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Research paper

Diagnosing integrated food security strategies

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ABSTRACT

The global food price crises of 2007–8 and 2010 and subsequent policy debates have led to increased recognition that the drivers of food insecurity and associated policies transcend the boundaries of traditional governmental sectors and jurisdictions. Building on this insight, many governments of countries facing food insecurity have developed, or are in the progress of developing, integrated food security strategies. However, in spite of their recent popularity, to date little is known about the properties and outcomes of these strategies. This paper aims to help overcoming this gap by proposing a way of diagnosing the expected variety of integrated food security strategies and associated outcomes. Three diagnostic steps are put forward, each of which is linked to a specific theoretical perspective from the Public Policy literature. The first step concerns diagnosing the variety of IFSSs and is referred to as *descriptive* diagnostics. This type of diagnostics is suggested to be performed by using a policy integration perspective. The second step involves diagnosing what *causes* variety and change. This step is named *explanatory* diagnostics and revolves around what ‘mechanisms’ explain (dis)integration. The third diagnostic step focuses on diagnosing the outcomes of IFSSs and is referred to as *evaluatory* diagnostics. For this type of diagnostics a policy success and failure perspective is proposed. The applicability of these diagnostic steps and associated theories is illustrated through the case of South Africa’s Integrated Food Security Strategy. The paper ends with a discussion of promising methodological approaches and with raising some hypotheses and expectations about performing these types of diagnostics in a Sub-Saharan African context.

1. Introduction

Recent years have witnessed increased recognition of the cross-cutting nature of food (in)security¹ among academics, policymakers, and other stakeholders. The world food price crises of 2007–8 and 2010 showed that states of food insecurity are affected by a broad range of determinants, including changing diets, yield gaps, effects of climate change, poor governance, social inequality, the functioning of the global trade system, biofuels production, and financial speculation (Headey and Fan, 2008; High Level Panel of Experts, 2011; Tadesse et al., 2014); many of which had been insufficiently appreciated in both the scholarly literature and the steering efforts of governments and international organizations. This range of factors makes clear that food insecurity, as a problem that policymakers need to engage with, transcends the boundaries of ‘traditional’ sectors, levels, and arenas of government (Misselhorn et al., 2012; Qureshi et al., 2015; von Braun and Birner, 2016).

Following on this recognition, food security commentators have propagated governance approaches that put greater emphasis on co-ordination, policy integration, or holism (Chen et al., 2016; Lang et al., 2009; Maxwell et al., 2010). The core assumption lying underneath

such calls is that concerted efforts across jurisdictions will enhance the coherence and consistency of policy goals and instruments, eventually effectuating in better targeted food security interventions. For that purpose, many governments of countries facing severe food insecurity have recently developed, or are in the progress of developing, *integrated food (and/or nutrition) security strategies* (IFSSs), particularly also in Sub-Saharan Africa (Table 1). Integrated food security strategies are explicit governmental attempts to align or even fundamentally redesign goals, instruments, and capacities (cf. Rayner and Howlett, 2009), with the purpose of achieving the four food security dimensions of availability, access, utilization, and stability. As such, these strategies can be considered as ambitious and potentially far-reaching attempts to realize concerted action across governmental levels and sectors (e.g., agricultural, public health, trade, environmental, social and economic policy). Although many of these strategies have been developed in reaction to the food price crises and are thus fairly new, some older examples that have already attracted considerable scholarly interest exist. Two examples of the latter are Brazil’s ‘Fome Zero’ program (Hall, 2006; Rocha, 2009) and South Africa’s Integrated Food Security Strategy (Drimie and Ruysenaar, 2010; Hendriks, 2014; Pereira and Ruysenaar, 2012). Many of the more recent strategies in Sub-Saharan

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¹ In this paper, references to ‘food (in)security’ also include concerns about *nutrition (security)*, which is considered a key dimension of food security.

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Table 1
Overview of integrated food and/or nutrition security strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa.²

Country	Strategy	Years	Country	Strategy	Years
Angola	National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy	2009–2013	Madagascar	Plan National d'Action pour la Nutrition	2012–2015
Benin	Plan Stratégique de Développement de l'Alimentation et de la Nutrition	2009-?	Malawi	Food Security Action Plan	2008–2013
Botswana	?		Mali	Programme national de sécurité alimentaire; Politique Nationale de Nutrition	2006–2015; 2012–2021
Burkina Faso	Politique Nationale de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle	2013-	Mauritania	Stratégie Nationale de Sécurité Alimentaire pour la Mauritanie; Plan d'Action Intersectoriel de Nutrition	2012-?; 2012–2015
Burundi	Programme national de sécurité alimentaire; Multi-sectoral Food and Nutritional Security Strategic Plan	2009–2015; 2014–2017	Mauritius	Food Security Plan	2008–2013
Cameroon	Politique et Programme Nationale d'Alimentation et de Nutrition	2007–2011	Mozambique	Multisectoral plan for chronic malnutrition reduction; Food Security and Nutrition Strategy	2011–2020; 2007–2012
Cape Verde	Estratégia Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional	2015–2020	Namibia	National Food and Nutrition Policy; Strategic Plan for Nutrition	1995-?; 2012–2015
Central African Republic	Programme national d'investissement agricole, de sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle; Politique Nationale de Nutrition de la République Centrafricaine	2013–2018; 2013-?	Niger	Plan National D'Action Pour La Nutrition	2007–2015
Chad	Programme National de Sécurité Alimentaire	2013–2020	Nigeria	National agriculture and food security strategy; National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition	2010–2020; 2014–2019
Comoros	?		Rwanda	National Food and Nutrition Policy	2013–2018
Congo	Cadre Stratégique de Lutte Contre la Malnutrition au Congo horizon 2025	2015–2025	São Tomé and Príncipe	Programme National de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle	2012-
Côte d'Ivoire	Plan national de nutrition; Programme National de Sécurité Alimentaire et de Nutrition	2016–2020; 2009-?	Senegal	Plan de Réponse à l'Insécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle	2014-
Djibouti	Programme national de sécurité alimentaire	2012–2017	Seychelles	National Food Security Strategy	2012–2015 (?)
DR Congo	Programme National de Sécurité Alimentaire	2010-?	Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone National Food and Nutrition Security Policy	2012–2016
Equatorial Guinea	?		Somalia	Somali Nutrition Strategy	2011–2013
Eritrea	Eritrea Food Security Strategy; National Nutrition Strategy	2004-?; 2007–2011	South Africa	National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security for South Africa	2013-?
Ethiopia	National Nutrition Programme; Food Security Program	2013–2015;?	South Sudan	?	
Gabon	Plan national d'investissement agricole, de sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle	Already adopted?	Sudan	National Nutrition Policy and Key Strategies	2009-?
Gambia	National Food and Nutritional Security Programme	2011–2015	Swaziland	National Food and Nutrition Policy	2009 (adopted?)
Ghana	Naitonal Nutrition Policy	2014–2017	Tanzania	Tanzania Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan	2011–2021
Guinea	Politique Nationale d'Alimentation – Nutrition	2005–2015	Togo	Programme National d'Investissement Agricole et la Sécurité Alimentaire; Plan Stratégique National pour l'Alimentation et la Nutrition	2011–2016; 2012–2016
Guinea-Bissau	Plano Estratégico de Nutrição	2015–2019	Uganda	Food and Nutrition Policy; Ugandan Nutrition Action Plan	2003-?; 2011–2016
Kenya	National Food and Nutrition Security Policy	2011-?	Zambia	National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan for Zambia	2011–2015
Lesotho	National Action Plan for Food Security	2007–2017	Zimbabwe	National Nutrition Strategy; Food and Nutrition Security Policy in the Context of Economic Growth and Development	2014–2018; 2012-? (adopted?)
Liberia	National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy	2008-?			

Africa (SSA) have been developed in close collaboration with international donors and think tanks, most notably the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Scaling Up Nutrition movement

²This overview was composed in Autumn 2016 through an extensive Google search and by consulting the WHO web page: <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/policies/summary>. NB: I do not claim to be comprehensive; the table should be read as an exploratory overview. For every country, the most recent strategy/-ies that were found are presented.

(SUN), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Given the involvement of these various international actors, the different food security contexts countries face, and differences in national governance systems and traditions, one would expect variation in the design as well as outcomes of IFSSs. However, in spite of their increasing popularity and associated high expectations, to date only few scholarly attempts to study these strategies and their outcomes have been undertaken. In addition, of the studies that *have* been conducted, various restrict their analysis to changes in eventual food security or

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