasoned in

twenty different ways, then wrapped in plastic, has lived through many more production steps than a plain potato, has therefore given many more people an opportunity to profit from. It is an all to sure way of increasing profits, and spreading them on to more participants along the value chain, instead of just the farmers. (Furtmayr-Schuh 1993: 107, 129; Nestle 2003: 17)

Subsequently, since the beginning of the 21st century, food stocks and emergency reserves gradually diminished on an average of 36 %, with its low points for maize, rice and wheat in 2007/2008. That year, only 22 % of globally consumed grains were stored, a reduction of 37 % versus 2000/2001. These numbers have improved in recent years, but still remain relatively unstable. (van de Sand 2013: 27)

Instead, production and processing of food has become more centralized, ever-larger meat factories serve even larger areas and food travels larger distances. Food miles, known as the distance the food has traveled from soil to fork, have increased steadily in the last seventy years. The average U.S. American food item has traveled approximately 2,500 kilometers. Before one food calorie has reached its plate and 4-10 fossil fuel calories have been used up along the food chain; through pesticides, fertilizers, transportation, processing, retail, and household cooking. (Weis 2007b: 14; Scheub/Kuschel 2012: 25)

5.1.2 Global Conglomerates and Corporate Power

From among the fifteen largest food-processing companies world wide, nine originate in the United States and four in Europe, including the number one, *Nestlé*. Next to one more company from Japan, merely one originates in the global South, the emerging market of Brazil, occupying the sixth place. These Top 15 alone rained in $ 575.8 billion of profits in 2012, which is 40 % of what the Top 100 earned in food sales. (Foodengineeringmag 2013).

The competitive structure of the food retail market is similar: more than 30 % of the 250 biggest global food retailers are based in the United States. The five largest retail-TNCs: *Wal-Mart*, *Carrefour*, *TESCO*, *METRO Group* and *AEON* originate in the US, France, the UK, Germany, and Japan. They made roughly $ 870 billion in revenue in 2011, which is 15 % of total global food retail revenues that year. The Top 15 food retailers, with $ 1.38 trillion, account for almost 26 % of global food retail sales. (UFCW 2012).

The agro-input market is also highly concentrated: only three companies control 53 % of the global seed market. The global number one, Monsanto, controls roughly 27 %, and is also the number four on the pesticide market. 40 % of the agro-chemicals market is in the hands of ten companies. (ETC Group 2013a)

Due to this consolidation process into a few large global businesses, a market oligarchy develops within this commodity chain. A very small amount of retailers and processors stand opposite a large number of producers on the one side, and a mass of consumers on the other. This is what political economists describe as an "hourglass, which controls the flow of sand from the top to the bottom" (Heffernan 2000: 66). And as they continue to branch out globally, into developing and emerging markets of the South, and diversify their supply through a high number of different brands, none of them have to substantially fear substitution.

Large food processing businesses and food retailers have the power to pressure their sub-contractors and suppliers into certain production and delivery conditions, lower prices or a higher product quality, who usually comply out of fear of being replaced by a competitor. This puts an immense pressure on prices of unprocessed foods, since the commodity chain deals with an 'oversupply' of farmers, onto which higher costs can be externalized. This is also known as "vertical price transmission" (FAO 2013: 13), where higher costs for transportation, processing or marketing are transmitted backwards along the food chain. The few international processing companies enjoy enough freedom to make their own prices and spent their profits on elaborated marketing strategies. Similarly, the few international food retailers have the freedom to set far-reaching standards for quality and quantity of food, as well as certain production and contract conditions, and changing them at will. (Maxwell/Slater 2004: 80, 140; Fuchs et al. 2009; Wiggerthale 2007: 11; ActionAidInternational 2005)

With their enormous contributions to the GDPs of Europe and the United States and also the vast number of people they employ, food porcessors and retailers are considered the heavyweights of Western European and U.S. American economies (Weis 2007b, Weis 2007a). Consequently they also enjoy a dominant influence on agricultural and trade policies of these states, which are unwilling to risk the relocations of such economic giants. This influence usually takes the form of lobbyism, helped along by the revolving door between political consultants and CEOs of multinationals. While, for instance, campaign contributions are very efficient means within the United States, lobbyist in Brussels contribute to slowing down, blocking or weakening regulations. (Nestle 2003: 95ff; Weis 2007b)

The global power hierarchies and structural inequalities witnessed within the commodity chains and production conditions addressed above, making Western consumption cultures such as those discussed in chapter three possible, are only one part of the global food system. The other important issues to assess are the global trade mechanisms, which follow next.

5.2. International Trade

Structural hierarchies between North and South on an economic and political level can be seen very clearly in the following part on international trade regulations. Global trade, established on the basis of inequalities, the exploitations of imperialism and power structures between industrialized countries and many of their former colonies, still exhibits some of these today, even though there are seldom present in the public dialogues of European and North American societies.

5.2.1 WTO - Agreement on Agriculture

The three most important internationally traded goods are wheat, corn and soybeans. In 2011 approximately 349 million tons of theses products were traded at a value of $ 139 billion. This makes up roughly 22 % their global production. The EU and the United States account for 51 % of global wheat exports, as well as 57 % of maize exports. The US alone can claim 37 % of global soybean exports; together with Brazil they control 73 %. Opposite them stand 43 countries, most of them low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDC), which gain more than 20 % of their export revenues from one single commodity (sugar, coffee, cotton, lint or bananas). (FAOSTAT 2013; Mittal 2009: 13)

International trade agreements and contracts are regulated since 1995 by the *WTO (World Trade Organization)*, which follows a neoliberal ideology of free trade on international markets. It negotiates its treaties by sector, such as agriculture, services, investments, intellectual property rights and so on. It carries a non-discrimination clause in its core, meaning that agreements must be accepted by all members to the fullest extent (Weis 2007a: 130). Multilateral free trade zones like the European Union or *NAFTA* (*North American Free Trade Agreement*), however, do exist, just as much as bilateral free trade agreements between states, but they must be registered with the *WTO* and conform to its principles (Choplin/Strickner/Trouvé 2011: 17; Weis 2007a: 130ff.).

The *WTO*'s negotiations and decision-making processes have been informally dominated by the richer industrialized states ever since its establishment, and since its last conference in

2008, it has been predominantly inactive due to failing consensus (Choplin/Strickner/Trouvé 2011; Weis 2007a).

Its inherent *Agreement on Agriculture* comprises a number of regulations referring to national support and subsidies of agriculture and the trade of agricultural products. It prescribes a step-by-step reduction of import tariffs and divides subsidies into three categories: no trade-distortion, limited trade-distortion and trade-distortion. The first category includes subsidies in form of direct payments to farmers that remain uncorrelated to export or domestic prices or production quantities and is allowed by the *WTO*. The second refers to subsidies that remain tied to prices or come without a maximum production quota and for which a limit is set. The third, which includes subsidies that are given according to farm-output, meant for export or price guarantees, are required to be reduced. (Choplin/Strickner/Trouvé 2011: 12)

The TRIPS–Agreement (Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property) advances legal protection rights for agricultural innovations and research methods concerning crops, including genetic modification, most of which were carried out and funded by large agro-TNCs of Europe and North America. (Weis 2007a: 37ff.)

5.2.2. Subsidies and Structural Neglect

EU subsidies for agriculture, installed in a time of drastic food shortages in Europe after World War II with the purpose of increasing production, still, in this era of abundance, make up the majority of the EU-Budget (Choplin/Strickner/Trouvé 2011: 3). The budget of the EU CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) supplied € 55.8 billion to farmers and rural regions in 2012, not counting additional subsidies supplied by the national budgets. Of these funds € 40.5 billion were given via direct aid according to farm size (EU 2012: II/239; BLE 2013). Agriculture makes up roughly 2 % of the Euro-Zone GDP and 1 % of the US GDP (World Development Indicator 2012). US agricultural subsidies, or *Farm Bill,* implemented during the Great Depression for similar reasons (Library of Congress 2013), amounted to $ 144 billion in 2012, approx. $ 40 billion of which were given via direct payments (US Budget Office 2012).

The core instruments of these agricultural policies have been manifold: export subsidies, which support the export of any surplus of agricultural products, to be made available at lower prices on the world market; price guarantees, fitted to every crop or product, obligating the states to pay the difference, if domestic market prices ever dropped below this level; tariffs on imports of agricultural products; and last but no least structural measures, meant to support high efficiency farms or producers, as well as rural development itself.

Most of these policies have in time been declared by the *WTO* as distorting global agricultural markets, resulting in either a slow but constant reduction of these measures or their transformation into direct payments to producers, decoupled from prices and production volume, as well as loans or support for rural developments. The economic effects, however, remain basically the same: European and American farmers, who produce at higher costs than the global average, are still compensated for their losses on the world market, just in a different form. However, this way these monetary backings (subsidies) conform to *WTO* regulations. (Choplin/Strickner/Trouvé 2011; Reichert 2011; Weis 2007a)

Southern agricultural sectors, however, are not that lucky–just the opposite. In the 1980's and 1990's *The World Bank* and *The International Monetary Fund*, put in place a series of neoliberal policies in several Latin American and African countries in order to reduce their international debt. Government spending was largely cut and many services were privatized, resulting in almost no further investments into agricultural sectors or rural regions. Southern food producers, who could not keep up with the subsidized industrial farmers of Europe and North America on the world market, saw even their national markets flooded with European and US American products.

5.2.3 Speculation

While economic factors such as harvest outcome, production yield or political interventions are direct causes for agricultural price developments, financial speculation and investments account for the intensified price drops or spikes, as well as the increasingly high price volatility we have witnessed in recent years (van de Sand 2013: 39; Henn 2011; foodwatch 2011).

Especially after the global financial crisis and the burst of the real estate bubble, many financial investors moved their capital into speculating with agricultural goods or food commodity futures (Bello/Baviera 2009: 19; van de Sand 2013: 39). Global investment in agricultural products, mainly wheat, maize, and soy, through index funds reached $ 200 million in 2008. In 2011 virtual wheat futures reached 73 times the volume of the actual amount produced that year (van de Sand 2013: 39). Financial institutions such as *Deutsche Bank*, *Barclays* or *Goldman Sachs* and several other insurance companies or pension funds invested about $ 600 billion in these commodities in 2011, expecting returns of 40 - 50 % (foodwatch 2011: 1; Scheub/Kuschel 2012: 22).

Trading food futures, for example buying three tons of wheat in six months at today's price, expecting it to be more expensive then, is not a recent invention and has always been an

important instrument for producers and traders to hedge potential price-risks. A farmer, who decides to sell his crop next week instead of today, is strictly speaking also speculating. Hedge funds and index funds on raw materials and agricultural products, operating solely on financial market strategies, are a different matter however, as they invest more aggressively, more intensely, continuously for longer periods of time, and into an entire bundle of products. Thus, their influence on prices is far greater creating an apparent – though virtual – high demand for commodities and subsequently leads to higher prices in reality. (Henn 2011; foodwatch 2011; 7)

The share of this aggressive, profit driven investment has increased from 30 % in the 1990's to 80 % in 2011. According to foodwatch, this increase is due to the deregulation of worldwide capital and global investment flows, allowing their unrestricted access to any commodity markets. (foodwatch 2011: 07)

5.2.4 Investment in Land

Investments in agricultural commodities nowadays go along with increasing investments in land. Land is currently the desired commodity one needs to get a hold of (Bello/Baviera 2009: 21). Global investors increasingly invest in land in order to profit from the rise in demand for grain-based biofuels, livestock feed and population growth in the emerging countries. Many states such as China, Saudi Arabia or South Korea buy or lease land from Southern states because they anticipate a population growth that will surpass their own domestic agricultural production capacity. This occurs under surprisingly good conditions for the investors, as it is assumed by the seller- or lender-country that this will bring jobs and economic growth to the region in question. Exceptions on import tariffs or tax breaks are not uncommon, neither the subsequent displacement of farmers or even whole communities, who initially owned the land. Thus, this phenomenon is also known as "Land Grabbing" (Bernau 2012: 59).

Since 2001 up to 227 million hectares of land of Southern countries, most of them in Africa (75 %) (Bernau 2012: 59), were sold or leased to international investors, mainly from the financial industry. The biggest share of that land is used to grow biofuel sources. (Bernau 2012; Scheub/Kuschel 2012: 23). This phenomenon also intensified in wake of the financial crisis in 2007/2008, suddenly a lot of dislodged investment capital being available paired with fewer investment opportunities. (Bernau 2012; Brand 2009)

Just as the production conditions of media programs and newspaper articles have an effect on content and format, so do the production conditions and international trade mechanisms of

food commodities have an influence on its content, the natural environment, and on the people involved in producing it.

5.3. Collateral Damage - Social and Environmental Implications

The following social and ecological implications are external effects of the global food market, are therefore not included in the price of food, the convenience or the overabundance, which are part of Western consumption cultures. The connection between Western consumption cultures and the social and ecological damages discussed below, often remain hidden and undiscussed, lacking alternatives. The following sub-chapters will review these connections, developments and circumstances so as to be able look for them in the news coverages, discourses and debates of *The Washington Post* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

5.3.2 Social Implications

So, while the world has witnessed a steady growth of agricultural productivity per capita, these global industrial or regulatory structures have done little to improve the distribution of this large amount of available food or the persistent hunger and undernourishment (Weis 2007b: 11). On a global scale the North-South polarization of wealthy and poor increases. Southern rural or small farm agriculture cannot keep up with the subsidized European and American industrial food production, which dominate the global market.

The United States and the European Union remain the two biggest exporting regions of agricultural products, while many countries of the global South have become net-importers of food (Bello/Baviera 2009; FAO 2013: 12; Reichert 2011). Many of the poorest and most food-insecure countries, low-income food deficit countries (LIFDC) are largely dependent on world commodity prices and therefore very sensitive to their fluctuations (FAO 2013: 12). Burkina Faso, Bangladesh and Haiti, for example, spend approximately half of their foreign exchanges on food imports (Weis 2007b: 24). Consequently, they were amongst those hit hardest in the 2007/2008 Food Crisis.

> […] global agricultural trade is extremely imbalanced, with a few per cent of the world's farm population responsible for more then three-fifths of the world's agro-exports by value, at the same time as there are many low-income, increasingly food-import-dependent nations with large small-farming populations. (Weis 2007b: 25)

While the FAO projects the global average of one in eight people to chronically suffer from hunger and are food insecure, in 'developing regions' this affects 14.3 % of the population (one in six), in 'developed countries' less than 5 % (one in 20) (FAO 2013: 8).

Moreover, the intransparency of production and distribution activities limits consumer democracy equally, both in North and South.

> [...] within the context of an increasingly complex food chain and a growing asymmetry of information (…) between producers and consumers, this "right [to choose]" may not significantly enhance choice benefits (Becker 2007: 59)

At the same time, the power hierarchies inside this complex commodity chain leave farms with increasing disadvantages and decreasing bargaining powers. They receive the smallest amount from the profits, while higher production costs or harvest losses are shifted onto them. The largest amount of profit remains within the food processing and food retail industry. Peasants and farm labourers are faced with smaller wages and longer working hours. Mostly women are affected by this, as they provide approx. 90 % of labour going into export of fruits and vegetables from Southern countries (ActionAidInternational 2005: 5). Other unfair practices such as delaying payments, changing prices, standards or supply amounts at the last minute put an extra burden on farmers (ActionAid International 2005: 25).
Additionally many producers, in South as well as North, are bound by stringent supplier-contracts to produce according to certain private standards set by retail-TNCs: a certain quality and quantity, as well as "sophisticated and expensive systems of implementation and control" (Fuchs et at. 2009: 30). Many producers who cannot afford to implement these measures due to insufficient funds, for example, are either forced to indebt themselves, often with the retailers they supply to, or lose their market access (ActionAidInternational 2005: 23; Fuchs et al. 2009). Simultaneously the concentration of only a few agro-input TNCs, which supply farmers with seeds and agrochemicals have the market power to raise their prices on the supply side. Subsequently a farmer's input costs rise while his output prices shrink, leaving him "squeezed from both sides" (ActionAid International 2005: 22).

Finally, on a local level, whether North or South, small farmers are marginalized due to higher input costs of the competing industrialized production sector as well as lower overall

market prices. They increasingly lose their land to larger industrialized farms that can produce in larger volumes and thus reach a better economy of scale. (Fuchs et al. 2009)

In the long run, only large-scale industrial farmers can afford these high costs for initial production input of technologies and agro-chemicals (Maxwell/Slater 2004: 71ff; Fuchs et al. 2009). Small farms and peasant agriculture, such as traditional indigenous knowledge on farming, is increasingly marginalized as the market entry barriers become too high for them to have any access at all (Weis 2007; ActionAidInternational 2005). They, who work on 60 % of the global agricultural land and produce 70 % of the globally consumed food (Scheub/Kuschel 2011: 27; ETC Group 2013b), can eventually no longer afford to produce and so lose their livelihood. They are often left with no other opportunities than to sell their land to large industrial farms and at the same time work there as laborers. This ultimately leads to a concentration of land ownership in favor of large producers, often producing solely to export, whether feed or food, while a large amount of the local population is left landless and to battle starvation. (ActionAidInternational 2005: 35; IAASTD 2009: 43ff.; Weis 2007b).

This serves as an explanation for the fact that hunger and poverty are most prevalent and acute in rural areas. Ironically, many numbers and statistics suggest a correlation between the relevance of agriculture in an economy and its high percentage of chronically starving and undernourished population. Roughly 70 % of the undernourished people are rural small farmers or peasants, representing the agricultural essence of an economy. (Weis 2007b: 12; Scheub/Kuschel 2012: 27)

South Asia with 294.7 million and sub-Sahara Africa with 222.7 people million undernourished (FAO 2013: 8), are the most food insecure regions, concomitantly being host to the majority of the global farming population (Weis 2007b: 22). Women, while contributing more than 50% of agricultural work in these regions (Weingärtner/Trentmann 2011: 111), make up 60 % of the undernourished population (Scheub/Kuschel 2012: 27).

In their desperate attempts to escape rural poverty, many end up in slums outside of megacities, without access to safe housing, drinking water or sanitation. Approximately one billion people have no access to safe drinking water and one third of the global population suffers from water shortages or lack of sanitary facilities (Scheub/Kuschel 2012: 31). In countries of the South, 80 % of the sewage waters reach the environment, lakes, and rivers unfiltered and unsanitized (UN 2009). This lack of hygienic facilities and safe drinking water has enormous health repercussions for the local communities, such as bacterial infections causing cholera, typhus, dysentery, polio or hepatitis A. They represent the third highest

health risk in countries of the South and contribute to the high numbers of infant mortality. (Mauser 2007: 165). The trend of rising slum-populations will continue in the next few decades, and is estimated to approach two billion people by 2030. (UNHSP 2003 in Weis 2007b: 27)

While millions of people in Southern countries suffer from chronic undernutrition, hunger and famine, which procure, among others, an increasing vulnerability to infectious diseases and an overall loss of productive capacities (IAASTD Health 2009), Western industrial societies face health issues due to malnutrition and obesity. With 1.4 million overweight adults in 2008, the population of the obese outnumbers that of the starving (WHO 2013; Weis 2007b: 13).
Food related illnesses such as high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease are the most common illnesses in Western-industrialized countries, driving up the costs of health care (CDC 2012). These chronic diseases make up roughly half of all globally prevalent illnesses (IAASTD Health 2009: 2). These developments can be witnessed in countries of the global South as well, where the wealthy population groups have undergone a 'westernization' of their diets, with numbers increasing even faster (Maxwell/Slater 2004: 52; IAASTD Health 2009: 3).
These chronic illnesses excluded the rising number of food borne diseases due to unsafe nutrition, such as E.coli bacterium infections, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or avian influenza. All the scandals were due to carelessness, insufficient safety measures and a lack of animal welfare somewhere along the food chain. (IAASTD Health 2009)

5.3.2 Ecological Implications

> *We are in an era of giganticism, where nation-wide economic survival depends on gigantic organizations for mass production. We no longer irrigate our own small-holdings and water our cattle from the village pump; we mass together for work, we mass-produce in mammoth factories . . . and therefore, we must mass produce our water. (Twort 1963: 9)*

High yielding monocultures and genetically modified crops used in industrial agriculture, usually require greater amounts of agro-chemicals, as they are more susceptible to pests and larger amounts of water. The harvest becomes increasingly unsustainable and reliant on the help from chemicals and technologies. The use of more pesticides, more fertilizers, genetically modified seeds in order to increase the harvest output in Southern countries, also

known as the green revolution, takes a toll on the natural environment. The land, the water and the communities living close to the monocultures absorb the negative externalities of this industrial agriculture. Due to the toxic waste running into the ground, the soil looses its ecological balance. This contamination and desolation of the soil makes it evermore dependent on fertilizers, while the pests and vermin adapt to the chemicals in time and new compounds and toxins become necessary. (Weis 2007b: 30ff)

Moreover, traditional polycultures and yearly crop rotations, as well as the habit of leaving fields fallow, have all been abandoned for intense monocultures and their high short-term productivity. The soil loses the same nutrients through the same crop that is planted every season, and has no time regain them, as it gets no chance to recuperate. This leads to infertility, erosion, and salinization, and with the loss of valuable humus layers through such intensive use, the soil loses vital nutrients and minerals along with its filter function. (Mayr 1996; Weis 2007b: 30ff)

In search of arable land, in order to remain productive, farmers are forced to take away space from the forest areas for agricultural production. Deforestation, mainly do to the use of land for agriculture, is estimated at 16 - 12 million hectares per year. Especially in Latin America, the loss of highly diverse rainforest-land contributes to ecological problems. (van de Sand 2013: 35).

This, along with extensive cultivation of only a few crops, such as rice, wheat, corn and soy, global biodiversity is diminished. Today, around thirty crops essentially feed the world, the decline of diversity of crop-species and within species during the 20th century amounts to approximately 95 % (Weis 2007b: 16). Between 1970 and 2010, 30 % of all known species died out (WWF 2010).

Industrial mass-production of food also implies massive use of water. Global agriculture accounts for 70 % of global water consumption. Approximately 1500 liters of water are used to grow, harvest and process 1 kg of wheat flour, 2000 for 1 kg of vegetable or plant oil (Mauser 2007: 174ff.). One kg of beef requires 15,500 liters, 1 kg of poultry 3,900 liters (Scheub/Kuschel 2012: 33). 3,600 liters of water are needed to produce the daily-recommended amount of 2,400 vegetable calories and 600 animal calories (Mauser 2007: 174ff.). While keeping in mind, that what is produced and made available for consumption in Europe and North America covers that amount many times over.

Apart from the water that is used up by agriculture and food processing, another large amount is polluted by the increasing volume of chemicals reaching the groundwater, lakes and rivers surrounding the fields. This has long-term affects on the local habitats of animals and plants,

the biodiversity, as well as the health of the surrounding community members. Estimates speak of two to five million cases of pesticide poisoning each year, affecting pesticide applicators and surrounding rural communities. (Weis 2007b: 31; IAASTD Health 2009: 5).
All these developments in industrial agriculture contribute considerably to global climate change through the exhaustion of carbon dioxide or methane. Agriculture accounts for 40 % of global greenhouse emissions (Scheub/Kuschel 2012: 25), not the least of which is due to extensive use of fossil fuels, needed to produce fertilizers and pesticides as well as fuel the vast apparatus of machinery and transportation system. (IAASTD 2009: 41)
Ironically, neither the North American soil is the one that is degraded, nor the European Forest that is diminished in favor of mass-produced food, nor does its environment suffer most from the ramifications of climate change. Due to the structure of global food production and supply chains, droughts, floods, or forest clearings and contaminations are not exported along with the cash crops. The horrendous externalities remain in the Southern hemisphere far away from Western consumers. The already economically unstable South, rich in biodiversity and enormously dependent on its agricultural sector, is left to fend off damages it hardly caused, but which hurt it more severely than the Western beneficiaries. (van de Sand 2013: 19)

Even though food is a perfectly marketable product, the international Human Right to Food and Food Security–the guarantee that everyone should have sufficient nutrition to live a long and healthy life, cannot be warranted or secured by a liberal market. In a system such as currently prevailing, the food tends to follow the money and creates an environment of extremes, “hunger amidst abundance” (Araghi 2000: 155). And while the consumption of food may not have many external effects, the production of food, especially industrial production has an immense amount of external environmental and social effects. The perfect marketability of food is problematic in the sense that it is not at all based on any constraint or sense for sustainability, it is unlimitedly accumulated along with the natural environment. The international division of labor, the extremes producing and consuming, importing and exporting food, create an environment of extreme instability. Exceedingly volatile prices and extreme weather conditions due to climate change and loss of arable land will eventually lead to unstable harvests procuring one food crisis after another, just as the one of 2007/2008,

discussed in the next chapter. Neither farmers nor consumers can depend on the system to feed them anymore.

> These perverse poles of the global food economy, obesity and hunger, reflect the basic reality of that while food is elemental to life and health it is conceived as a commodity and not a right–food aid and food banks, which reflect a minimalist conception of food rights, notwithstanding–and the motive force of profit prevails over concerns about equity and nutrition. (Weis 2007b: 13)

6. Critical Discourse Analysis

After the previous chapters have done the groundwork, discussing the social values, ideals and expectations concerning media, food and consumption, as well as their conditions of production and distribution, this chapter will deliver the actual study of the medial texts. It inhabits the analysis of the news coverages by *The Washington Post* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on the 2007/2008 Food Crisis and will inspect and decipher from this example how the global food system is portrayed in Western print media; whether their form of discourse reflect the hierarchies of power in this system; and whether they informed their readers critically on the issues of globalized agriculture, global consumption and structural inequalities.

The method used here to analyze the coverage of the 2007/2008 Food Crisis is based on Norman Fairclough's *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA), particularly as disclosed in his two books *Analysing Discourse–Textual analysis for social research* (2003), and *Critical Discourse Analysis–A Critical Study of Language* (2010).

As CDA is scientific approach as well as method, elaborated earlier in the introduction, and builds part of the basis for this paper, it is useful to continue it here and apply it to the praxis of analyzing medial coverage. Especially the concepts of *intertextuality* and *assumptions,* that Fairclough uses, are very well suited to address the issues mentioned in previous chapters:

For journalistic texts, which nourish themselves from other sources such as, for instance, texts stemming from other discourses (i.e. discursive realms such as agricultural science or economics with again different practices and values) or genres*, intertextuality*, which Fairclough describes as a chain of texts, each influencing the next, is an important factor. As each text is reused, quoted directly or reported on, it is recontextualized, moved into another discourse, with different expectations and social structures, and its inhabited assumptions are carried along. (Fairclough 2003: 47-55) The argument here is that this focus helps to reveal different influences on the production of text as such, whether from individual persons or institutions, from realms of discourse, social groups or scientific approaches. By studying the sources of the information that is reproduced and the events or actors reported on, and also considering what other perspectives were not mentioned, it is possible to decipher patterns of popularity, prominence and ultimately power. The "hierarchy of credibility" (Manning 2001: 15) and therefore the hierarchy of certain ideas and perspectives are suddenly visible.

When analyzing a text's language, Fairclough concentrates on underlying *assumptions* of a text in general, which are not actually discussed, but taken as given and true, and which all

texts are based on. Any text, which simply cannot explain everything, takes these as a self-evident basis for its logic of argument, supposing that its audience knows and agrees with these assumptions. Fairclough names three: assumptions of existence, assumptions of value and assumptions of propositions. They are treated as generally agreed upon–beyond debate– and remain in the unconsciousness of the text at hand. (Fairclough 2003: 55-61)

This is a concept similar to what Gramsci (1971) recognizes as *common sense*, the habits and inactive systems of belief, that seem to be 'natural' and 'completely logical' to everyone. Within these unmentioned assumptions lies popular ideology and power, and they are tools for achieving cultural hegemony. By collecting and naming at least some of these assumptions and bringing them into the realm of the conscious, where they can be made aware of, the accompanying ideals and dogmas can be made aware of also. This ultimately creates a possibility of debating and questioning them.

The present analysis starts with a short summary of the Food Price Crisis in 2007/2008 as seen by the FAO, as well as an overview of *The Washington Post* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* as businesses and newspapers. This is followed by an analysis of the coverage of these two newspapers from February 1st to April 30th, 2008. Focus is laid on three separate categories: structure of the coverage, content, substance, and context of the issues reported, and last but not least detailed language and style of one sample article which highlights the most interesting findings of the news coverage.

The first step in performing this analysis consisted of searching and collecting relevant articles covering or mentioning the food crisis, rising food prices or any riots or protests due to a rise in food prices. For articles by *The Washington Post*, the *Proquest National Newspapers Premier Database* was used, where digital articles are accessible by year, month and date, without pictures, however. All articles containing the search-term *food* were screened and those relevant were sorted out.

For articles by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Archiv*, was used, which is accessible online as a full-text database within time frames. Here, pictures are also not part of the analysis. Since the German language has several words for *food* (i.e. *Essen, Lebensmittel, Nahrungsmittel*) and also often substitutes the term with *grains,* the search terms used here were *Lebensmittel(n), Nahrungsmittel(n), Lebensmittelpreise, Nahrungsmittelpreise, Getreide, Getreidepreise* and *Hunger*[24].

[24] Translation: food, of food, food prices, cereals, cereal prices, hunger

The relevant articles were divided into two categories: those that mainly covered the food crisis, food protests or rising food prices, and those where the main topic was another issue, but food crisis issues were at least mentioned (within two paragraphs or less).

Concerning the articles only mentioning the food crisis, their main subject, geographical context, whether domestic or international, sections located in (A–Section, Financial, Local), type of article (Hard News, Report, Feature, Commentary, Editorial, Word Briefing Snippet), information sources, or authors, if written by non-staff members, were documented; publication month as well as number and titles of front page articles were also noted.

Those articles covering the food crisis issues as the main topic were documented the same way as above, but in addition subjected to a detailed keyword analysis–the keywords given by the newspaper as well as relevant terms used most often.[25] Furthermore, cited causes for the food crisis, as well as mentioned solutions, critical positions or opinions were collected and categorized.

Finally, one article from each newspaper was analyzed and interpreted more closely concerning their use of language, style and grammar, with a special focus on intertextuality and underlying assumptions.

It is important to add, that–according to Fairclough–no text can be analyzed to its fullest extent (Fairclough 2003: 15), and this is not the intention of this paper. However, certain influences and patterns can nevertheless be disclosed and critically questioned.

6.1 The Food Crisis of 2007/2008

The 2007/2008 Food Crisis refers to a period of several months dating from Fall 2007 to Summer of 2008 where global prices of basic foods rose to extreme heights, making millions of people food insecure and driving even more into extreme poverty (IRIN 08.07.2008; FAO 2008; de Schutter 2009). While food prices had been rising gradually since the beginning of the 21st century, a more extreme price spike began in mid-2007 due to a rise in fuel prices and bad weather conditions leading to harvest losses in food producing countries, combined with low food reserves. Export restrictions from large food exporting countries, a reaction to the high food costs, drove up international prices for wheat, rice, maize and cooking oils even further (IRIN 08.07.2008). They continued to soar until February and March 2008, reaching a historic record, and remained high for the better part of that year (FAO 2008). Within one year, the global price of corn rose by 31 %, rice soared up 74 %, soybeans up to 83% and

[25] See list attached in annex

wheat 130 %. Domestic food prices reacted accordingly, rising up to 40 %. (de Schutter 2008: 5f.)

The countries most affected by this crisis were the LIFDCs of Sub-Sahara Africa, South Asia and the Caribbean, which are all net-importers of food, whose cereal bill rose by approx. 74 % (Mittal 2009: 2: de Schutter 2008: 6). This ultimately led to political unrest and protests in over 60 countries (Weingärtner/Trentmann 2011: 46), amongst them Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Peru, Senegal, Uzbekistan and Yemen (UNDESA 2011). In Haiti the riots lead to a collapse of government (Weingärtner/Trentmann 2011: 46).

Due to rising food costs in 2008, 130 million people were estimated to have been pushed into poverty, an additional 40 million joined the population of the hungry (UNDESA 2011: 63; Mittal 2009: 1).

6.2 *The Washington Post*

6.2.1 Background

The Washington Post is an US American daily newspaper, published in Washington D.C. and is, with a circulation of about 475,000 copies one of the leading newspapers in the United States, along with *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* (mondotimes 2012). It is published seven days a week, reporting on international and national news, politics, business and finance, sports, style, local news and community events. The majority of its readers are in the D.C., Maryland or Virginia area, many working for the US government, which is why *The Washington Post* keeps a special focus on national politics (Farnsworth/Lichter 2005: 97). Having won several Pulitzer Prizes for its coverage, *The Washington Post* has a high reputation for credibility–the Watergate Scandal having been unveiled through its investigative reporting (Thomas 2006). It is considered as an elite newspaper, known for reliable, dispassionate journalism (Hoffman et al. 2010: 564). Its political standing is considered to be centrists-left leaning, having endorsed Barack Obama in the presidential elections of 2008 and 2012 (mondotimes 2012; Washingtonpost.com 25.10.2012; Washingtonpost.com 17.10.2008). Until 2013 the newspaper was owned by *The Washington Post Company,* a publicly traded company, but was bought by Jeff Bezos, the owner of Amazon, in October 2013 (Fahri 01.10.2013).

In 2012, the paper generated revenues of $ 581.7 million, advertising accounted for 61 % and 36 % derived from subscription sales (The Washington Post Company 2012: 20, 53).

6.2.2 Structure of the Food Crisis Coverage

Time, Section and Type

The Food Crisis, as well as riots and unrests caused by rising food prices, were mentioned in 48 *The Washington Post* articles during the months of February, March and April–the lion's share (30) appearing in April. Most articles could be found in the Front- or A-Section (30), destined to cover the most important national and international issues, but also in the financial section of the paper (15). Three front-page articles mentioned the rise in food prices. The geographical focus was largely international (33), as many mentions were part of the international summary-articles such as *World in Brief* or *Around the World* (19), but the domestic issues of rising food prices and inflation were also covered (15). Rising food prices were noted within issues such as rising energy prices contributing to global and domestic inflation and reducing economic growth world wide, the global and the US economy, the US Farm Bill and biofuel policies, the central banks of Europe and the United States and their interest rate policies, the political stability of the governments of Zimbabwe, Haiti, North Korea and Venezuela. Mainly hard-news articles (29), reporting on a specific event or recent facts coming to light, mentioned the surge in food prices, opinion articles such as editorials (five) or commentaries (six), however, also broached the subject. Only four ongoing stories or soft-news reports, mentioned the rising food prices.

Thirty-six articles covered the Food Crisis as a main topic, with more detailed reporting on the causes, consequences and reactions to the rising number of people threatened by hunger and poverty. The biggest share of this main-topic coverage (26) also appeared in April. Among them were nine front-page articles, covering the reduction of US international food aid, the critical situation in North Korea, domestic inflation burdening Americans, alarming food shortages and political unrest in Egypt, the rice crisis in the Philippines, the *World Food Program's* warning over high food prices, Argentina's export policies, international food markets, food shortages and hunger in Mauritania, high domestic wheat prices, and domestic biofuel production causing a rise in the price of corn. The A-Section featured another eleven articles and another four could be found in the financial section. The geographical context of these main-topic articles was mainly international (28), only eight featured US American issues. Fourteen articles were hard-news stories, while ten were more in-depth reports about ongoing issues. Another eleven opinion articles, such as editorials (four) or commentaries (seven), appeared.

When matching *The Washington Post's* Food Crisis coverage to the 2008 Food Price Index by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), showing prices to peak in February and

March, slightly dropping down in April (FAO 2008: 4), a delayed reaction of *The Washington Post* to the price spike can be witnessed. Detailed and front-page coverage started slowly in March, evolving into more and more reports by mid or end of April. In February, rising food prices were kept in the background, mostly correlated to rising international inflation and high prices for energy, even though food riots were already braking out in Cameroon, Mozambique and Burkina Faso. The term Food Crisis was mentioned the first time on: March 3rd (WP 03.03.2008: A13).

This lingering coverage could be attributed to belated attention of the international community to the price spikes and the crisis, which ensued and worsened in time. Instead of covering riots that were happening thousands of miles away in countries with little relevance to the United States, or keeping track of the FAO Food Price Index, *The Washington Post* covered the press conferences and statements by *The World Bank*, *The International Monetary Fund*, *The World Food Program*, the US Government, and of several US Agencies such as the *US Department of Agriculture* (USDA) and the *US Agency for International Aid* (USAID). The coverage was more a reaction to their assessment and handling of rising food prices. When more and more official statements and warnings from experts were released, the reporting finally became denser.

Sources

This argument of delayed and mere reactive reporting is supported further when taking a closer look at the news sources of the Food Crisis coverage: Out of a total of 186 sources cited or reported on in main topic articles, 36 were representatives of the United Nations, an average of one per article, 31 were economists, with 16 representatives of banks, regional as well as international, such as the World Bank or the IMF, 31 local people from 13 different countries were interviewed, 23 US Government or Department sources were cited, as well as nine members from foreign governments, but only 14 non-government organizations (NGOs), and nine farmers. Out of the 114 occasions when individual persons were cited, men–predominantly in the group of economists, bankers, university professors, farmers, UN or government officials–were cited 88 times and women, mostly local people or NGO-representatives, only 26 times[26].

At total of 13 articles were written by non-members of *The Washington Post*, five mentions and eight in-depth coverage articles. The majority (eight out of 13), however, were opinion pieces, seven commentaries and one editorial. Only five articles were actually news pieces

[26] See complete list in annex

and four were published in the financial section. The Pakistani Prime Minister, Youssaf Paza Gillani, and the Secretary General to the United Nations, Ban Ki Moon, were among the most prominent authors. Moreover, two members of the *German Marshall Fund*, a public-policy Think Tank concerned with promoting transatlantic cooperation between North America and Europe, the *Earth Policy Institute*, the *Clean Air Task Force*, *Action Aid International*, two environmental organizations, an organization working to improve north-south equity and reducing poverty, and two business magazines–*Fortune Magazine*, part of the AOL/Time Warner conglomerate and *Forbes Magazine*, self-owned – wrote contributions.

6.2.3 Content and Substance

Causes and Solutions

The Washington Post saw the causes for the surge in food prices most often on either the demand or the supply side of the global food market, a higher demand of food was attributed to the conversion of food crops for biofuels (13) and the rising food consumption on emerging economies such as China and India (ten). On the supply side, harsh weather conditions leading to harvest losses in many food-producing countries such as Australia, Russia or Ukraine were made responsible (eleven). Only one production factor, rising oil prices, was also mentioned quite frequently (ten). Financial speculation with food commodities was held responsible in three articles, trade imbalances or agricultural subsidies in five.

Several conclusions and judgments were drawn from this crisis. The most recurrent were calls for increasing international food aid to help those in need (14)–members of the United Nations or *The World Bank* were regularly cited asking the international community to donate more money. But to donate not simply because there were more people suffering from hunger, but also because the international food aid programs, who purchase food on the world market, saw their budgets diminished, struggling to keep the programs going that were already in place. Apart from a frequent reaction to help those in need, many other articles sought for solutions both on the supply and demand side. Eleven more articles called for an increase in agricultural production, especially in Africa. Five saw the best way to achieve this was through science and technology, through better fertilizers, and more resilient crops, a second green revolution. Biofuels were heavily criticized to be the culprit on the demand side for food, but also citing new studies on their harmful effects on the environment. Ten articles called for the reduction of ethanol subsidies in Europe and the United States, and lamented the conversion of crops to fuel, providing a direct link between food and energy prices.

Moreover, several articles warned that not just the poorest people were struck most by the high prices for staples (ten), but that the crisis could moreover affect the political stability of several countries, as well as the national security of many others (seven). Additionally, it would take a toll on global economic growth (two). Only a few contributions called for a change in certain aspects of the food system in general. An appeal to dismantle agricultural subsidies and trade barriers was voiced in four articles, three suggested buying food aid locally in the receiving countries, instead of shipping it there from a donor country, and two pieces called for a regulation of speculation with food commodities.

Half Truths

When criticism was given and blame was issued, it was not discussed within its full context, often surrounded by half-truths.

While the connection of fuel and food prices was a frequent aspect and the two price developments were mentioned together very frequently, no consequence was deduced from this revelation. This correlation was only discussed in depth and made aware of in context with the repeated criticisms of biofuels.

The suggestion of developing a food system disconnected from fossil fuels is mentioned only once within an *Around the World* snippet (three paragraphs), citing a report released by UNESCO (16.04.2008: A10). Transportation and fertilizer use seemed to be a normal part of food production. Apart from that, industrialized agriculture was left undebated and the dark side of factory farming was discussed in only one article, citing a report by the *Pew Charitable Trusts* and the *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*, barely mentioning rising food prices, ignoring the pressures farmers are put under and completely failing to make a connection to global inequalities (WP 30.04.2008: A2).

The lack of investment into the agricultural sector in the past twenty years, especially in Southern countries, is lamented by *The Washington Post* and attributed to the low yields and market opportunities they suffer from. However, the *Structural Adjustment Programs*, policies, implemented by the World Bank and the IMF, forcing many governments to cut investments and privatize as many services as possible in order to reduce their debt, found no place inside this argument.

Hierarchies within the supply chains or the overwhelming market power of transnational corporations were never an issue.

Western Lifestyles?

The Washington Post's coverage lacks self-criticism. The fact that millions of Americans have so far benefited from this unstable system of globalized agriculture, from cheap foods possible through subsidies and low wages, remained ignored. American and European consumption patterns were not discussed as part of the problem–one article comparing food cultures and diets around the world, highlighting how privileged Americans are to be to able to afford such a diverse and high energy diet, remained otherwise relatively tame and diplomatic (WP 27.04.2008: B1). No other article mentioned the American or European diets. The increasing demand in China, India and other emerging economies for meat fed on grains is named several times as a cause for rising food prices, but the fact that Americans and Europeans still consume the most meat is left unwritten.

Moreover, the production and export of dog food in Zimbabwe, whilst its population is starving, is displayed as one of the perverse structures in such a corrupt African country (WP 03.03.2008: A13). The striking similarities to feeding food to a cow in order to become meat to keep up the European and American way of life, instead of to a starving person, remains unseen and undiscussed.

The American way of life is not negotiable (George W. H. Bush 1992)[27]

While biofuels are depicted as increasing the worldwide demand for grains, the meatification of diets, which accounts for the greatest demand for crops, is indeed mentioned, but never criticized or called upon to change. It is left as a normal justifiable demand for food, not at all seen as a cause for rising prices nor is discussed in detail, how much food is used for animal feed.

A change of the global agricultural system or the consumption patterns of the wealthiest nations is never mentioned as a possible long-term solution. Increasing agricultural production and infrastructure with the help of more investments, science and technology are the only long-term options coming to mind.

Agency

Another interesting aspect is that of agency. National governments, international organizations and central banks–who develop policies, set trade barriers, subsidize agricultural production, finance aid programs or set credit ratings–are displayed as the few

[27] at Earth Summit 1992, cited in Vidal 2012

active participants in solving this Food Crisis. They seem to be the only ones with any agency at all. Average local individuals, who are portrayed merely in their role as consumers, not as citizens with political agency, are illustrated as hopeless victims, left at the mercy of higher food prices–"hostages of international market forces" (WP 27.04.2008: B1). The 31 locals interviewed are all quoted saying similar things: not knowing what do to or how to keep going. They all seem to be in the same situation: one driven by uncertainty, hopelessness and a lack of perspective. The actions they take are fueled by desperation. The farmers interviewed seem to be only reacting to market forces, producing whatever crop they get the highest price for, making choices solely out of business reasons, not considering sustainability or social responsibility. They appear to be completely directed by the market, having no choice but to obey to its apparently forcing logic. With the exception of a group of activists in Egypt, who were reported to organize strikes against the Mubarak regime (WP 21.04.2008: A15), no person actively involved in promoting a change of the desperate circumstances, or part of a creative and positive force was even mentioned. While riots and strikes were reported, no one actually participating was interviewed, that perspective not available to readers.

6.2.4 Language and Style

6.2.4.1 Keyword Analysis[28]

In order to analyze the keywords and terms repeated most often in the articles covering Food Crisis issues, it was useful to divide them into groups depending on their connotation, their meaning or their originating discourse.

A total of nine word-groups were devised: actions with negative connotations, situations with negative connotations, actors, institutions or policies, resources, economic terms, political terms, reactive words or actions, geographical regions, and countries. The largest word-groups were those of mentioned countries (44), of describing negative situations (19), and of the economic terms (17). The group with the highest total amount of word repetitions was that of economic terms (495) such as *supply*, *demand*, *imports*, *exports*, *markets*, *inflation*, *producers*, *consumers* and so on. It was followed by the group of mentioned countries with 468 repetitions, of which the *United States*, *America* or *Americans* made up almost a quarter (114). The third highest repetitions were recorded for negative situations, such as *poor/poverty*, *crisis*, *hunger/hungry*, *famine* or *emergency*. The group with the lowest repeat count (24), was that of political words. *Change* was only repeated once, *power* eight and

[28] See full list in annex

democracy five times. The words with the highest repeat count were *United States/America/n* (114), *government* (111), *fuel/energy/oil* (91), *market* (90) and *farmers* (70).

This keyword analysis, combined with the analysis of sources made above, strongly indicates that the most influential realm of discourse for this coverage by *The Washington Post* is that of economics. Each of the 31 economists and bankers cited or reported on contribute an economic text, based on economic assumptions, logic of market forces, of supply and demand, of prices and trade balances, of investments and strive for profits. These are then mediated by the articles within the news genre into a discussion about a humanitarian crisis, about starvation, hunger and political unrest. Subsequently the causes and consequences of the Food Crisis are exceedingly viewed from an economic perspective, solutions and responses such as investing more money, increasing supply and reducing demand, are thought up within this realm and logic of debate.

The frequent use of government or United Nations sources supports the argument of agency made above. The United Nations, *World Bank* and *IMF* as well as national governments are the main actors in *The Washington Post's* articles dealing with these Food Crisis issues, and the actions they take, or are called upon to take, are less political and more economic. While the terms *subsidies*, *investments*, *imports* and *exports* come up a total of 112 times, *re/distribution*, *change*, *sustainability* and *democracy/democratic* appeared 16 times. *Demonstrating* or *protesting*, political actions taken by citizens, were repeated a total of 26 times.

The considerable use of *United States*, *America* or *Americans* expresses the egocentrical focus of *The Washington Post* on national policies and the US Government within the Food Crisis. Putting an international issue such as this into context with domestic prices for food, American families struggling with higher costs of living, national statistics on agricultural productions by the USDA, the amount of international food aid given by USAID, and US *Farm Bill* or ethanol subsidies, increases its relevance for the readers and serves to capture their attention.

6.2.4.2 Article Analysis

"The New Economics of Hunger. A brutal convergence of events has hit an unprepared global market, and grain prices are sky high. The worlds poor suffer most" April 27th 2008, A1

This front-page article appearing at the end of April, amidst 21 other articles in *The Washington Post* that week, and three others that day explores the Food Crisis within a context of global trade and international food markets. It was chosen for a more detailed analysis, because it connects several issues of globalization with each other, rather than focusing on one problem or one geographical region, taking in a macro- as well as micro-perspective. Furthermore it is a front-page article, assumed to be read by the highest number of people.

After title, subtitle and lead paragraph, giving a summary of the events, the article is divided into four parts, beginning with the coverage of developments on the international markets, and gaining perspective from commodity traders. The next paragraphs elaborate on the dimension of the Food Crisis, the surge of prices and their future developments, the protests that have arisen and the number of people driven into poverty and hunger. A perspective follows on how people in poorer regions, such as Mauritania, China, India as well as wealthy nations are coping with the crisis and struggling with higher prices. A short discussion on the causes and drivers of higher prices, one of them being the higher demand set by biofuels ensues and asks why the global market did not react sooner. An outline of the developments of international markets follows, elaborating on how food trade never fully liberalized due to agricultural subsidies by wealthier nations. Here, the article ends rather abruptly, quoting the French Minister of Agriculture arguing not to leave food in the hands of market forces. A word frequency analysis of the article concluded that the words repeated most often were *food*, *prices*, *world*, *said*, *wheat* and *market*[29].

Several assumptions could be deduced from this text. Fairclough divides between three different types of assumptions, existential assumptions (existence), "assumptions about what exists" (Fairclough 2003: 55), propositional assumptions (proposition) that assume "what is, what can or what will be the case" (Fairclough 2003: 55) and assumptions of value (value) "about what is good or desirable" (Fairclough 2003: 55). Assumptions are usually not explicitly mentioned in the texts, especially neither questioned nor discussed in detail. They serve as the basis for the texts argument.

[29] See full results in Annex

The title "New Economics of Hunger" is based on the assumption that there exists hunger in the world, that there are economic aspects of hunger, that feeding people is, at least in part, an economic issue; and that a change has occurred, that there were 'old economics of hunger' and that a new phase has begun, one of more expensive food. The subtitle further assumes that there is a global market and (global) prices, as well as that there is poverty.

Moreover the article assumes that there is such a thing as a global market and global trade for food, as well as global demand for and a global supply of food (existence) and that food is traded with money. That food supply and food demand should be in balance for a market to function (proposition), but are not now (existence). The global market is–normally–efficient, and able to gradually adjust to demand and supply through prices (proposition), but due to distortion (existence) it was unprepared for a higher demand. Sentences such as "The convergence of events has thrown world food supply and demand out of whack" or "[…] the world has largely failed in its attempt to create an integrated food market" (WP 27.04.2008: A1) imply that a free and integrated market usually functions well and is something worth implementing (value).

This further leads to the assumption that there exists a Food Crisis (existence), which is undesirable (value), that it emerged and developed and that it was caused by rising prices, which rise and fall (proposition). Prices for food are high (existence), caused by events such as a higher global demand, for biofuels, which are made from corn, and investment and a lower supply due to weather conditions (proposition) and set the market under stress (proposition/existence). These high prices, or inflation, are a negative development (value) leading to food shortages, hunger as well as protests and food riots around the world–all unfavorable (proposition/value). It is further negative because it threatens economic growth, social progress and political stability, which are all amicable and which do exist (proposition/value/existence). "The food price shock now roiling world markets is destabilizing governments, igniting street riots and threatening to send a new wave of hunger rippling through the world's poorest nations" (WP 27.04.2008: A1).

The article also assumes the existence of wealthy nations such as Japan, the countries of the Euro Zone and the United States and poor nations such as Mauritania and India (existence), wealth being something positive, poverty negative (value), which is measured in money available per day (propositional). Consumers, paying for their food in money grow hungry and poor because they cannot afford the higher prices (propositional). Nations or governments regulate trade through tariffs and taxes and increase food production through food subsidies (propositional), a positive measure that reduces food shortages (value/propositional). The

assumption lying behind food or agricultural subsidies, which protect farmers (propositional), is that farmers will plant the crops they get paid the most for (propositional), because making profits is something positive (value).

Almost all assumptions, such as the existence of a price for food, of a global market, market efficiency, and especially the positive value attributed to profit and economic growth, are based on economic logic, on a balance between supply and demand, on the global market being the tool to regulate distribution through prices**,** all for the goal of profits and economic growth. Furthermore, it suggests these economic assumptions, logics and values to be common knowledge, universal truths and 'objective' facts. It reproduces a capitalistic *common sense* within its readers, portraying economic values as common principles and ideals. Not ideology and dogma, opinion or perspective, but rationality and truth.
And yet it does not remain completely uncritical towards market forces. "But no matter the price, there always seems to be a buyer…. This isn't just any commodity. It is food, and people need to eat." (WP 27.04.2008: A1) one commodities trader is cited saying. And the French Minister of Agriculture is quoted "We must not leave the vital issue of feeding people to the mercy of market laws and international speculation" (WP 27.04.2008: A1).
While it is refreshing to have some of these assumptions redeemed within the same article they were used, this critique is never fully formed into an argument or a call for alternatives. And the language still remains so saturated with business terminology, that the few sentences criticizing global market forces, deeming them unfit to deal with food, seem hypocritical, almost schizophrenic.

Concerning the aspect of intertextuality, the article falls perfectly in line with the average of the coverage outlined above. Many of the cited sources are economists, economic analysts or experts, international traders, even a representative of the *Kansas City Board of Trade* or a vice president of the futures brokerage *MF Global*. Behind them stand a number of texts and perspectives that are part of an economic discourse, bringing with them their own sets of assumptions, their social practices and expectations of texts and their meanings.
Apart from economists, the United Nations were cited as sources, giving their take on the consequences of the crisis, as well as one university professor and a number of local food consumers, from Mauritania, China, India and the United States. One woman from Mauritania was quoted saying "I don't know how long we can survive like this" (WP 27.04.2008: A1). The paragraph, describing her as a widow supporting a family of three and

earning fifty cents a day, cutting out breakfast due to the price spike, is laden with hopelessness and emotion, meaning to inspire sympathy, even pity. The description of the situation in India is similar. “At a dusty and nearly empty market in one New Delhi neighborhood” a shopkeeper stands “sluggish in the scorching afternoon sun” (WP 27.04.2008: A1). The language describing stockbrokers and commodity traders is more abstract, rational, even detached in comparison. “[…] food was becoming the new gold. Investors fleeing Wall Street’s mortgage-related strife plowed hundreds of millions of dollars into grain futures”. While readers know name, age and address of the victims, the ones partly responsible for the crisis, remain anonymous among a group of many invisibles.

The aspect of agency can be witnessed once more. The governments of Argentina and Ukraine raising their export tariffs, those of the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan and China stocking up on grains, Indonesia subsidizing food, and India removing all import duties are the only ones described taking action.
Moreover, the crisis, rising food prices and the global market forces are portrayed as agents, as entities instead of processes started by man. This nominalization contributes to an elision of agency and responsibility (Fairclough 2003: 13). The language describes these resulting events as actively destabilizing, igniting, threatening and pushing people into poverty instead of blaming the structural problems and inequalities they unveil. At the same time people are grammatically treated as passive objects. They are being pushed, being threatened and destabilized by prices, global trade and food shortages.

Conclusively it can be said that the information serving a well-founded criticism of ‘business as usual’ is given at least in some parts of *The Washington Post's* coverage, but it is given too scarcely, too little and it lacks consistency in order to be able to serve as a basis for a strong argument, which incidentally is never made. The opportunity offered by the Food Crisis, offered by any crisis, to substantially overthink the current system, consumption patterns and way of life, is not at all taken. No connection is made between American diets and starving farmers in Burkina Faso, neither self-criticism nor alternative solutions find their way to *The Washington Post.*

6.3. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

6.3.1 Background

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung is a German national daily newspaper published in Frankfurt am Main and is together with *BILD* and *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* one of the leading newspapers in Germany (absatzwirtschaft.de 2013). It has with approximately 350 thousand sold copies in 2013, the third highest circulation rating in Germany, reaches approx. 1.2 million readers a day and the has the largest foreign readership of all German political newspapers (faz.net 2013; absatzwirtschaft.de 2013; presseurop.eu 2012). It is published 7 days a week, including a Sunday-edition called the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* reporting on politics, national and international, business and finance, arts and leisure, society, sports, lifestyle, science and technology, as well as local news and travel (faz.net 2013). With its conservative and economically liberal standing and a large business section, it is a prominent news source in business and financial circles (presseurop.eu 2012). It is the oldest national newspaper in Germany and has high reputation for responsible and prestigious reporting (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online 2013). It has won the International Newspaper Award in 2009, 2011 and 2012 (faz.net 2013). It is organized as a Ltd. corporation and owned in large majority by the Fazit Foundation. In 2012 it generated a loss of € 4.3 million after a reduction in copy sales (spiegel.de 2013).

6.3.2. Structure of the Food Crisis Coverage

Time, Section and Type

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)* mentioned rising food prices and related distresses in 83 articles during the months of February, March, and April, and fully covered the issue in 70 more news pieces. While the number of items touching on the subject only slightly increased in time, with the worsening of consequences and spread of international attention, 22 in February, 29 in March, and 32 in April, full coverage was most concentrated during April. Sixty-one articles covered the food crisis due to rising prices that month, compared to only four in February and five in March. Similar to the coverage of *The Washington Post,* the reporting here is slightly postponed, presumably due to the delayed attention of the international community and the aggravation of the consequences. The term hunger crisis appeared for the first time on March 7th.

What is more striking about the coverage of *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, is that a large majority of items appeared in the financial section of the paper, as well as its subsection covering financial markets and investments. Seventy-three mentions and 41 full coverage

articles were placed in the financial section, which makes up almost 75 % of the entire Food Crisis coverage; of those, 19 mentions and 16 full coverages could be found on the financial market and investments pages. The front section, covering domestic and international politics, only hosted 33 articles with food price related issue, in total (ten mentions, 23 full coverages), six of which were featured on the front page. Furthermore, two full coverage articles appeared in the local and another two in the science sections. Amongst the 70 full coverages were 33 hard news pieces, 20 background or soft news reports, most often on the development of food commodity prices, 13 opinion pieces and four interviews. Of these six front page articles, four covered the official statements of Ban Ki Moon, the Secretary General to the United Nations, of Robert Zoellik, head of the *World Bank*, of the *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development* (OECD), and of the German Minister of Development Cooperation, Heidemarie Wieczoreck-Zeul, on the Food Crisis and its consequences, the remaining two were opinion pieces on the causes of rising food prices and the EU biofuel policy.

The topics mentioning the crisis suggest a corresponding relation to the financial section: Rising food prices were mentioned among such issues as rising energy prices, domestic, as well as global inflation, developments on commodity markets and investment flows. The economies of the United States, Japan and China were paid attention to, as well as to the *European Central Bank* (ECB) and the *United States Federal Reserve* covering their decisions on lowering credit ratings. Anxiety for rising consumer prices, leading to inflation, combined with a looming global financial crisis, which could cause political instabilities and insecurities, was a dominant feature. Among the 83 mentioning articles were 48 hard news pieces and 23 background reports mostly covering developments of commodity prices, stock markets or the local economy of a specific country. Eleven opinion pieces and one interview with a member of the ECB Directorate also broached the subject of rising food prices.[30]

The geographical focus was largely international, although a significant amount of articles covered the German and European environmental, agricultural and financial polices, as well as domestic consumer prices.

This coverage structure gives evidence to the fact that the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* treated this Food Crisis more as an economic and market issue, rather than a political or humanitarian concern. The analysis of style and language as well as the consideration of sources will give further support of this. Whether *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* prefers to treat most subjects as economic and financial matters, rather then political ones, is due to the

[30] See full list in Annex

fact that the majority of its readership is part of the Frankfurt financial sector, can only be assumed. The small sample of articles and the specific topic do not permit a statistically supported judgment here.

Sources

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung quoted or cited individuals or institutions on 171 occasions within their 70 full coverage articles, which is overall a considerably lower average, as well as a lower diversity of sources compared to the coverage of *The Washington Post.*[31] The largest group serving as news sources was that of economists, consisting of mostly bankers, traders or hedge fund managers. These were cited a total of 56 times. German government officials or members of parliament reached 24 citations, members of eleven different foreign governments were cited on 23 occasions, United Nations Representatives on 15, and other international organizations on eight more occasions. Officials or Ministers of the European Union were cited nine times.

While *The Washington Post* cited local consumers from all over the world on 34 occasions, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* interviewed only four people, two individuals from Argentina and India and two farmers from Argentina and Germany. No activist or member of a political opposition party and no one involved in protests or unrests was given a voice in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.* NGOs or civil society organizations, all from Europe, were cited three times, farmers organizations seven times, the German *Bauernverband*[32] six times, an Argentinean organization once. Agricultural experts, such as university scientists or researchers were quoted on 19 occasions. Individual persons were quoted on 126 occasions, men - mostly politicians or economists - were cited 103 times, women only 23 times. This 84 % to 16 % ratio is even more extreme than in *The Washington Post*, who had a 77 % to 23 % gender gap.

Five articles on the food crisis issues stemmed from outside the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* writers staff. Three were written by economists; representatives from *Morgan Stanley*, *The Bank of America,* and the Federal Bank of Baden-Württemberg. The remaining two were contributions from the *Ludwig-Erhard Foundation*, working to promote social market economics, and the *International Rice Research Institute*. Furthermore, the four interviews appearing in the paper were held with Peter Harry Carstensen, the Minister President of the state of Schleswig-Holstein in Germany, the head of the *Asian Development*

[31] See full list in Annex
[32] Translation: Farmers Association

Bank, a University Professor of biogenetics, and the Head of the agro–chemical corporation *Syngenta*.

When considering the sources as well as the placing of most of the articles, a "hierarchy of credibility", as Manning (2001: 15) calls it, can be witnessed here in favor of economic analysts, experts of market developments or international trade. The content and substance of the coverage focusses on economic issues accordingly.

6.3.3. Content and Substance

Causes and Solutions

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung attributed the economic growth and its correlated change of diets towards more animal products in the emerging countries of China and India as the main reason for rising food prices. The paper elaborates on this issue 16 times. The production of biofuels, due to its overwhelming demand for grains, was also mentioned often as a cause for the food crisis (15). Moreover, the paper argued, that due to low agricultural yields (eleven), as well as droughts and floods in producer countries (eight), the supply of agricultural products could not keep up even with the rising demand occurring from population growth alone (eight). *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* attributed this low agricultural productivity to a neglect of agricultural infrastructure and technology, lamented too little investment into this sector over the years (five) and blamed low local food reserves for the rise in prices (four). Export or agricultural subsidies by the United States or the European Union were connected to the price surges in five articles. The influence of financial speculation with food commodities on the development of their prices was frequently discussed and debated in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and eight articles in total mentioned it as a contributing factor of food price spikes, but never as an underlying cause.

The initial response to increase international food aid was named eight times. But as the problem was mainly identified as an economic one, the imbalance of demand and supply of food commodities, the suggestion to increase agricultural production was the most recurrent argument (15). This should be achieved through more investments into the agricultural sector (seven) and more research and better agricultural technologies (12). A call to stop the production and the state subsidies for the production of biofuels was made five times, the argument to dismantle agricultural subsidies all together and liberalize world markets four times. Suggestions to reduce or regulate financial speculation with agricultural products, was

made nowhere, rather the NGO *Attac*'s call for a ban on speculating with food was patronized for its impracticability.

Western Lifestyles?

When generally considering the manner of how the food crisis was covered in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* hardly any hint of self-criticism or suggestions for alternatives to the current Western consumption culture can be found.

The discussion and debate on the production of biofuels, the doubtfulness of their climate neutrality or their harm on the machinery of those 'holy' German cars, as well as critique on the European Union's biofuel policy takes up a considerable part of the coverage, but not once leads to a proposal that reducing car traffic could help on the way to fuel independency or to fight global warming. Individual mobility is certainly a sensitive subject to be discussed in Germany, where the automotive industry is such a vital driver of the economy. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* is not the paper to start to question the perhaps economically most vital habit, transportation by car, even if it is such a CO_2 weak spot.

Moreover, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* does consider the ample demand of grain due to the meatification of diets and does mention in detail the amount of grain going into animal products, but, as with *The Washington Post*, the discussion remains strictly within the realm of changing foreign diets, Chinese, Indian, Brazilian, and does not spread to a critique of European or American food styles. It is the demand of the emerging economies that is so troublesome and worrying, not that of the economies that have already emerged, which have demanded gigantic amount of resources for decades.

A call for the use of better agricultural technologies, especially the use of genetically modified crops in order to increase the food supply is very loud in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.* The European Union's refusal to allow Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) is reduced to an ideological argument and called a "Western luxury" (FAZ 20.04.2008: 69). It seems as though the writers and editors of the paper have never heard of limits to growth, limits of the natural environment, so simply and so ardently do they call for a more intense and extensive production and supply of energy, of resources, water and food. The issue of unequal distribution through global trade policies and state subsidies is not completely ignored, but it is considerably downplayed, never formed into a substantial argument for the change of these policies.

Agency

The argument of agency remains as true to *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* as it was for *The Washington Post.* Citizens, rarely reported on at all in this coverage, still remained those with the least amount of possibilities, in the position of having to accept higher prices and making due as best as they can. Politicians and especially financial actors such as the *World Bank*, the *International Monetary Fund*, the ECB and the *United States Federal Reserve* were the ones called upon or anticipated in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* to act. Even the United Nations seemed to have a less important role. Farmers, who seemed to be less victimized by this coverage, were represented less individually but as associations, organized and equipped with bargaining power.

Moreover, countries were mentioned more often for their market power, economic growth or their role within the global economy, rather than the degree of affectedness in the food crisis or for the amount of people suffering or protesting. The country reports presented analyzed solely the economic state, not the political or social.

Innocent Financial Markets

The role of speculation as a driver of food prices is reported on quite detailed, giving data on the number and strength of investment flows into agricultural commodities, as well as the reasons for the participation of hedge funds and investment banks in the food commodities market. However, these activities are more often defended than actually accused of increasing hunger in poor regions of the world. Those experts questioned, cited and interviewed on the subject were all representatives of banks or hedge funds and investment managers. They all remained in defense of their activities, calling the accusations "ridiculous" (FAZ 20.04.2008: 40), contending that an insignificantly small amount of investments would be going into food markets, that the virtual prices remain unconnected to the real world or domestic market prices and that, if anything, speculation does not create high prices, only intensifies them. A negligible effect, so it seems. Along side this, the argument that these were investments into companies seeking to increase agricultural production, which is an honorable goal no one else than the financial sector would be able to invest in, found its way to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. A publisher's supplement to the April 8th edition titled "Fat Profits with Food"[33] informed readers on the benefits of investing in food derivatives and certificates on agricultural commodities (FAZ 08.04.2008: B14).

[33] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Satte Gewinne mit Lebensmitteln" in (FAZ 08.04.2008: Verlagsbeilage)

Instead of explaining more explicitly how speculation could or can influence prices and markets, more detailed reports are given on who profits from higher food prices or which company's value rose due to the food crisis. All the while the paper takes great care not to judge those who are investing in and profiting from rising food prices.

6.3.4. Language and Style

6.3.4.1 Keyword Analysis

For this keyword analysis, just as with the one done on *The Washington Post*, the terms were divided into nine groups: actions with negative connotations, situations with negative connotations, actors, institutions or policies, resources, economic terms, political terms, reactive words or actions, geographical regions and countries. In this coverage the group with the largest collection of terms was that of countries (45), followed by that of economic terms (22). The other word-groups all remained relatively smalls with three to eight words. The smallest group being the one with reactive terms (three). The group with the overall largest repeat-count was that of economic terms (865), followed as a distant second by the group of countries (435) and those of resources (391) plus actors, institutions and policies (334). The group with the lowest repeat-count was that of the political words (38). This supports the argument once more that *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* remains well within the confines of an economic discourse. The word with the single highest repeat-count was *market* (155), followed by *farmers* (136) and *government* (107). The words with the lowest repeats were *democracy* and *change* with both only two repeats. The most mentioned geographical region was *Europe* (73), followed closely by *Asia* (63). The country with the highest single repeat-count was the *United States* or *America* (78), followed by *Germany* (62).

This strongly indicates that the economic discourse is greatly influencing the coverage of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and that its articles are not just mediating economic texts and assumptions, but that these news items are simply economic texts, written almost exclusively by economists, who seem to consider only other economic sources values and indicators worth mentioning. The fact that political terms and values such as *social*, *change*, *power* or *distribution,* are used very scarcely (38 times in 70 articles) show, that political processes and structures matter very little to economists and financial analysts. Especially the fact that the concept *change* appears only twice during the entire coverage, gives the reporting a rather conservative and reactive character.

Phrases and Implications

Three more aspects of language stand out particularly throughout the coverage of the food crisis. One is the returning implication that hunger just newly developed, has suddenly reappeared on the face of the earth. The second one is the neglect of gender sensitive verbalization. "The return of hunger"[34] (FAZ 13.04.2008: 35) – a phrase used quite frequently during the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* coverage, even as an article headline – expresses a distinct and underlying ignorance on the structural hunger and food insecurity in countries of the South, which incidentally has never left the world. 'The return of hunger to our consciousnesses' would have been a more suitable phrase here, but *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* does not seem to be that self-aware. The second aspect, that of gender sensitive wording, is a feature that is a particular part of the German language, as it has both a female and a male version for most nouns in its grammatical structure - for instance 'Bauer' for male farmer, and 'Bäuerin' for female farmer. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* has been sticking to the custom of the generic masculine, where the male version of the noun or pronoun is used in texts to describe the gender neutral or universal state. This sets the male as the prototypical and more superior gender and as such reproduces a biased state of society (see Aarts/McMahon 2006).

The third issue is that of a nominalization of processes, of turning developments started by men and women into full-fledged subjects with powers of their own. 'The market reacts', 'globalization creates economic growth' and 'the crisis threatens'. Just as with the coverage of *The Washington Post*, this expresses a denial of responsibility.

6.3.4.2 Article Analysis:

"The costly fruits of globalization"[35] April 20th 2008, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* - Wirtschaft

This editorial appeared in the financial section of the Sunday–edition of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and takes a closer look at the causes and effects of globalized consumption patterns and possible solutions to the problem of growing demand for food. It was chosen for a more detailed analysis because it addresses the issues of globalization, the globalized agriculture and consumption system, which seems to be in a crisis. Moreover,

[34] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Der Hunger meldet sich zurück"
[35] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Die teuren Früchte der Globalisierung"

since it appeared in the Sunday-edition, which enjoys a higher circulation rating, the article has reached a higher number of recipients.
The lead paragraph, introducing readers to the problem, that while globalization has helped so many people out of hunger and poverty in the last decades, it is no surprise that many are suffering again.
The article is divided into three parts. The first elaborates on the seeming conflict between the expansion of global fast-food chains in China due to a wealthier middle class and the newly developing hunger crisis. The following part elaborates that the one is a cause for the other, as mostly Asians who accumulated more wealth due to globalization have also acquired a taste for better foods, especially animal products such as milk and meat. These new diets in the most population dense areas of the world are putting a strain on the global demand for grains, which has lead to higher prices and made the poorest starve. But that does not have to continue, argues the article in the third part. It suggests that it is up to farmers to produce as much as possible and strive for the highest agricultural yield and appeals to the use of better technologies, more fertilizer and investments into a dense agricultural infrastructure.
The word-frequency analysis of this article concluded that the terms repeated most often were *not*, *have*, *people*, *wealth*, *poor* and *grains*.[36]

Underlying assumptions, about what exists (existence), about what is and what will be the case (proposition) and what is valuable (value) can be found in this news piece (Fairclough 2003: 55). The article assumes that there is such a process as globalization (existence) and it has lead to long-term economic growth in many regions of the word, which is positive (value) and has propelled many people out of hunger (propositional). This growing wealth has lead to consumption of better types of food (propositional), which is good (value). This assumes further, that some types of food are better than others (value), that there exist more sophisticated foods and less sophisticated foods (existence). Animal products, i.e. meat is such a better type of food (value) and wealthier people, who are doing better, consume it (propositional and value). Further, there is also such a thing as a hunger crisis (existence), which is problematic (value) and a short-term reaction to rising demand for food (propositional), because food prices are rising. Thus, food has a price (existence), which is regulated by supply and demand (propositional). This higher demand and more expensive food leads to a higher income and profits for farmers (propositional), which is good (value) and in turn motivates them to produce more, because farmers are motivated by profit

[36] See full list in Annex

(propositional). Moreover, there exist such a thing as technology (existence) and it has helped humanity to progress and the control of natural processes (propositional), which is positive (value). Technology is positive (value) and will help to increase production (propositional), which is positive (value), because it will end world hunger.

> But the way back to an agriculture without fertilizer and technology is an illusion only romantic dreamers can afford. The domination of nature through technology and economy has been responsible throughout history for growing wealth[37] (FAS 20.04.2008: 40)

Finally, all these assumptions are based on the belief that there is a linear process of development (existence) leading from the bottom of poverty, hunger and subsistence agriculture (negative value) to the top of wealth, industrial production and technology (positive value) (propositional). In this case, China is emerging and increasing its wealth and other countries are trying to keep up. This "catching up" and "trailing behind" (FAS 20.04.2008: 40) to the countries of Western Europe and North America, as well as their ways of life and consumption patterns, is something to aspire too. They are at the very top (existence).

These assumptions do not only stem from an economic discourse with its values of profit, wealth and growth or money as its main indicator, but also from a deeply rooted ideology of progress through technology, the dogma of controlling nature through the human intellect and its inventions. The ultimate goal of economic growth, of profits and wealth through industrialization and technology, which are the marker of development measured in Dollars, Euros or Yen, are the *common sense,* the habitual argument and logic of this article. Not only capitalistic logics, but the suggestion that North American and European societies are the role models of development, that other regions want and should be just like them, are stated as universally agreed upon. The article suggests them as the ultimate truth and naturalness to its readers.

Furthermore, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* remains woefully ignorant of limits to growth, to the underlying structural problems of globalization: an unequal distribution that is polarizing the world and perpetuating the development of extreme poverty along side extreme

[37] Translated by L.D. from the original: "Doch der Weg zu einer Landwirtschaft ohne Dünger und Technologie ist eine Illusion, die nur bioromatische Träumer sich leisten können. Naturbeherrschung durch Technik und Ökonomie sind in der Geschichte verantwortlich für steigenden Wohlstand."

wealth and luxury. These assumptions altogether perpetuate and reproduce the habit of imprudent consumption in Western societies.

When looking closer at the aspect of intertextuality, the average of the coverage analyzed above is not contradicted. The head of the *International Monetary Fund* at the time, Dominique Strauss-Kahn is cited on his take on the food crisis, the globalization–critical network *Attac* is quoted, but in a critical attitude ("[…] Attac sounds off triumphantly." (FAS 20.04.2008: 40); and the director general of the *International Food Policy Research Institute* is cited assessing the causes of the increasing demand for food. Economic texts remain prominent.

The altogether conservative and reactionary coverage of the food crisis by *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* goes beyond the overwhelming influence of economic discourses and assumptions, for economists are not necessarily such adversaries to changes and alternatives. While *The Washington Post* at least explores the idea of changing global policies, however unfitting and crude, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* not only ignores alternatives but ridicules and criticizes them with full force, confidently stating that *there is no alternative*: T.I.N.A[38].

Conclusively, two distinctive features of the 2007/2008 Food Crisis coverages by *The Washington Post* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* can be deduced, which in turn express and reflect a striking attitude within the societies of Western Europe and North America toward inequalities, development and injustice.

First of all, the main assumption of this food price crisis is the economic argument that food is a commodity with a price, rather than a human right, and that people starve because they cannot pay enough money. It appears to be a universal consent that remains unchallenged. Both newspapers give their unspoken concurrence to this assumption as critique is expressed, if at all, inconsistently and unconvincingly, and no alternatives are mentioned. Within all this coverage consisting of 217 articles the Human Right to Food is mentioned once, in a quote by the German Minister of Development Cooperation.

Secondly, both newspapers absolutely refrain from connecting the ways of life, the consumer cultures of industrialized capitalistic societies and their members to any global problematic. Their readers, the citizens of the United States and Europe are innocent bystanders to a crisis they could neither solve nor worsen–neither created nor could have prevented. While their

[38] A phrase coined by the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, arguing in several of her speeches that "there is no alternative" to economic liberalism (Krämer 04.05.2013).

politicians, their central banks, the omnipotent market or globalization had an effect on the hunger in Asia and Africa, Europeans and Americans seem to not really be a part of all this, separated from the policies, the credit ratings and the growing demand for food. According to *The Washington Post* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* they are not actors and have no role in any of these global inequalities.

The global food system is portrayed as something unaffected and unaltered by European or North American convenience consumption, completely out of the hands of individuals, if at all only to be changed by politicians or banks. The forms of discourse are strikingly similar to each other, often citing the same sources, the same statements and speeches, naming similar causes and solutions. The power hierarchies, reflected in part through intertextuality of the news articles and the hierarchy of credibility of named sources, are similar to those present in the global food system, more bankers, economist, politicians and officials, and fewer farmers or activists are given a platform to contribute their perspectives to the public debate.

7. Conclusion

What can be clearly seen from this paper is that food as well as media texts should not be treated as economic goods, their distribution not be left up to market forces. They are both too vital to the existence of individuals as well as democratic societies.

Media with their immense potential to create and influence social discourse and public thought should not be produced within structures designed to measure success in profits instead of a highly informed and self-critical public. Evidently, this only places them deeper into power relations already dominant enough. Their social responsibility is too great, their task too important, their work too powerful.

Food is one of the most necessary parts of life. Apart from needing it in order to live, it is a social and cultural practice, rich in meaning, symbolism and taste. It expresses identities, values, ideologies, and manifests relationships. It is a human right, which cannot possibly be secured by market laws or the balance of supply and demand. Putting a price on a human right is not only immoral but also a most ineffective way of distribution in a global system where profits and wealth increasingly polarize. The human right to food will follow the money, and it will be secure to only those who can afford it.

Yet both media content and food are treated as commodities. And the obstruction of one system leads to the ignorance of injustices in another. If people keep talking about food as a commodity and considering this to be the most objective, rational way of discourse, they will keep treating it like one.

From the analysis of 2007/2008 Food Crisis by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *The Washington Post* it can definitely be deduced that media texts are more conform to the current economic system, less critical and less open toward alternatives. This medial discourse represents global hierarchies of power existing in the global food system very adequately. The "hierarchy of credibility" (Manning 2001: 15) lies with economic experts, international bankers, North American or European politicians, expressing capitalist logics; the publics of Western societies are neither critically informed, nor made aware of possible alternatives to the current system. The global food system is portrayed as fixed and unalterable, disconnected from and unaffected by Western consumption patterns. Whether this is due to the direct financial influence of advertisers or just the fact that media producers are socialized within an economic and profit seeking ideological environment cannot be judged however. As economic discourse along with its logic and values spreads into more and more places outside its original realm, for example into social, educational, even artistic discourses, it is naïve to

assume that journalists remain immune to it. It is a very resilient, "manufactur[ed] consent" (Herman/Chomsky 2002: 1) within whose boundaries discourse can take place and discussion is even encouraged, but still provides the basis of every assumption behind every argument. Everything outside of this consent is called irrational, impossible or delusional.

What is just as problematic is that this economic discourse seems to be accompanied by an absolute lack of information that could be used to empower or emancipate individual citizens. Neither *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* nor *The Washington Post* report on encouraging stories, on people living different lives outside the system where everything has a price, on people making a difference, thinking critically of themselves or their way of life, on people making a change. These media did not inform their readers on how a difference or change could be achieved in times of a crisis, when change is needed more than ever. It plays into the hands of those who want to change nothing and keep up the structures that are already in place. It drains a society of the opportunity for social change, for development. If people believe that nothing can be done, surround themselves with only certain images of what exists, a low diversity of what could be and many distracting spectacles, they will remain where they are, limited by their mirrored images (Hedges 2009).

What is needed for social change and social development, on the local as well as the global stage is a healthy dose of self-criticism, of questioning one self on the individual as well as the social level. This cannot be achieved through media alone, and to blame every social injustice and every bit of ignorance on a lack of medial attention would be unfair. Mass media are one part of social life, interlocking with every other part in producing a social sphere, discourses and knowledge. People can be taught to critically judge their circumstances, including the media they consume, can be taught to 'read against the grain', to actively work against the asymmetry of information between senders and receivers, to decode and interpret medial text in a critical way, to question the agenda of sources, and to think outside the consented realms. What remains unanswered by this paper is how and through what means audiences and readers can be emancipated, learning to demand the information they deserve, unwilling to consume any text available. But just because people cannot see the opportunities to change the present circumstances, doesn't mean they are not there. *There are alternatives*; one just has to know how to look.

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English Abstract

The continuing commoditization of media content, since the last quarter of the 20th Century, has had enormous implications on the medial discourse influencing public opinion and debate whithin the societies of Europe and North America. Especially problematic issues such as the dire social and ecological consequences produced by the global system of industrialized agriculture–fed by Western consumption cultures–remain hidden and shrouded in the public subconscious, wanting alternatives.

Based on the approaches of *Political Ecology* and *Critical Discourse Analysis*, focussing on the connection between social and ecological developments, this paper will analyse the Western medial discourse on the social and ecological implications of globalized industrial agriculture. The coverage of the 2007/2008 Food Price Crisis in *The Washington Post* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* will serve as an example on the problematic phenomena of the commoditization of information and nature.

German Abstract

Die stetig andauernde Kommodifizierung von Medieninhalten und -texten, seit den letzten Jahrzehnten des 20. Jahrhunderts, hat einen beträchtlichen Einfluss auf den medialen Diskurs, daher auch auf die öffentlichen Meinungen und Debatten der europäischen und nordamerikanischen Gesellschaften. Vor allem problematische Themen wie die sozialen und ökologischen Missstände, produziert durch das globale System der industriellen Landwirtschaft bleiben verschleiert und ohne ernsthaft diskutierte Alternativen.

Diese Diplomarbeit wird, fokussierend auf die Zusammenhänge zwischen sozialen und ökoloschen Entwicklungen und mit Hilfe der theoretischen Zugänge der politischen Ökologie und der kritischen Diskursanalyse, den westlichen medialen Diskurs über die sozialen und ökologischen Folgen der globalisierten industriellen Landwirtschaft analysieren. Die Berichterstattung der Nahrungsmittelkrise von 2007/2008 in *The Washington Post* und *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* dienen hierbei als ein Beispiel für die problematische Entwicklung der Inwertsetzung von Information und Natur.

About the Author

Education

2008 - 2014	University of Vienna, International Development Studies
June 2007	Degree: German Abitur. Final Examinations in: English, History, German, Math and Philosophy
2004 - 2007	High School: Lindenauschule, Hanau
1999 - 2004	German School New York, White Plains, New York
1998 - 1999	Middle School: Lindenauschule, Hanau

Work Experience

Jun. - Sept. 2011	Interniship at Germanwatch e.V. - Stresemannstr. 72 D-10963 Berlin - Department of World Food Security, Land Use and Trade - Data research on global food consumption and production - Co-authorship on analysis and research papers - Public relations and campaign work - Administration
2008	Volunteer at Fair Trade Store Hanau, Germany - Sale, customer service and administration
Sept. 2007 - Feb. 2008	Voluntary social and archaeological work, Inka Project - Projects Abroad, Cusco and Huyro, Peru

Languages

German (fluent), English (fluent), Spanish (beginner), French (beginner)

ANNEX

Table 1: Washington Post Article Analysis

		Mentions	Full Coverage
	Total	**48**	**36**
Time	Febuary	15	1
	March	3	9
	April	30	26
Type	Hard News	29	14
	Reporting	4	10
	Editorial	5	4
	Commentary	6	7
	Feature	1	1
Section	Front Page	3	9
	A-Section	30	11
	Financial	15	4
	Outlook	0	1
	Metro	0	1
Region	**International**	**33**	**26**
	World in Brief	19	0
	Domestic	**15**	**10**

Table 2: Washington Post Source Analysis

	Sources	Total	Male	Female	Non-Individuals
Total		**186**	**88**	**26**	**72**
United Nations	FAO	8	0	0	8
	WFP	21	3	2	16
	UNICEF	1	1	0	0
	Ban Ki Moon	2	2	0	0
	Study	1	0	0	1
	Officials	3	0	0	3
Subtotal		**36**	**6**	**2**	**28**
U.S. Officials	Government	5	0	0	5
	Members of Congress	10	10	0	0
	USAID	3	2	0	1
	USDA	4	1	0	3
	U.S. Malaria Initiative	1	1	0	0
Subtotal		**23**	**14**	**0**	**9**

Table 2 (continued)

	Sources	Total	Male	Female	Non-Individuals
Foreign Governments	President of Afghanistan	1	1	0	0
	Pakistani Finance Minister	1	1	0	0
	French Agricultural Minister	1	1	0	0
	President of the Phillipines	1	1	0	0
	Mauretanian Prime Minister	1	1	0	0
	President of Argentina	1	0	1	0
	Argentinian Finance Minister	1	1	0	0
	Cambodian Finance Minister	1	1	0	0
	UK Prime Minister	1	1	0	0
Subtotal		**9**	**8**	**1**	**0**
NGOs and Think Tanks	CARE	1	1	0	0
	World Vision	1	0	0	1
	Earth Policy Institute	2	2	0	0
	Catholic Relief Services	1	1	0	0
	U.S. Food Banks	7	1	3	3
	IFPRI	1	0	0	1
	Center for Strategic International Studies	1	1	0	0
Subtotal		**14**	**6**	**3**	**5**
Farmers	Unites States	5	3	0	2
	Argentina	2	1	0	1
	Brazil	1	1	0	0
	Zimbabwe	1	1	0	0
Subtotal		**9**	**6**	**0**	**3**

Table 2 (continued)

	Sources	Total	Male	Female	Non-Individuals
Locals	Pakistan	3	2	1	0
	United States	7	4	2	1
	Zimbabwe	1	0	1	0
	Niger	1	0	1	0
	Mauretania	3	1	2	0
	China	3	0	1	2
	India	3	1	2	0
	Egypt	4	1	3	0
	Argentina	1	1	0	0
	Yemen	2	2	0	0
	Guatemala	1	0	1	0
	Mexico	1	0	1	0
	Brazil	1	0	1	0
	Guatemala	1	0	1	0
	Mexico	1	0	1	0
	Brazil	1	0	1	0
Subtotal		**34**	**12**	**19**	**3**
News Services	Associates Press	4	0	0	4
	Reuters	2	0	0	2
Subtotal		**6**	**0**	**0**	**6**
Economists	Economists	6	6	0	0
	Amro Bank Pakistan	1	1	0	0
	Moody's	1	1	0	0
	Federal Reserve Bank	1	0	0	1
	World Bank	10	6	0	4
	USDA	1	0	0	1
	Univ. of Dakota	1	1	0	0
	MF Global Futures Broker	1	1	0	0
	IMF	1	1	0	0
	Asian Development Bank	1	1	0	0
	Morgan Stanley	1	1	0	0
	Dallas Federal Reserve Bank	1	1	0	0
	J.P. Morgan	1	0	0	1
	Bank of International Settlements	1	0	0	1
	Commodity Futures Trading Commission	1	1	0	0
	Kansas City Board of Trade	1	1	0	0
	Economic Policy Institute	1	1	0	0
Subtotal		**31**	**23**	**0**	**8**

Table 2 (continued)

	Sources	Total	Male	Female	Non-Individuals
Other Media	Egypt	1	0	0	1
	North Korea	1	0	0	1
	Zimbabwe	1	0	0	1
	The New York Times	1	1	0	0
	Time Magazine	1	0	0	1
	Science Magazine	2	1	0	1
Subtotal		**7**	**2**	**0**	**5**
Business Associations	Consumer Federation of America	1	0	1	0
	Renewable Fuels Association	1	1	0	0
	North American Cereal Seed Operations	1	0	0	1
	American Bakers Association	1	1	0	0
Subtotal		**4**	**2**	**1**	**1**
Corporations	Tyson Foods	1	0	0	1
	Syngenta	1	1	0	0
	Costco	1	0	0	1
	Sam's Club	1	0	0	1
	Vera Sun	1	1	0	0
Subtotal		**5**	**2**	**0**	**3**
Scientists	Center for Agricultural and Rural Development Iowa State University	2	2	0	0
	Crop Breeders	2	2	0	0
	Rice Research Institute	2	2	0	0
	National Academy of Science	1	0	0	1
	Food Security and Environment Stanford University	1	1	0	0
Subtotal		**8**	**7**	**0**	**1**

Table 3: Washington Post Keyword Analysis

Category	Term	Repeats
Negative Actions	Riot/s	28
	Violen/t/ce	6
	Dead/death/dying/died/kill/ed/ing	17
	Demonstrat/ions/ors/ing	5
	Strike/s	8
	Protest/s/ng	13
	Unrest	12
Subtotal		**89**
Negative Situations	Poor/poverty	64
	High Cost of Living	4
	Hunger/hungry	62
	Crisis	63
	Famine	14
	Threat/threatening	14
	Mal/undernutrition	7
	Emergency	34
	Vulnerable	3
	Risk/y	2
	Dependen/t/ce	11
	Humanitarian	8
	Problem/s	11
	Difficult/y	7
	Desperate	1
	Starvation/starve/starving	4
	Critical	3
	Food in/security	9
	Climate change/global warming	8
Subtotal		**329**
Actors/Institutions/Policies/	Government (s)	111
	Farmers	70
	Peasants	2
	Millenium Development Goals	2
	Farm Bill	4
	GAP	0
	Subsidies	34
	World Bank	15
	Human Rights	2
	Science/Technology/Research	12
Subtotal		**252**

Table 3 (continued)

Category	Term	Repeats
Resources	Fuel/Energy/Oil	91
	Land	14
	Animal Feed	17
	Biofuels/ethanol	66
Subtotal		**188**
Economic Terms	Budget	8
	Spending	10
	Business	10
	Produc/ers/ing/tion	43
	Demand	34
	Efficien/t/cy	5
	Import/s/ing	28
	Exports/s/ing	40
	Market	90
	Inflation	55
	Consum/er/ers/ption	41
	Economy	57
	Growth	13
	Investment/s/investing	20
	Profit/s/able	5
	Suppl/y/ies	30
	Rich	6
Subtotal		**495**
Political Terms	Power	8
	Re/distribution	7
	Change	1
	Sustain/ability/able	3
	Democra/cy/tic	5
Subtotal		**24**
Reactive Terms	Respon/d/ing/se	3
	Donor/s/donation/s	15
	Aid/help	57
	Solution/s	6
	Progress	6
	Cause/d/s	6
	Effect/s/ive	5
Subtotal		**98**
Regions:	Latin America/n	1
	Africa/n	29
	Asia/n	32
Subtotal		**62**

Table 3 (continued)

Category	Term	Repeats
Countries:	Afghanistan/Afghan	8
	Argentina/n	14
	Australia/Australian	5
	Bahrain/ian	1
	Bangladesh	6
	Brazil/ian	6
	Burkina Faso	3
	Cambodia	5
	Cameroon/ian	4
	China/Chinese	40
	Egypt/ian	39
	Ethiopia/Ethiopian	4
	E.U./ European Union / Europe	14
	Honduras/Hunduranian	1
	Hong Kong	1
	Haiti/Haitian	13
	India/n	25
	Indonesia/n	7
	Iraq/i	1
	Ivory Cost	2
	Jordan/ian	1
	Kazakhstan/ian	3
	Kenya/n	3
	Malaysia/n	2
	Mali	3
	Mauretania/n	15
	Marocco	4
	Mexico/Mexican	2
	North Korea/n	35
	Pakistan/i	14
	Phillipines/Fillipino	23
	Saudi Arabia/n	1
	Senegal	5
	Somali/a	2
	Sudan/ese/ Darfur/ian	7
	Tagikistan/ian	1
	Thailand/Thai	1
	Ukraine/an	2
	United Emirates	1

Table 3 (continued)

Category	Term	Repeats
Countries:	Usbekistan/ian	1
	United States/ U.S./American/s	114
	Venezuela/n	1
	Vietnam/ese	6
	Yemen/i	10
	Zimbabwe/an	12
Subtotal		**468**

Table 4: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung Article Analysis

		Mentions	Full Coverage
	Total	**83**	**70**
Time	February	22	4
	March	29	5
	April	32	61
Type	Editorial	1	2
	Commentary	10	11
	Hard News	48	33
	Reporting	23	20
	Country Report	3	0
	Interview	1	4
Section	Front Section	10	23
	Front Page	1	6
	Financial	73	41
	Financial Market	19	16
	Local	0	2
	Arts & Leisure	0	1
	Science	0	2
	Supplement	0	1
Region	**International**	**45**	**54**
	World Briefing	0	2
	Domestic	**38**	**16**

Table 5: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung Source Analysis

	Sources	Total	Male	Female	Non-Individuals
Total		**180**	**103**	**23**	**54**
					0
United Nations	Ban Ki Moon	3	3	0	0
	World Food Program	3	0	2	1
	FAO	9	3	0	6
Subtotal		**15**	**6**	**2**	**7**
German Officials	Chancelor	1	0	1	0
	Minister of Agriculture	8	8	0	0
	Minister of Development Cooperation	6	0	6	0
	Environmental Departemen	1	0	0	1
	Members of Congress	6	6	0	0
	Minister of Finance	2	2	0	0
Subtotal		**24**	**16**	**7**	**1**
EU Officials	EU Officials	9	6	3	0
Subtotal		**9**	**6**	**3**	**0**
Agricultural Experts	USDA	6	0	0	6
	Professor of Agriculture Göttingen University	1	1	0	0
	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture	1	0	0	1
	IFPRI	6	5	0	1
	Agroeconomist	1	1	0	0
	International Rice Research Institute	2	2	0	0
	Professor of Biogenetics	1	0	1	0
	International Grain Council	1	0	0	1
Subtotal		**19**	**9**	**1**	**9**

Table 5 (continued)

	Sources	Total	Male	Female	Non-Individuals
Economists	Bloomberg	2	0	0	2
	Citi Group	1	1	0	0
	DBS Bank Singapur	1	0	0	1
	Dresdner Kleinwort	1	0	0	1
	Goldman Sachs	4	2	0	2
	Lyxor Asset Management	1	1	0	0
	Asian Development Bank	3	2	0	1
	World Bank	15	5	0	10
	International Monetary Fund	7	6	0	1
	Afrikan Development Bank	1	0	0	1
	Interamerican Development Bank	1	0	0	1
	Kieler Institut für Weltwirtschaft	1	1	0	0
	Credit Suisse Bank	2	1	0	1
	Uni Credit Group	2	2	0	0
	U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission	1	0	0	1
	A.S. Resource Co.	1	0	0	1
	German Bundesbank	1	1	0	0
	Handelshaus Töpfer International	1	1	0	0
	Tiberius Asset Management	1	1	0	0
	Cash Grain Bids Inc.	1	0	0	1
	Standart & Poor's	1	0	0	1
	DWS Fondgesellschaft	1	0	0	1
	Deutsche Bank	2	1	0	1
	Commerzbank	1	1	0	0
	Zentrale Markt- und Preisberichtstelle	3	2	1	0
Subtotal		**56**	**28**	**1**	**27**
International Org./Inst.	CEPAL	1	1	0	0
	OECD	7	3	0	4
Subtotal		**8**	**4**	**0**	**4**

Table 5 (continued)

	Sources	Total	Male	Female	Non-Individuals
Foreign Gov./Ministers	Primeminister of China	1	1	0	0
	Primeminister of India	1	1	0	0
	Minister of Finance India	2	2	0	0
	President of Argentina	1		1	0
	Minister of Economic Affairs Argentina	1	1	0	0
	Primeminister of the United Kingdom	3	3	0	0
	President of Bolivia	2	2	0	0
	U.S. Minister of Finance	1	1	0	0
	United States Government Official	1	0	1	0
	President of France	1	1	0	0
	President of Peru	1	1	0	0
	President of Haiti	2	2	0	0
	Haiti Senator	1	1	0	0
	Haiti Government Official	1	0	1	0
	Japan Minister of Foreign Affairs	1	1	0	0
	President of Brazil	1	1	0	0
	Minister of Agriculture Brazil	1	1	0	0
	Minister of Finance Brazil	1	1	0	0
Subtotal		**23**	**20**	**3**	**0**
Farmers	Farmers	2	2	0	0
Subtotal		**2**	**2**	**0**	**0**
Locals	Argentina	1		1	0
	India	3	1	2	0
Subtotal		**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**
Members of Farmers Org.	Argentina	1	1	0	0
	Germany	6	5	0	1
Subtotal		**7**	**6**	**0**	**1**
Business Associations	Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Ernährungsindustrie	1	1	0	0
	Deutsche Lebensmittelverarbeiter	1	1	0	0
Subtotal		**2**	**2**	**0**	**0**
Corporations	Archer Daniels Midland	1	0	0	1
	Syngenta	1	1	0	0
	Costco's	1	1	0	0
	Sam's Club	1	0	1	0
Subtotal		**4**	**2**	**1**	**1**

Table 5 (continued)

	Sources	Total	Male	Female	Non-Individuals
NGOs and Social Scientists	Attac	2	0	1	1
	Welthungerhilfe	1	0	1	0
	Political Analyst	1	1	0	0
	Tata Institute of Social Science	1	0	0	1
Subtotal		**5**	**1**	**2**	**2**
Media	Spiegel Magazin	1	0	0	1
	Reuters	1	0	0	1
Subtotal		**2**	**0**	**0**	**2**

Table 6: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung Keyword Analysis

	Term	Repeats
Negative Actions	Aufstand/Aufstände *uprising/s*	2
	Demonstration/en *demonstration/s*	6
	Protest/e *protest/s*	25
	Gewalt/gewaltsam *violence/violent*	7
	Tod/Tote *death/s*	3
	Streik/s *strike/s*	11
	Unruhen *unrests*	12
	Konflikte *conflicts*	9
Subtotal		**75**
Negative Situations	Gefahr *danger*	12
	Armut/arm *poverty/poor*	73
	Hunger	83
	Krise *crisis*	40
	Leid/leiden *suffer/ing*	4
	Not *need/distress/emergency*	20
	Sorgen *worry*	7
	Problem	15
Subtotal		**254**
Actors/Institutions/Policies	Landwirte/Bauern *farmers*	136
	Staat/Regierung *state/government*	107
	subventionen/subventionieren *subsidies/subsidize*	45
	Weltbank *Worldbank*	38
	Nachhaltigkeit/nachhaltig *sustainability/sustainable*	8
Subtotal		**334**

Table 6 (continued)

	Term	Repeats
Political Terms	(Um)verteilung *(re)distribution*	7
	sozial *social*	12
	Demokratie *democracy*	2
	Veränderung *change*	2
	Sicherheit *security*	3
	Macht *power*	12
Subtotal		**38**
Regions	Afrika *Africa*	51
	Asien *Asia*	63
	Europa/Europäische Union E*urope/European Union*	73
	Karibik *Carribean*	5
	Latein-/Südamerika *Latin/South America*	19
Subtotal		**211**
Resources	Vieh-/Tierfutter *animal feed*	28
	Biosprit/-diesel/-ethanol *biofuels*	76
	Natur/Umwelt *nature/environment*	16
	Agrarrohstoffe *agricultural commodities*	86
	Ernte *harvest*	65
	Forschung/Technik/Technologie *science/research/techonology*	54
	Klima *climate*	14
	Öl/Treibstoff/Kraftstoff/Benzin/Diesel/Energie *oil/fuel/gassoline/diesel/energy*	52
Subtotal		**391**

Table 6 (continued)

	Term	Repeats
Economic Terms	Angebot *supply*	33
	Nachfrage *demand*	58
	Verbrauch *use/consumption*	27
	Erzeuger/Produzenten *producers*	22
	Produktion *production*	99
	Konsum *consumption*	9
	Effizienz/effizient *efficiency/efficient*	5
	Produktivität *productivity*	15
	Markt/Märkte *market/markets*	155
	Wirtschaft *economy*	51
	Handel *trade*	44
	Importe/importieren *import/s*	14
	Exporte/exportieren *export/s*	85
	Börse *stock exchange*	18
	Inflation	39
	Spekulation/spekulieren *speculation/ to speculate*	37
	kommerziell *commercial*	3
	Wachstum *growth*	37
	Zinsen *credit ratings*	8
	Gewinne/Rendite/Profit *profit/s*	32
	reich *rich*	7
	Investitionen/investieren *investments/ to invest*	67
Subtotal		**865**
Reactions	Hilfe *help/aid*	41
	Grund/Ursache *cause*	20
	Folgen/Effekte/Konsequenzen *effects/consequences*	10
Subtotal		**71**
Countries	Ägypten *Egypt*	6
	Argentinien *Argentina*	32
	Australien *Australia*	8
	Bangladesh	2
	Bolivien *Bolivia*	4
	Brasilien *Brazil*	34
	Burkina Faso	4
	China	46
	Deutschland/deutsch *germany/german*	62

Table 6 (continued)

	Term	Repeats
Countries	Elfenbeinküste *Ivory Coast*	2
	Ethiopien *Ethiopia*	3
	Frankreich *France*	4
	Guniea	3
	Haiti	18
	Japan	9
	Jemen	1
	Kambodscha *Cambodia*	3
	Kamerun *Cameroon*	2
	Kanada *Canada*	1
	Kongo	1
	Kasachstan *Kazachstan*	1
	Marokko *Marocco*	1
	Mexiko *Mexico*	5
	Namibia	1
	Nigeria	4
	Indien *India*	43
	Indonesien *Indonesia*	11
	Italien *Italy*	1
	Paraguay	1
	Philippinen *Philippines*	4
	Russlan *Russia*	4
	Senegal	2
	Sierra Leone	2
	Singapur	2
	Slowenien *Slovenia*	1
	Tansania	1
	Thailand	8
	Tschad	1
	Tunesien *Tunesia*	1
	Ukraine	2
	Usbekistan *Uzbekistan*	2
	Vereinigtes Königreich *United Kingdom*	2
	Vereinigte Staaten/Amerika/amerikanisch *United Staates/America/American*	78
	Venezuela	2
	Vietnam	10
Subtotal		**435**

Table 7: Keyword Analysis[39] of Washington Post Article: April 27, 2008 "The Economics of Hunger" – General Statistics

Total word count :	1,342
Number of different words :	845
Complexity factor (Lexical Density) :	0.63
Readability (Gunning-Fog Index) : (6-easy 20-hard)	8.5
Total number of characters :	12,634
Number of characters without spaces :	7,966
Average Syllables per Word :	1.65
Sentence count :	130
Average sentence length (words) :	17.09
Max sentence length (words) :	48
(but within a few weeks the traders discerned an ominous snowball effect one that would eventually bring down a prime minister in haiti make more children in mauritania go to bed hungry even cause american executives at sam s club to restrict sales of large bags of rice)	
Min sentence length (words) :	1
(s)	
Readability (Alternative) beta : (100-easy 20-hard, optimal 60-70)	49.6

[39] Analysis performed by Textalyser, http://textalyser.net/

Table 8: Keyword Analysis[40] of Washington Post Article: April 27, 2008 "The Economics of Hunger" – Frequency and top words

Word	Occurrences	Frequency	Rank
food	31	2.3%	1
prices	22	1.6%	2
world	18	1.3%	3
said	15	1.1%	4
wheat	11	0.8%	5
market	10	0.7%	6
percent	10	0.7%	6
price	10	0.7%	6
even	9	0.7%	6
grain	9	0.7%	6
now	9	0.7%	6
global	9	0.7%	6
people	9	0.7%	6
the	8	0.6%	7
trade	8	0.6%	7
new	8	0.6%	7
year	6	0.4%	9
demand	6	0.4%	9

[40] Analysis performed by Textalyser, http://textalyser.net/

Table 9: Keyword Analysis[41] FAZ April 20th, 2008
"Die teuren Früchte der Globalisierung" – General Statistics

Total word count :	642
Number of different words :	450
Complexity factor (Lexical Density) :	0.701
Readability (Gunning-Fog Index) : (6-easy 20-hard)	9.2
Total number of characters :	8,181
Number of characters without spaces :	6,671
Average Syllables per Word :	1.81
Sentence count :	90
Average sentence length (words) :	14.01
Max sentence length (words) :	32
(immer wenn kentucky fried chicken in china eröffnet und das passiert dort jeden tag müssen acht bis zehn private schutzleute für ordnung sorgen um den ansturm zu bewältigen)	
Min sentence length (words) :	3
(dank der globalisierung)	
Readability (Alternative) beta : (100-easy 20-hard, optimal 60-70)	39.2

[41] Analysis performed by Textalyser: http://textalyser.net/index.php?lang=en#analysis

Table 10: Keyword Analysis[42] FAZ April 20th, 2008
"Die teuren Früchte der Globalisierung" – Frequency and top words

Word	Occurrences	Frequency	Rank
food	31	2.3%	1
prices	22	1.6%	2
world	18	1.3%	3
said	15	1.1%	4
wheat	11	0.8%	5
market	10	0.7%	6
percent	10	0.7%	6
price	10	0.7%	6
even	9	0.7%	6
grain	9	0.7%	6
now	9	0.7%	6
global	9	0.7%	6
people	9	0.7%	6
the	8	0.6%	7
trade	8	0.6%	7
new	8	0.6%	7
year	6	0.4%	9
demand	6	0.4%	9

[42] Analysis performed by Textalyser: http://textalyser.net/index.php?lang=en#analysis

The New Economics of Hunger; A brutal convergence of events has hit an unprepared global market, and grain prices are sky high. The world's poor suffer most.

Author: Anthony Faiola - Washington Post Staff Writer
Publication info: The Washington Post [Washington, D.C] 27 Apr 2008: A.1.ProQuest document link

Abstract: [...] within a few weeks, the traders discerned an ominous snowball effect -- one that would eventually bring down a prime minister in Haiti, make more children in Mauritania go to bed hungry, even cause American executives at Sam's Club to restrict sales of large bags of rice.

Full text:
The globe's worst food crisis in a generation emerged as a blip on the big boards and computer screens of America's great grain exchanges. At first, it seemed like little more than a bout of bad weather. In Chicago, Minneapolis and Kansas City, traders watched from the pits early last summer as wheat prices spiked amid mediocre harvests in the United States and Europe and signs of prolonged drought in Australia. But within a few weeks, the traders discerned an ominous snowball effect -- one that would eventually bring down a prime minister in Haiti, make more children in Mauritania go to bed hungry, even cause American executives at Sam's Club to restrict sales of large bags of rice. As prices rose, major grain producers including Argentina and Ukraine, battling inflation caused in part by soaring oil bills, were moving to bar exports on a range of crops to control costs at home. It meant less supply on world markets even as global demand entered a fundamentally new phase. Already, corn prices had been climbing for months on the back of booming government-subsidized ethanol programs. Soybeans were facing pressure from surging demand in China. But as supplies in the pipelines of global trade shrank, prices for corn, soybeans, wheat, oats, rice and other grains began shooting through the roof. At the same time, food was becoming the new gold. Investors fleeing Wall Street's mortgage-related strife plowed hundreds of millions of dollars into grain futures, driving prices up even more. By Christmas, a global panic was building. With fewer places to turn, and tempted by the weaker dollar, nations staged a run on the American wheat harvest.
Foreign buyers, who typically seek to purchase one or two months' supply of wheat at a time, suddenly began to stockpile. They put in orders on U.S. grain exchanges two to three times larger than normal as food riots began to erupt worldwide. This led major domestic U.S. mills to jump into the fray with their own massive orders, fearing that there would soon be no wheat left at any price.
"Japan, the Philippines, [South] Korea, Taiwan -- they all came in with huge orders, and no matter how high prices go, they keep on buying," said Jeff Voge, chairman of the Kansas City Board of Trade and also an independent trader. Grains have surged so high, he said, that some traders are walking off the floor for weeks at a time, unable to handle the stress.
"We have never seen anything like this before," Voge said. "Prices are going up more in one day than they have during entire years in the past. But no matter the price, there always seems to be a buyer. . . . This isn't just any commodity. It is food, and people need to eat."
The food price shock now roiling world markets is destabilizing governments, igniting street riots and threatening to send a new wave of hunger rippling through the world's poorest nations. It is outpacing even the Soviet grain emergency of 1972-75, when world food prices rose 78 percent. By comparison, from the beginning of 2005 to early 2008, prices leapt 80 percent, according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization. Much of the increase is being absorbed by middle men -- distributors, processors, even governments -- but consumers worldwide are still feeling the pinch.

The convergence of events has thrown world food supply and demand out of whack and snowballed into civil turmoil. After hungry mobs and violent riots beset Port-au-Prince, Haitian Prime Minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis was forced to step down this month. At least 14 countries have been racked by food-related violence. In Malaysia, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is struggling for political survival after a March rebuke from voters furious over food prices. In Bangladesh, more than 20,000 factory workers protesting food prices rampaged through the streets two weeks ago, injuring at least 50 people.

To quell unrest, countries including Indonesia are digging deep to boost food subsidies. The U.N. World Food Program has warned of an alarming surge in hunger in areas as far-flung as North Korea and West Africa. The crisis, it fears, will plunge more than 100 million of the world's poorest people deeper into poverty, forced to spend more and more of their income on skyrocketing food bills.

"This crisis could result in a cascade of others . . . and become a multidimensional problem affecting economic growth, social progress and even political security around the world," U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said. Prices for some crops -- such as wheat -- have already begun to descend off their highs. As farmers rush to plant more wheat now that profit prospects have climbed, analysts predict that prices may come down as much as 30 percent in the coming months. But that would still leave a year-over-year price hike of 45 percent. Few believe prices will go back to where they were in early 2006, suggesting that the world must cope with a new reality of more expensive food.

People worldwide are coping in different ways. For the 1 billion living on less than a dollar a day, it is a matter of survival. In a mud hut on the Sahara's edge, Manthita Sou, a 43-year-old widow in the Mauritanian desert village of Maghleg, is confronting wheat prices that are up 67 percent on local markets in the past year. Her solution: stop eating bread. Instead, she has downgraded to cheaper foods, such as sorghum, a dark grain widely consumed by the world's poorest people. But sorghum has jumped 20 percent in the past 12 months. Living on the 50 cents a day she earns weaving textiles to support a family of three, her answer has been to cut out breakfast, drink tea for lunch and ration a small serving of soupy sorghum meal for family dinners. "I don't know how long we can survive like this," she said.

Countries that have driven food demand in recent years are now grappling with the cost of their own success -- rising prices. Although China has tried to calm its people by announcing reserve grain holdings of 30 to 40 percent of annual production, a number that had been a state secret, anxiety is still running high. In the southern province of Guangdong, there are reports of grain hoarding; and in Hong Kong, consumers have stripped store shelves of bags of rice.

Liu Yinhua, a retired factory worker who lives in the port city of Ningbo on China's east coast, said her family of three still eats the same things, including pork ribs, fish and vegetables. But they are eating less of it.

"Almost everything is more expensive now, even normal green vegetables," said Liu, 53. "The level of our quality of life is definitely reduced."

In India, the government recently scrapped all import duties on cooking oils and banned exports of non-basmati rice. As in many parts of the developing world, the impact in India is being felt the most among the urban poor who have fled rural life to live in teeming slums. At a dusty and nearly empty market in one New Delhi neighborhood this week, shopkeeper Manjeet Singh, 52, said people at the market have started hoarding because of fear that rice and oil will run out.

"If one doesn't have enough to fill one's own stomach, then what's the use of an economic boom in exports?" he said, looking sluggish in the scorching afternoon sun. He said his customers were asking for cheaper goods, like groundnut oil instead of soybean oil.

Even wealthy nations are being forced to adjust to a new normal. In Japan, a country with a distinct cultural aversion to cheaper, genetically modified grains, manufacturers are risking public backlash by importing them for use in processed foods for the first time. Inflation in the

15-country zone that uses the euro -- which includes France, Germany, Spain and Italy -- hit 3.6 percent in March, the highest rate since the currency was adopted almost a decade ago and well above the European Central Bank's target of 2.0 percent. Food and oil prices were mostly to blame.

In the United States, experts say consumers are scaling down on quality and scaling up on quantity if it means a better unit price. In the meat aisles of major grocery stores, said Phil Lempert, a supermarket analyst, steaks are giving way to chopped beef and people used to buying fresh blueberries are moving to frozen. Some are even trying to grow their own vegetables.

"A bigger pinch than ever before," said Pat Carroll, a retiree in Congress Heights. "I don't ever remember paying $3 for a loaf of bread."

The root cause of price surges varies from crop to crop. But the crisis is being driven in part by an unprecedented linkage of the food chain.

A big reason for higher wheat prices, for instance, is the multiyear drought in Australia, something that scientists say may become persistent because of global warming. But wheat prices are also rising because U.S. farmers have been planting less of it, or moving wheat to less fertile ground. That is partly because they are planting more corn to capitalize on the biofuel frenzy.

This year, at least a fifth and perhaps a quarter of the U.S. corn crop will be fed to ethanol plants. As food and fuel fuse, it has presented a boon to American farmers after years of stable prices. But it has also helped spark the broader food-price shock.

"If you didn't have ethanol, you would not have the prices we have today," said Bruce Babcock, a professor of economics and the director of the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development at Iowa State University. "It doesn't mean it's the sole driver. Prices would be higher than we saw earlier in this decade because world grain supplies are tighter now than earlier in the decade. But we've introduced a new demand into the market."

In fact, many economists now say food prices should have climbed much higher much earlier. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world seemed to shrink with rapidly opening markets, surging trade and improved communication and transportation technology. Given new market efficiencies and the wide availability of relatively cheap food, the once-common practice of hoarding grains to protect against the kind of shortfall the world is seeing now seemed more and more archaic. Global grain reserves plunged.

Yet there was one big problem. The global food trade never became the kind of well-honed machine that has made the price of manufactured goods such as personal computers and flat-screen TVs increasingly similar worldwide. With food, significant subsidies and other barriers meant to protect farmers -- particularly in Europe, the United States and Japan -- have distorted the real price of food globally, economists say, preventing the market from normal price adjustments as global demand has climbed.

If market forces had played a larger role in food trade, some now argue, the world would have had more time to adjust to more gradually rising prices.

"The international food trade didn't undergo the same kind of liberalization as other trade," said Richard Feltes, senior vice president of MF Global, a futures brokerage. "We can see now that the world has largely failed in its attempt to create an integrated food market."

In recent years, there has been a great push to liberalize food markets worldwide -- part of what is known as the "Doha round" of world trade talks -- but resistance has come from both the developed and developing worlds. Perhaps more than any other sector, nations have a visceral desire to protect their farmers, and thusly, their food supply. The current food crisis is causing advocates on both sides to dig in. Consider, for instance, the French.

The European Union doles out about $41 billion a year in agriculture subsidies, with France getting the biggest share, about $8.2 billion. The 27-nation bloc also has set a target for biofuels to supply 10 percent of transportation fuel needs by 2020 to combat global warming.

The French, whose farmers over the years have become addicted to generous government handouts, argue that agriculture subsidies must be continued and even increased in order to encourage more food production, especially with looming shortages.
Last week, French Agriculture Minister Michel Barnier warned E.U. officials against "too much trust in the free market."
"We must not leave the vital issue of feeding people," he said, "to the mercy of market laws and international speculation."

Staff writers Dan Morgan, Steven Mufson and Jane Black in Washington and correspondents Ariana Eunjung Cha in Beijing, Emily Wax in New Delhi and John Ward Anderson in Paris contributed to this report.
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Die teuren Früchte der Globalisierung

Hunderte Millionen Menschen sind in den vergangenen Jahren dem Hunger entronnen. Dank der Globalisierung. Kein Wunder, dass jetzt die Nahrungsmittel teurer werden. Und schon wieder arme Menschen hungern.

Von Winand von Petersdorff

McDonald's wird dieses Jahr das tausendste Schnellrestaurant in China eröffnen, die Kentucky-Fried-Chicken-Gruppe hat dort schon knapp 2500 Gaststätten. Die amerikanischen Fastfood-Spezialisten kalkulieren, dass sich 500 Millionen Chinesen wenigstens gelegentlich einen Besuch in ihren Niederlassungen leisten können - und wollen. Immer wenn Kentucky Fried Chicken in China eröffnet - und das passiert dort jeden Tag -, müssen acht bis zehn private Schutzleute für Ordnung sorgen, um den Ansturm zu bewältigen.

Warum essen die Chinesen plötzlich so gerne Hühnchen und Hamburger? Die Antwort ist einfach: Es geht ihnen besser. Sie haben mehr Geld als früher, sonst wären die Fastfood-Giganten nicht in ihrem Land. Steigender Wohlstand verändert die Essgewohnheiten. Sonst würden die Chinesen nicht die neuen Gaststätten stürmen. Die Armen der Welt werden weniger, und der Wohlstand der Nationen wächst. Doch seit mehr als zwei Wochen gibt es Hungeralarm. Wie passt das zusammen?

"Hunderttausende werden wieder an Hunger sterben", fürchtet der Chef des Internationalen Währungsfonds, Dominique Strauss-Kahn. Er hält die Krise für mindestens so schlimm wie die Turbulenzen an den Finanzmärkten. Die Bilder der Ausgemergelten, die jetzt um die Welt gehen, scheinen alle Gegner offener Märkte zu bestätigen. "Die Globalisierung zeigt ihre hässliche Fratze", tönt Attac triumphierend.

Aber in Wirklichkeit ist alles mal wieder ein bisschen komplizierter. Es sind gerade die langfristigen Erfolge der Globalisierung in weiten Teilen Asiens, die eine kurzfristige Hungerkrise in anderen Teilen Asiens und Afrikas zur Folge haben. Die gestiegenen Ansprüche der vielen ehemals Armen verteuern weltweit die Nahrung zum Schaden für die immer noch Armen.

1990 verzehrte der durchschnittliche chinesische Stadtbewohner 131 Kilogramm Getreide, in diesem Fall vor allem Reis. 2006 isst der Stadtchinese nur noch 76 Kilogramm Getreide, dafür aber hat er seinen Konsum an Hähnchenfleisch verdreifacht, trinkt viermal so viel Milch und verzehrt deutlich mehr Meeresfrüchte und Gemüse. Ähnlich sieht es in Indien, Brasilien und selbst Nigeria aus. Zusammengenommen leben dort 2,8 Milliarden Menschen. Und diese Menschen wollen mit steigendem Wohlstand anders essen als früher: vor allem mehr und besser. Sie verfügen über eine Nachfragemacht, welche die globale Versorgungslage dramatisch verändert. Selbst Länder, deren Wohlstand noch weit hinter China und Indien zurückliegt, holen nach 30 Jahren Stagnation auf.

Von den 33 am stärksten von Hunger bedrohten Staaten sind in den vergangenen zwei Jahren 22 zwischen 5 und 16 Prozent gewachsen. Dieses Wirtschaftswachstum hat die Nachfrage nach Lebensmitteln beflügelt, sagt Joachim von Braun, Generaldirektor des International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington.

In den ganz armen Ländern stecken Bürger, die zu etwas Geld gekommen sind, ihren bescheidenen Wohlstand zunächst in Lebensmittel. Sie essen anders als die Bürger in Schwellenländern, nicht unbedingt besser. Aber sie haben heute zwei statt früher nur einer Mahlzeit am Tag. Weil die Menschen mehr essen, bauen die Landwirte mehr an. Tatsächlich steigt in den Entwicklungsländern die Produktion von Gemüse, Obst, Fleisch und Milch. Für die Bauern ist das eine gute Nachricht, verspricht sie doch mehr Einkommen. Aber Grundnahrungsmittel wie Reis, Mais, Weizen, Hirse, die wichtig sind für das Überleben der ganz Armen, fehlen. Die Berichte sind alarmierend. 2006 war die Getreideernte so niedrig wie lange nicht mehr: Minus 2,4 Prozent bei steigender Nachfrage nach Getreide. Das Angebot schrumpfte wegen Missernte - Dürre in Australien - und weil einfach weniger Getreide angebaut wurde. Die Bauern versprachen sich bessere Ertragschancen mit Gemüse und zunehmend mit Energiepflanzen.

Warum die Nachfrage nach den Grundnahrungsmitteln wächst, obwohl Chinesen, wie berichtet, deutlich weniger Reis konsumieren, ist auch schnell erklärt: Das Getreide wird verfüttert an Kühe, Schweine und Hühner. All das, was die Wohlhabenderen jetzt essen wollen.

Das hat gravierende Folgen für die Preise. Die Kombination aus Missernten, mehr Kaufkraft und neuen Essgewohnheiten haben die Grundnahrungsmittel extrem verteuert. Für viele Menschen sind sie nicht mehr erschwinglich. Es ist, als ob die Globalisierung ihre schwächsten Kinder frisst.

Aber der neue Hunger in der Welt ist nicht von ewiger Dauer. Es kommt auf die Bauern an. Sie müssen mehr aus ihren Böden herausholen. Dazu brauchen sie Knowhow und Gewinnaussichten. Steigende Chancen auf Gewinn haben schon jetzt dazu geführt, dass die Weizenernten in diesem Jahr einen neuen Rekord erreichen könnten, wenn die Ähren nicht verdorren oder ertrinken.

Das Vorbild liefert die grüne Revolution, jenes Landwirtschaftswunder, das Milliarden Menschen vor dem Hungertod bewahrte. Von 1970 bis 2004 hatten sich die Ernteerträge insgesamt und auch pro Hektar verdoppelt (die global bewirtschaftete Fläche blieb ungefähr gleich). Die Folge waren niedrige Preise und bessere Einkommen für Bauern vor allem in den Erfolgsländern Indonesien, Indien, Thailand oder China.

Der Anteil der Unterernährten an der Weltbevölkerung sank von 30 Prozent Anfang der 70er Jahre auf 15 Prozent um die Jahrtausendwende. Neue Saatgutsorten, Kunstdünger und ausgefeilte Bewässerungsmethoden beflügelten Reis- und Weizenerträge. Indien, das Land der Hungerleider, wurde zum Nahrungsmittelexporteur ebenso wie Thailand.

Fortschritte in der Agrarwissenschaft allein können diesen Erfolg nicht erklären. Die neuen Reis- und Weizensorten hatten vor allem in großen asiatischen Ländern Erfolg, die eine robuste Infrastruktur vorweisen konnten. "In Asien verbanden Straßen das Land mit den Städten, in Afrika gehen die großen Verkehrswege von Minen zu Häfen. Das ist ein Erbe der Kolonialzeit", sagt Agrarexperte Braun.

Dazu kommt, dass sich die grüne Revolution auf die Großsorten der globalen Ernährung stürzte: Reis, Weizen und Mais. Doch in armen afrikanischen Ländern südlich der Sahara spielen Ackerfrüchte wie Sorghum (eine Hirseart), Tef oder andere Hirsesorten eine deutlich größere Rolle. Sie haben den entscheidenden Vorteil, dass sie den regionalen Bedingungen angepasst sind und die wichtigsten Nährstoffe haben. Sie sind deshalb die entscheidenden Lebensmittel für viele Millionen Menschen. Sie haben aber den Nachteil, dass sie schlechte Ernten liefern.

Doch niemand hat gesagt, dass es in der Landwirtschaft keinen Fortschritt gibt. Das Ertragspotential ist längst noch nicht ausgeschöpft. Erntet ein norddeutscher Landwirt zehn Tonnen aus einem Hektar Ackerland, kommt sein Kollege in Afrika auf ein bis zwei Tonnen von der gleichen Fläche. Das liegt daran, dass viele Länder die Agrarforschung zurückgefahren haben: Die Züchtung der Sorten ist längst nicht so fortschrittlich wie bei den Großfrüchten. Außerdem streuen afrikanische Landwirte weniger Dünger. Asien setzt pro Hektar 129 Kilogramm Dünger ein, während in Afrika südlich der Sahara nur elf Kilogramm ausgebracht werden.

Dünger hat sich parallel zu den Energiepreisen aber in den letzten Jahren dramatisch verteuert. Während steigende Preise die Bauern eigentlich ermutigen müssten, mehr aus ihren Böden herauszuholen, trüben die Kosten für Dünger und Pestizide ihre Kalkulation.

Doch der Weg zurück zu einer Landwirtschaft ohne Dünger und Technologie ist eine Illusion, die nur bioromantische Träumer sich leisten können. Naturbeherrschung durch Technik und Ökonomie sind in der Geschichte verantwortlich für steigenden Wohlstand. So auch jetzt in Asien. Vielleicht werden bald Genmais und Genweizen die Preise drücken und den Hunger lindern? Vielleicht wird es attraktiv, neue und billigere Düngemittel anzubieten? Der Einfallsreichtum der Menschen ist bekanntlich groß.

China ist längst in der McWelt angekommen. Wer will schon den ganzen Tag nur von Reis leben?

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