

Can Trade Facilitation Policies Mitigate Food Crises? Evidence from the Kingdom of Jordan

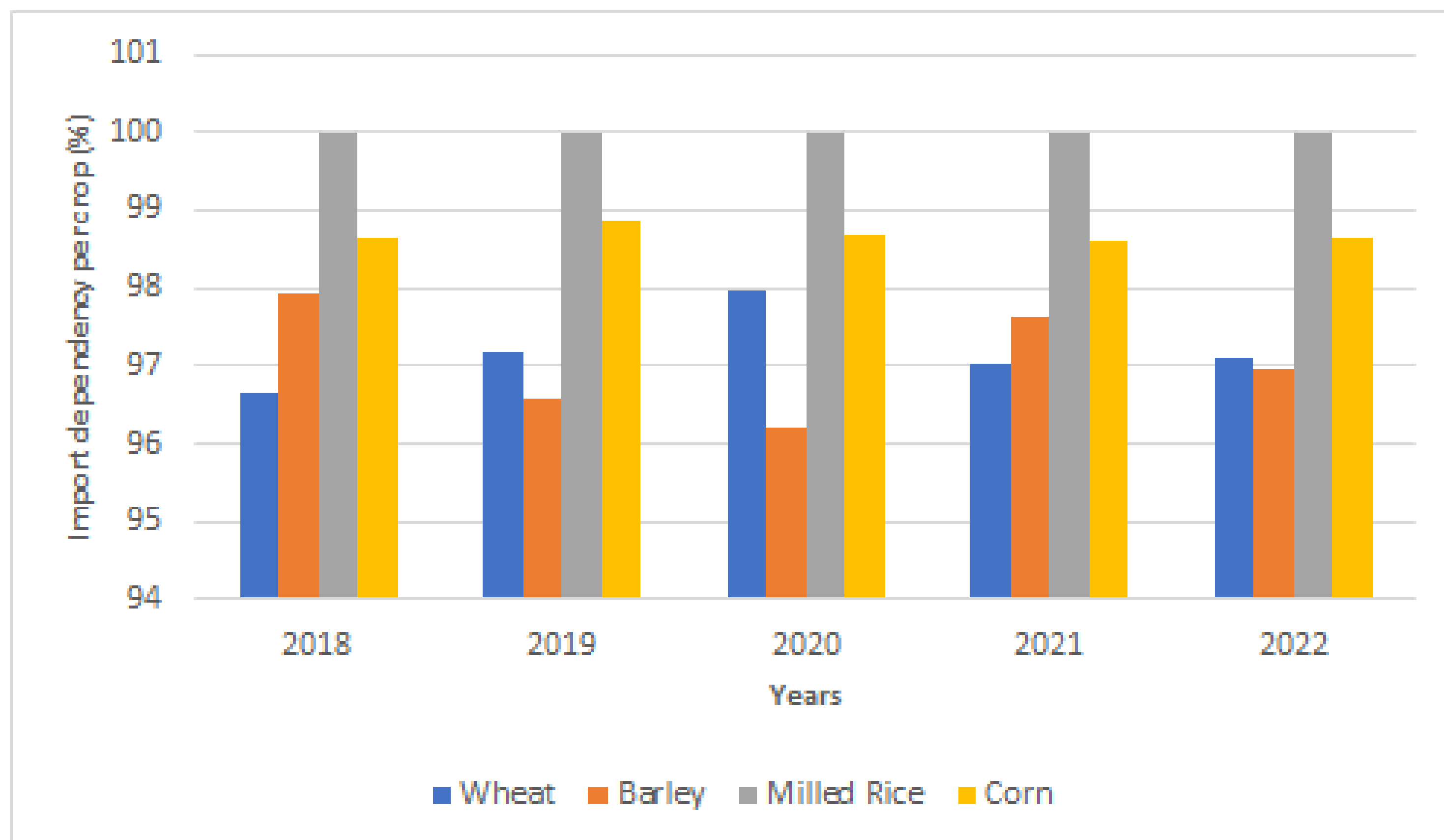


Sara Samir Ashour, PhD Candidate at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

1. Introduction

Jordan ranked the **highest** in the Middle East and North Africa region **with regards to food insecurity and the 5th globally in terms of water stress** (FAO 2022, Binder et al., 2022), which makes it highly dependent on food imports (Figure 1) and thus highly vulnerable to global risks.

Figure 1: Import dependency percentage for food products in Jordan. Source: own calculation based on data from Index Mundi, 2022.



- In food import dependent countries with several trade agreements, **tariff barriers removal might not activate the full potential to contribute to food security and welfare** (Chahir, 2014).
- Trade facilitation, which entails the simplification, modernization and harmonization of export and import processes, can enhance the smooth flow of commodities from food surplus to food deficit countries, especially in times of crises.
- Since 2017, Jordan has taken several strides in implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement successfully.
- Nonetheless, international reports indicate that there is still **room for advancement** especially in **digitalization of sanitary and phytosanitary certificates and exports/imports permits, e-payments, and separation of release from final determination of taxes, duties, fees and charges** (UNTF-Survey, 2023).

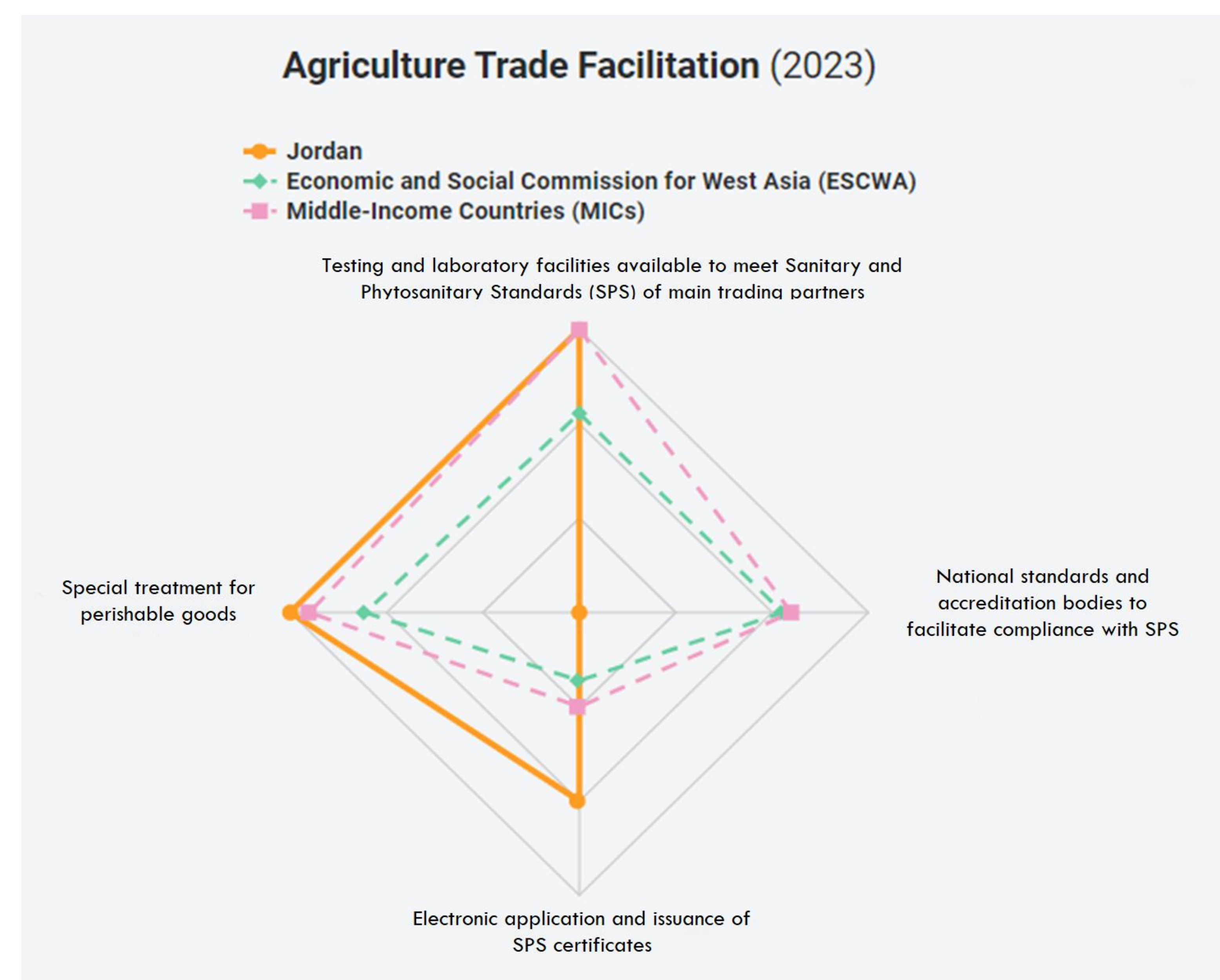
2. Motivation

To test if **trade facilitation policies can help to mitigate future food crises** in import dependent countries such as Jordan.

3. Research Questions

- What is Jordan's current trade facilitation situation with regards to Agri-imports? (Figure 2)
- How has the sector been affected by the latest international crises (Covid-19 – Black Sea conflict)?
- What are the economy wide implications of enhancing trade facilitation policies for agro-industrial imports?

Figure 2: Trade facilitation and paperless trade overview 2023. Source: UNTF-Survey, 2023.



4. Methodology: Mixed Methods Approach

- **Trade facilitation for agri-imports (qualitative):** Semi-structured interviews, Grey literature, trade statistics databases.
- **Implications for the economy (quantitative):** Simulations using a Computable General Equilibrium Model depicting the economy of Jordan

5. Novelty and Research Gap

- Few studies on agricultural trade facilitation in the Arab region using mixed methods.
- Few studies on investigating trade facilitation policies to achieve food security in times of crises.

References



Supervisor:
Prof. Dr. Harald Grethe
grethe@hu-berlin.de

Co-Supervisor:
Dr. Jonas Luckmann
luckmann@hu-berlin.de