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URBAN FOOD SECURITY, RURAL BIAS AND THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

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Abstract

This discussion paper sets out the global, African, and South African contexts within which both urban development and food security agendas in Africa are framed. It argues that the pervasive rural bias and anti-urbanism identified in the international and regional food security agendas in the first decade of the 21st century have persisted into the second. In examining whether the last decade has brought any significant changes to the dominant discourse and its accompanying sidelining of urbanization and urban food security in policy debate and formulation, the authors find that there are promising signs for cracks in the edifice but that rural bias remains the dominant feature of current thinking about food security policies. Although researchers have begun to press for the urban to be included in the food security agenda, and food to be included in the urban agenda, there has been limited policy uptake to date at the international level and very little at the municipal level. If urban food security is addressed in a substantive manner, it will probably be indirectly, through the actions of the influential global nutrition lobby.

Keywords

urban food security, rural bias, urbanization, nutrition

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Introduction

A 2011 review of global food security policy debates in the first decade of the 20th century showed that the "new international food security agenda" was dominated by a pervasive rural bias that focused almost exclusively on rural hunger and increased support of smallholder agriculture (Crush and Frayne 2011). Rural bias could also be seen in the food security programmatic statements of international organizations, inter-governmental agencies, regional bodies such as the African Union, and the food security mitigation plans of individual governments. At the same time, despite mounting evidence of rapid urbanization in the Global South, the "invisible crisis" of food insecurity of urban populations remained a marginal concern at all levels of governance from the global to the local (Crush and Frayne 2010). In part, the invisibility of urban food insecurity was a product of the roadmap laid out in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Battersby 2017).

The MDGs were ill equipped to address the particular challenges of food insecurity in a rapidly urbanizing Africa (Crush and Battersby 2016). Urban poverty reduction was limited to the improvement of slums in the Global South and an arbitrary target of improved conditions for 100-million slum dwellers (Cohen 2014). In reducing the concept of food security to the problem of rural hunger, the MDGs cut short policy debate on urban food and nutrition security and hunger (Fukuda-Parr and Orr 2014, Haddad 2013). Taken separately, the development challenges of urban poverty and food insecurity were inadequately addressed by the MDGs. However, the broader problem was the lack of integrated thinking about these two issues (Battersby 2017). The "siloing" effect of the delineated goals and targets meant that across sectors the big picture of development – including the inter-relatedness of contributing factors of poverty and underdevelopment – was obscured by perverse incentives to reach specific targets (Fukuda-Parr 2014). The effect was to set back the progress on addressing urban food security concerns that had emerged in the 1990s (Maxwell 1999, Ruel and Garrett 1999, Smith 1998).

This paper revisits and updates the arguments of Crush and Frayne (2011) concerning the pervasive rural bias and anti-urbanism in global and regional responses to the challenge of urban household food insecurity. The national context of South Africa is then explored because South Africa is the most urbanized country in Sub-Saharan Africa and yet, even here, a coherent urban food security policy is absent. The discussion paper examines whether the last decade has brought any significant changes to the dominant discourse and its accompanying sidelining of urbanization and urban food security in policy debate and formulation. We argue that there are promising signs for cracks in the edifice but that rural bias remains the dominant feature of current thinking about food security policies. Although researchers have begun to press for the urban to be included in the food security agenda, and food to be included in the urban agenda, there has been limited policy uptake to date at the international level and very little at the municipal level.

Locating the Urban in the Food Security Agenda

The rural and smallholder agriculture bias which characterized much global thinking about food security in the first decade of the 21st century has persisted into the second. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have an enhanced focus on food security (Goal 2) and a new focus on sustainable urbanization (Goal 11) (SDKP 2017). The objective of Goal 2 is to "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture." This brings food security into focus as its own goal, rather than as a subset of the poverty goal as in the MDGs. The first target of Goal 2 is "by 2030, (to) end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round." Even though the target suggests increasing awareness of food security in an urbanizing global context, the overall set of targets focuses on production and sustainable agriculture. As Battersby notes (2017: 122), "SDG 2 continues to frame the food problem as one of

scarcity informed by the knowledge effect of the MDGs." That is to say, the limited view of food security in the MDGs is amplified in the SDGs.

One notable innovation in the SDGs is a stronger emphasis on inter-linkages among development goals and targets, which are connected under the umbrella concept of sustainability. This emphasis has achieved some recognition by the influential Committee on World Food Security (CFS). For example, CFS (2015: 8) quotes Mary Robinson's speech on engaging with the 2030 SDG Agenda in which she noted that "critical to success will be strategies that cut across sectors and adopt people-centred interdisciplinary approaches." While the proposed shift to cross-sectoral approaches to food security holds promise for an urban food security agenda, the structure of the goals and targets does little to guarantee such an outcome. While many advocated for a more systemic integration of the goals and targets (Weitz et al 2014), ultimately the MDG structure was repeated with 17 SDGs and 169 targets (SDKP 2017). As a result, it is likely that "business as usual" will prevail and deeply interconnected issues like urbanization and food security will continue to be "siloed" in global development discourse and practice (Battersby 2017).

The SDGs and related programmatic documents on how to achieve food security reveals a continuing imbalance among the four pillars of food security, with the emphasis still overwhelmingly on food production. An urban-centred lens on food security suggests that the other major dimensions of food security (access, utilization, stability and safety) are critically important in the context of rapid urbanization. However, food security programming at the global, regional and national scales continues to be based on a narrow conceptualization of food security that is poorly equipped to address the growing need for urban solutions. Even when the broad definition of food security is cited, food security is implicitly reduced to production and rural development. Urbanization is portrayed as threatening food security, cities are reduced to "consumer markets," and urbanites are too often assumed to be privileged groups exploiting the work of farmers. In many quarters, urbanization is even perceived as a threat – leading to more demands on resources, more inequality and conflict, and even the erosion of cultures and morality.

New research perspectives are challenging the traditional dichotomies of urban-consumer, rural-producer (Lerner and Eakin 2010). As Tacoli and Vorley (2015: 1) note, "our food security narratives are outdated: urban dwellers are not all 'over-consumers'; rural communities are not exclusively producers." It is this lack of complexity – an apparently under-appreciation of geographical nuance – in the debates over the global food security agenda that raises concern about the suitability of current policies for the real challenges facing Africa in the coming decades. The world in 2030 will be much more urbanized than it is in 2017 and there will be many contentious policy decisions required to ensure that cities evolve as inclusive, sustainable and food-secure spaces.

A recent publication entitled "Toward a Food Secure Future" typifies a conservative view of Africa's shifting demographics and leads to policy prescriptions that are inherently anti-urban (Conceicao et al 2016). Using production data that dates back several decades, and pointing to current labour market structures where the majority of African workers are employed in agriculture, the authors advocate policies that focus on small-scale farming to reduce poverty and food insecurity. This policy has the supposed "benefit" of reducing rural to urban migration. The analysis ignores the processes of social change as well as the inevitability of human migration under conditions of social, economic, and environmental change. The rural bias inherent in such advocacy statements continues to determine the priorities of the international food security agenda, as evidenced by the priorities of influential groupings such as the FAO, IFAD, the WFP and the CFS.

Rural bias is particularly evident in the imagery and content of the annual *State of Food Insecurity* (SOFI) and *State of Food and Agriculture* (SOFA) reports of the FAO, WFP and IFAD. Tellingly, the covers of all three SOFI and four SOFA reports published between 2013 and 2016 feature images of small

rural farms and farmers. SOFA 2014 on "Innovation in Family Farming" describes family farms as "stewards of the world's agricultural resources" and claims that they are the source of more than 80% of the world's food supply. Innovation in small farm agricultural practices will "lift farmers out of poverty and help the world achieve food security and sustainable agriculture" (FAO 2014: 93). SOFA 2015 focuses on social protection mechanisms for rural populations, asserting that "poor and food-insecure families depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihoods, and make up a large proportion of the beneficiaries of social protection programmes" (FAO 2015: xvi). The report maintains that "extreme poverty is disproportionately concentrated in rural areas" and that 52% of the rural population in Sub-Saharan Africa lives in extreme poverty and food insecurity. The 29% of urban dwellers identified by the report as living in extreme poverty are systematically ignored (FAO 2015: 9). SOFA 2016 addresses the impact of climate change on food security, again with a particular emphasis on production by smallholder farmers. The complex effects of climate change on urban food security are not addressed (Frayne et al 2012).

The SOFI reports display a broader appreciation of the complexity of food security but are ultimately unable to escape the straitjacket of rural bias. SOFI 2013 provides a useful summary of different metrics for the analysis of all four dimensions of food security but focuses only on regional and national variations in food security, neglecting finer intra-national scales of analysis (FAO/IFAD/WFP 2013). SOFI 2014 on "Strengthening the Enabling Environment for Food Security and Nutrition" calls for food security and nutrition to be "at the top of the political agenda and creating an enabling environment for improving food security and nutrition through adequate investments, better policies, legal frameworks, stakeholder participation and a strong evidence base" (FAO/IFAD/WFP 2014). The call for national food security policies is certainly welcome, though the concrete suggestions are again compromised by rural bias. For example, SOFI 2014 suggests a policy environment that combines "immediate hunger relief interventions with long-term actions for sustainable growth, especially in agriculture and the rural economy" (FAO/IFAD/WFP 2014: 18). SOFI 2015 charts regional shifts and variations in hunger and devotes a whole section to "the contribution of family farming and smallholder agriculture to food security and nutrition." The report asserts that "to accelerate progress in improving access to food by the poor, lagging regions, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, will increasingly have to transform their agricultural policies to significantly improve agricultural productivity and increase the quantity of food supplied by family farmers" (FAO/IFAD/WFP 2015: 33).

The outputs of the CFS are also representative of the policy priorities of the current international food security agenda. The *Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition*, for example, provides much evidence of rural bias (CFS 2016). "Urbanisation and rural-urban migration" are asserted to be a "cause" of hunger and malnutrition (CFS 2016: 9) without any further explanation or evidence of this supposed causal relationship. The objective of the strategic framework may be to address the food security concerns of the rural poor, but recent migrants and long-time urban residents are missing from the picture or presumed to be food secure. A later section of the Global Framework on "issues requiring further attention," suggests that urbanization can be countered by "boost(ing) rural development to strengthen food security in the context of rural-urban migration" (CFS 2016: 67). The implication is that production is threatened by the loss of rural agricultural labour through migration from rural to urban areas.

The Global Framework falls short of addressing the role of cities and other sub-national entities in ensuring food security and nutrition. The framework is based on the "Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security" that "provide a powerful strategic underpinning for coordinated action by all stakeholders at global, regional, and country level" (CFS 2016: 12). The "national" level is equated to the local scale, even in large countries where megacities include millions of residents. The Global Framework mentions the sub-national scale only under recommendations at country level to "coordinate strategies and actions with local levels

of government" (CFS 2016: 54). The conflation of "national" with "local" is a very different orientation than in the urban agenda where the role of subnational governments is well-recognized. Overall, the international food security agenda continues to do a poor job of conceptualizing cities and rural-urban dynamics.

The focus on agriculture in food security policy discourses has remained even more pronounced in Africa due to the enduring perception of African societies as predominantly rural and the relatively high percentage of employment and GDP in the agricultural sectors of African countries. The FAO's (2017a) optimistic prognosis on positive trends in food security and agriculture calls on governments to maintain the momentum through greater support for smallholder agriculture. The conflation of food security with agricultural production is evident throughout the report. The AU's (2017) Food Security Priority also re-affirms rural smallholder production as key to ending food insecurity in Africa:

> *The continent can extricate itself from the vicious cycles of drought, hunger and famine by putting emphasis on the right policies to improve productivity of smallholders, more effective nutrition policies, targeting especially children, building households' ability to cope with shocks, empowering women, the youth and persons with disabilities and accelerating rural infrastructure and value addition.*

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) was an initiative by the African Union and NEPAD and has formed the core of the regional governance agenda for food security since 2004. CAADP apparently "reflects African governments' recognition of agriculture as central for the alleviation of poverty and hunger" (UN 2017a). In 2014, the Malabo Declaration marked the 10th anniversary of the CAADP and involved a pledge by African Heads of State and Government to "end hunger by 2025 by at least doubling current agricultural productivity levels, reducing postharvest losses and waste by at least half the current level, and reducing stunting to 10 percent and underweight to 5 percent" (FAO 2017b: 11).

The Malabo Declaration is aligned with the AU's Agenda 2063, which sets out a vision for *The Africa We Want* (AU 2015). In the first 10-year implementation plan, Aspiration 1 includes "a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development." There are several targets related to ending hunger including an 80% decrease in the incidence of hunger and malnutrition; a 50% reduction in "all forms of malnutrition, maternal, child and neonatal mortalities;" and GDP growth that will "provide the resources and the medium for eliminating poverty and hunger" (AU 2015: 43-44). The strategies for achieving these goals include a mix of agricultural and macro-economic strategies. Agricultural strategies include the implementation of CAADP, strategies that will boost the productivity of rural households, and the promotion of high nutrition and drought resistant crops. These are blended with strategies aimed at making food more accessible and affordable (through strengthening markets, food trade, and strategic food reserves), and more nutritious. These policies have the potential to benefit people in both urban and rural areas. However, the rural bias and isolation of food security challenges from urbanization are evident in the Declaration.

The national scale of analysis reveals the challenge of implementing a food security agenda that can respond to the complexity of the food system when viewed through an urban lens. South Africa is one of Africa's most urbanized societies, with about two-thirds of its population living in urban areas. The Government of South Africa adopted the Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS) in 2002 in response to the commitment made at the 1996 World Food Summit and the need to achieve the MDGs. The IFSS was guided by seven "strategic objectives" (DAFF 2002: 6): (1) increase household food production and trading; (2) improve income generation and job creation opportunities; (3) improve nutrition and food safety; (4) increase safety nets and food emergency management systems; (5) improve analysis and information

management system; (6) provide capacity building; and (7) hold stakeholder dialogue. These seven objectives went beyond the narrow view of food security as a problem of insufficient food supply. Drimie and Ruysenaar (2010: 323-4) argue that the strategy itself appropriately captured the integrated and multi-sectorial nature of food security: "in many ways, the approach built on an international best practice and adequately problematised the challenge of food insecurity in the country." However well formulated, the policy was insufficiently implemented because it was housed within the Department of Agriculture where it was subjected to rural bias and an oversimplification of the problem as one of food supply. Drimie and Ruysenaar (2010) argue further that the way the policy was implemented cannot be understood without reference to South Africa's political economy. The institutional culture of the Department of Agriculture, particularly the apartheid legacy of its focus on the white commercial farming sector and the constitutional division of roles across national and provincial levels of government, meant that the implementation of the policy emphasized production and supply. This was a missed opportunity to implement a more holistic policy that could have better addressed urban food security.

The failure of the IFSS implementation process to grapple with food security beyond concerns about food production represents a failure by one of the most economically advanced countries on the continent to overcome the narrow view of food security. By contrast, the recent National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security (currently under review by the Government of South Africa) includes only four points in its strategy: (1) better targeting of public spending on social programmes; (2) increased food production and distribution; (3) support for community-based food production initiatives, and (4) "the strategic use of market interventions and trade measures which will promote food security" (DOA 2014: 6). It is a source of concern that policy makers appear to be narrowing their view of food security even as the country continues to urbanize at a rapid rate and the structural inequality of these urban economies continues to weigh down social, political, and economic progress.

Locating Food in the Urban Agenda

The obstacles to creating policies that can address the challenge of urban food security are not limited to anti-urban biases of the food security agenda. There is a complementary absence of food security in discourses and development interventions in the urban agenda. The new urban SDG – Goal 11 – promisingly aims to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (SDKP 2017). However, food is altogether absent from the urban SDG, which includes 10 targets related to housing, transportation, participatory planning, disaster risk reduction, and other issues that may be related to food but do not specifically serve the food security agenda in cities. The effect of defining a set of urban issues of concern is to define other issues, such as food security, as not inherently urban. Battersby (2017: 124) notes that: "ironically, having a specifically urban goal may have led to a lack of engagement [with SDG 2]." And yet, by 2030 the global population will be even more urbanised and the need for a global food agenda that recognises the needs of poor urban consumers will be even more urgent (Crush 2016).

The global picture of urbanization presented by UNHABITAT appears to be as unengaged with food security as the international food security agenda is with the urban. UNHABITAT has traditionally avoided inclusion of urban food issues in its programming priorities. Most recently, the 2015 African Urban Agenda document prepared for HABITAT III discussions omits any reference to food security (UNHABITAT 2015). The continuing omission of food from UNHABITAT's brief is indicative of the separation of food security from the urban agenda at the global and continental levels. The official African regional declaration for HABITAT III did not explicitly name food as an urban challenge or development priority, even though issues like housing and water were mentioned (UN 2016). The declaration is explicitly "guided by the African Union's Agenda 2063" (UN 2016: 2). The urban vision in Agenda 2063

does not make reference to food or food systems (AU 2015).

The 2016 *World Cities Report* potentially signifies a new UNHABITAT sensitivity when it notes that a "shift towards an increasingly urbanised world constitutes a force which can be harnessed for a more sustainable development trajectory. This dramatic shift towards urban life has profound implications for energy consumption, politics, food security [emphasis added] and human progress" (Moreno et al 2016: 29). Yet, the report then goes on to mention food and food security primarily in terms of food production, for example in the effect of urban sprawl on the loss of farmland (Moreno et al 2016: 51, 71, 129), the effects of climate change on agriculture and hence the urban food supply (Moreno et al 2016: 181), and the potential for global food security to benefit from biodiversity in cities (Moreno et al 2016: 107). The conventional framing of food security as a non-urban issue is evident in the statement that "even *seemingly unrelated issues such as food security* [emphasis added] and rural water supplies are closely tied to the economic growth and prosperity of cities" (Moreno et al 2016: 152).

The New Urban Agenda (NUA), accepted at the HABITAT III conference in 2016, is the focal point of the global urban agenda until 2036 (UNHABITAT 2017). HABITAT III included many municipal and civil society representatives and, as a result, the NUA places more emphasis on subnational actors than the SDGs (Parnell 2016). It also strikes an optimistic tone about the potential for sustainable cities to optimize the benefits of new technologies and models of inclusive governance for the conservation of natural resources, the preservation of eco-systems and the promotion of equitable growth. Although there was some resistance to including food security in the NUA, sustained lobbying by various non-governmental agencies saw it named in 12 of the 175 articles of the document. In most cases, food or food and nutrition security are simply included in lists of desirable public goods, services and outcomes. One section stands out for advocating a broader focus on urban food security (UNHABITAT 2017: 39):

> *We will promote the integration of food security and the nutritional needs of urban residents, particularly the urban poor, in urban and territorial planning, in order to end hunger and malnutrition. We will promote coordination of sustainable food security and agriculture policies across urban, peri-urban and rural areas to facilitate the production, storage, transport and marketing of food to consumers in adequate and affordable ways in order to reduce food losses and prevent and reuse food waste. We will further promote the coordination of food policies with energy, water, health, transport and waste policies, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, reduce the use of hazardous chemicals and implement other policies in urban areas to maximize efficiencies and minimize waste.*

While a focus on promoting the "integration" and "needs of urban residents" is promising, the policy solution primarily ties food security to production and the reduction of food waste rather than to the full spectrum of actions that would promote food-secure cities.

In preparation for the national implementation of the NUA, the Government of South Africa prepared a national report on urban policies (DHS 2013) that aligns with the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) (COGTA 2016). These documents frame the national urban agenda and illustrate the rural bias even within the urban agenda where food security is mentioned. Food is couched in terms of production in both documents, and the more pressing issues of access to food and nutrition and rising obesity rates within the rapidly changing food system are treated as relatively marginal issues. The IUDF highlights urban-rural interdependency and the observation that urban residents rely on rural areas to supply their food (COGTA 2016: 28). This dichotomous view of urban-consumer/rural-producer is the foundation for the reduction of food-related issues in the IUDF to two problems: (1) the prevention of urban sprawl on land needed to produce food, and (2) the development of transportation infrastructure to "link local farmers to food processing industries" (notably not tied to food security but rather the growth of the agri-food industry) (COGTA 2016: 73). In the concluding

section of the report, the authors note that urban authorities "*should* accept some responsibility for supporting surrounding rural areas that they rely on for food" (COGTA 2016: 90, emphasis added). This directive implies that urbanites take rural areas for granted, do not "support" rural areas (without explaining what this support might look like), and conveys a moralizing anti-urban tone.

A range of non-governmental organizations and research organizations have continued to advocate productionist solutions to household food insecurity in the form of urban agriculture (Lee-Smith 2010, Redwood 2009). The IUFD makes little mention of urban agriculture, except as a type of "community based enterprise" that should be supported (COGTA 2016: 89). The NUA Report, which also emphasizes rural-urban linkages, goes much further in recommending a national policy for urban agriculture and asserting that urban agriculture "must also become part of the development strategy of every urban and peri-urban centre in South Africa" (DHS 2013: 33). The section on "enhancing urban and peri-urban food production" argues that it is "becoming an increasingly acceptable, affordable, and effective tool for sustainable urbanisation" (DHS 2013: 27). Battersby et al (2015: 2) argue that in South Africa, "the promotion of urban agriculture has been the major food security intervention at the urban scale. It has consistently been national government's lens for engaging the urban food security challenge." However, as a response to urban food insecurity, urban agriculture "does not provide an adequate response to the urban challenge. Expecting the urban poor, who have the least access to the resources (money, land, tools, seeds, knowledge, equipment) necessary to establish successful agricultural ventures, to "grow their own" in order to lift themselves out of poverty, "fails to recognise the massive barriers constraining urban agriculture in South African cities" (Battersby et al 2015: 2). Similar arguments have been made for East Africa where urban agriculture has been seen as the primary policy response to food insecurity (Brown 2015). The evidence-based critique of urban agriculture has been replicated in other Southern African countries and in other parts of Africa and the Global South (Badami and Ramankutty 2015, Crush et al 2011, Frayne et al 2016; Warren et al 2015, Zezza and Tasciotti 2010). Urban agriculture can be beneficial, but there is little evidence that it is effective in targeting the needs of the most vulnerable urban residents.

While the research on urban food security in Africa continues to accumulate through the work of the African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN), Hungry Cities Partnership (HCP), the Consuming Urban Poverty (CUP) project and others, there is little evidence that this body of work is shifting the policy priorities of the African regional and national food security and urban development agendas. However, there are signs that food could become more prominent within an African urban and food security agenda over the next decade through a growing policy emphasis on nutrition issues. Nutrition highlights the food security pillar of utilization and nutritionists have long argued that the MDG focus on undernutrition and hunger understated the importance of other kinds of food insecurity, such as micronutrient deficiencies and the burden of overnutrition (Haddad, 2013). Nutrition has begun to make an increasingly important contribution to the global food agenda (Haddad et al 2015, Global Panel 2016, FAO/IFAD/WFP 2015). The integration of the African Regional Nutrition Strategy in the AU Agenda 2063 is further evidence of the increasing prominence of nutrition (AU 2017). These developments reinforce the argument that food security is a multi-sectoral problem that is far more complicated than simply growing more food. On the other hand, much of the nutritionist agenda does still tend to be production-focused, for example in advocating for nutrition-sensitive agriculture, with less attention paid to nutrition needs in cities (Jaenicke and Virchow 2013).

Nutrition narratives are increasingly linked to urbanization through concerns about the double burden of nutrition with rising obesity rates and consequential rises in non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. The High Level Panel of Experts for the CFS starkly stated in the first "critical and emerging issues" paper that "urbanisation leads to obesogenic diets and behaviours" because of household income growth and

the increased consumption of animal-sourced food (CFS 2017: 7). Such narratives risk oversimplification of the causal connections between urbanization and changing diets because urban food systems are not only shaped by consumer demand but also by the food systems that supply certain foods to the cities and other aspects of urban culture that shape certain preferences (Crush and Battersby 2016, Tacoli and Vorley 2015, Bloem and de Pee 2017). Obesity in urban areas is found among low-income and high-income communities (Battersby 2017). The emerging health crisis of malnutrition is embedded across environmental, economic, and cultural dynamics and cannot be addressed using a non-dynamic concept of urbanization.

Other examples of an emerging policy awareness of the multi-faceted challenges of urbanization for food and nutrition security can be found in recent contributions from the World Bank, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. The World Bank's 2017 report on African cities notes the effects of high food prices in cities: "City dwellers pay around 35 percent more for food in Africa than in low-income and middle-income countries elsewhere: a premium that looms larger given the high share of African household incomes that goes to food" (Lall et al 2017). The report is primarily concerned with the negative impact on economic development of high urban food costs, but it is an important contribution to regional debates that tend to overlook the ramifications of a broken food system. The World Bank's decade-long obsession with smallholder agriculture may also shift in future as its Food and Agriculture Global Practice division is currently (mid-2017) preparing a scoping report on *Food Systems for an Urbanizing World* as the first step in deciding how the Bank can "advance a transformative agenda in support of urban food systems" (World Bank 2017). After years of focusing on rural food insecurity, IFPRI's latest *Global Food Policy Report* for 2017 notes that "rapid urbanisation, particularly in developing countries, is a critical ongoing trend shaping food security and nutrition that will continue in 2017 and beyond" (IFPRI 2017: 9). The report itself explores the current state of knowledge on a range of issues relating to food security in the cities and could serve as a flagship for a new policy agenda at the international, regional, national, and municipal levels. Finally, the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is attempting to place urban food issues on the municipal policy agenda. The Pact began with European cities and now includes international representation and 21 African cities out of 144 signatory cities (MUFPP 2017).

Conclusion

In contrast to some highly urbanized countries and major cities in Latin America, there is little awareness of the importance of crafting policy responses for managing and mitigating the growing crisis of urban food insecurity in Africa (Haysom 2015). Those countries that have formulated national food and nutrition security plans (such as Kenya, South Africa and Uganda) fail to recognize the magnitude of the challenge, so caught up are they in viewing food security as an agricultural and rural development challenge. At city level, there are few, if any, examples of coherent policy responses to the management of urban food systems in the interests of the poor and food insecure. Cities such as Cape Town, South Africa, that have initiated a process to develop a food security strategy have then abandoned the effort (Battersby et al 2014, Haysom et al 2017). A possible alternative route would see the mainstreaming of food security into national and local urban development planning and governance. Despite the ubiquity of food in African cities, food security is notable for its absence from local and national urban development agendas (Brown 2015, Haysom 2015, Smit 2016).

In this paper, we have examined the global, African, and South African contexts within which both urban development and food security agendas in Africa are framed. We argue that the pervasive rural bias and anti-urbanism identified in the international and regional food security agendas in the first decade of the 21st century have persisted into the second. The SDGs, like the MDGs before them, provide few grounds for optimism going forward

and nor do the priorities of UN agencies such as the FAO, IFAD and the WFP or the Committee on World Food Security. If urban food security is addressed in a substantive manner, it will probably be indirectly, through the actions of the influential global nutrition lobby. Despite the promise of the New Urban Agenda, there are grounds for caution about its ability to seriously and systematically formulate and promote a coherent set of policy interventions that reach much beyond the tired mantra of urban agriculture. That said, continued research, advocacy efforts such as the recent Bellagio Communique (ACC 2017), and initiatives to put food onto urban policy agendas at the local level should continue in order to lay the foundations for innovative and rights-regarding policy responses to the time when Africa's urban marginalized and food insecure force themselves onto the governance agenda.

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