

Review paper**THE UPSURGING INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
OF FOOD SECURITY AND NIGERIA'S OIL
MONOMANIA: METHODOLOGY FOR
CHANGE****Abstract**

Food security has assumed a prominent role in international politics not only for traditional state actors but also of giant multinationals ranging from large scale Western farming, agro-allied corporations to pharmaceuticals and global food supply and retail channels. This study seeks to examine Nigeria's oil dependency and its negative effects on food security. Data were generated using secondary sources. The paper argues that the continuous reliance of Nigeria on oil is largely associated with increased poverty rate resulting from boom burst cycle which accompanies it. Consequently, amidst plenty, a high percentage of people living in oil exporting countries tend to remain poor. The paper recommends, among others, that oil dependent countries like Nigeria should invest large oil proceeds to other sectors of the economy like agriculture, human resource training and development, and entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Oil Monomania, Food Security, Multinational Corporations, Agriculture.

Introduction

Food insecurity is at the intersection of many disciplines, and the factors perpetuating the crisis are largely diverse – population, social inequalities, nutrition and health, power monopolies in the international stage, giant market drivers, among others. The issue encompasses not only the daily ability of an individual, a house hold, and a nation to acquire or produce enough food to eat. Rather, in addressing such concern, importance must also be given in dissecting the inter-temporal duty to seek sustainable food source (Guerrero, 2010).

For instance, between 2007 and 2008 global food prices escalated. The price of wheat around the globe rose on average 130%. Energy and commodity prices fell in the latter part of 2008 due to a weakening global economy, but food prices again hit record levels in the

31 first half of 2011 and are predicted to remain high for the foreseeable future (FAO 2008,
32 World Bank 2008 and 2009, Oxfam 2011). This shock refocused the attention of many
33 countries on the issue of food security, and Nigeria is not an exemption.

34 In Nigeria, the discovery of oil and its subsequent boom in 1973-81 generated
35 complex changes in the structure of the polity and affected negatively other sources of
36 revenue in the country, especially agriculture. Agbaeze, Udeh and Onwuka (2015) noted that
37 as a result of this, the economy of the country has been substantially unstable, a consequence
38 of the heavy dependence on oil revenue, and the volatility in prices. The oil boom led to the
39 neglect of agriculture and other non-oil tax revenue sectors thereby increasing the level of
40 food insecurity in the country. According to Gbadebo Odularu (2008), although large
41 proceeds are obtained from the domestic sales and export of petroleum products, its effect on
42 the growth of the Nigerian economy as regards returns and productivity is still questionable.
43 Statistics have also shown that many oil-rich countries of the world are most-likely to suffer
44 high-rate of poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition.

45 Recently, food poverty, food security as well as food safety have therefore assumed a
46 prominent role in international politics not only for traditional state actors but also of giant
47 multinationals ranging from large scale western farming, agro allied corporations to
48 pharmaceuticals and global food supply and retail channels. This interrelatedness between
49 global food shortages as well as gains thereof has resulted in the emergence of a new ‘world
50 order’ in which big businesses, international organizations, governments and politicians
51 interrelate at a level reminiscent only of exploitation.

52 A series of close connections and interrelationships exist between the largest firms in
53 the food industry and international institutions for the regulation of trade and governments in
54 the developed world. These relationships, however, are themselves not new. Lenin identified
55 these close linkages between the state and monopoly capitalism and similarly connected the
56 development of monopoly capitalism with imperialist exploitation and war. Many of the
57 connections Lenin identified are, readily seen today in the food industry. The process of
58 globalization, through the agreement on agriculture, has brought these relationships into the
59 open more clearly than was previously the case (V. I. Lenin, 1975).

60 The objective of this paper is to collect and examine available literature on food
61 security and Nigeria’s monolithic oil diplomacy. It will explore the socioeconomic and
62 political environment at the national and international level as the principal determinant of
63 food security, its supply and consumption. The work will therefore provide a clear picture of
64 what is to be done to ensure that Nigeria plays a dominant role in the global food market with

65 its multiplier effect on greater food supply in Nigeria by tracing the various threads of
66 analysis and influence of food security in international politics which have resulted in the
67 present day global inequality, drawing links, contradictions, dilemmas and conflict, among
68 other issues.

69 **Conceptual Clarification**

70 **Food Security**

71 To better comprehend what food security connotes, one must have an idea of what
72 food insecurity is. Food insecurity represents lack of access to enough food and can be either
73 chronic or temporary. In chronic food insecurity, which arises from a lack of resources to
74 produce or acquire food, the diet is persistently inadequate (Adeoti, 1989). Now considering
75 food security, it is not a new phenomenon, the issue of food security came to the fore in the
76 1970s and at the 1974 World Food Conference in Rome the first explicit acknowledgement
77 was made that this issue concerned the whole of mankind:

78 “Every man, woman and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger
79 and malnutrition in order to develop fully and maintain their physical and
80 mental faculties. Accordingly, the eradication of hunger is a common
81 objective of all the countries of the international community, especially of the
82 developed countries and others in a position to help.”

83 (United Nations. 1975. Report of the World Food Conference, Rome 5-16
84 November 1974. New York). Since the 1974 Rome conference the whole
85 concept has “evolved, developed, multiplied and diversified” (Maxwell,
86 1996).

87

88 “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access
89 to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for
90 an active and healthy life”. (World Food Summit, 1996). The Directorate: Food Security
91 within the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Food and Agriculture
92 Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as well as the Centre for Poverty, Employment
93 and Growth (CPEG) of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) acknowledged that
94 food security has three dimensions namely food availability, food access and food use.

95 Food availability in the definition implies that a country must have sufficient
96 quantities of food available on a consistent basis at both national and household level. Food
97 access implies the ability of a nation and its households to acquire sufficient food on a

98 sustainable basis. Food use refers to the appropriate use based on knowledge of basic
99 nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation.

100 Food security is the ability of a country to produce most of its basic food necessities,
101 the survival and economic welfare of peasant producers and the protection of food
102 preferences, and stability of a country from the vagaries of world trade in grain and other
103 foodstuffs (Bello 1995). This position is agreed and further broadened by Food and
104 Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) when they posited that:

105

106 “Food security exists when all people at all times have physical or economic
107 access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and
108 food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 1996).

109

110 Though, in a simple language, a country is food-secure when majority of its
111 population have access to food of adequate quantity and quality consistent with decent
112 existence at all times (Idachaba, 2004). What is implied in this definition is that food must be
113 available to the people to an extent that will meet some acceptable level of nutritional
114 standards in terms of a calorie, protein and minerals which the body needs; the possession of
115 the means by the people to acquire (i.e. access) and reasonable continuity and consistency in
116 its supply (Davies, 2009).

117

118 Its central elements are: the availability of food and the possession of the
119 ability for its acquisition (Adeoti, 1989).

120

121 **Oil Monomania**

122 Petroleum production and export play a dominant role in Nigeria's economy and
123 account for about 90% of her gross domestic earnings. This dominant role has pushed
124 agriculture, the traditional mainstay of the economy, from the early fifties and sixties, to the
125 background. According to Budina and van Wijnbergen (2008) oil is the dominant source of
126 Nigeria's revenue it is approximately is 80% of the total government revenues. Since the oil
127 discoveries in the early 1970s, oil has become the dominant factor in Nigeria's economy
128 (cited in Ogbonna and Ebimobowei, 2012).

129 It will be a poor judgement to point at unstable oil earning as the sole cause of low
130 economic performance of Nigeria. Other factors like the inability of government to utilize

131 productively the financial windfall from the export of crude oil from the mid-1970s to
132 develop other sectors of the economy cannot be exonerated. So far, the oil boom of the 1970s
133 led to the neglect of non-oil tax revenues, expansion of the public sector, and deterioration in
134 financial discipline and accountability. In turn, oil-monomania exposed Nigeria to oil price
135 precariousness which threw the country's economy into disarray. It is important to note that
136 one of the hardest resources to utilize properly is petroleum. It is no news that oil
137 monomaniac countries seem susceptible to policy failure owing to the weakness of
138 preexisting institutions in places where oil for export is found, their frequently authoritarian
139 character, and their relationship with multinationals (Karl T., 2004). He noted further that:

140 Oil-dependent countries suffer from what economists call the "resource
141 curse." In its simplest form, this refers to the inverse association between
142 growth and natural resource abundance, especially minerals and oil. This
143 association repeatedly has been observed across time and in countries that
144 vary by population size and composition, income level, and type of
145 government; it is so persistent that has been called a "constant motif" of
146 economic history. Specifically, countries that are resource poor (without
147 petroleum) grew four times more rapidly than resource-rich (with petroleum)
148 countries between 1970 and 1993, despite the fact that they had half the
149 savings Karl T. (2004).

150

151 However, Nigerian economy has the potentialities of becoming one of the twenty
152 leading economies of the world before the year 2020 if her abundant crude oil wealth, human
153 and natural resources are properly managed and corruption mitigated (Nafziger, 2006 and
154 Ibaba, 2005).

155 **Consequences of Oil Led Development in Nigeria**

156 Statistics have shown that oil-rich countries have sluggish developmental progress as
157 compared to states without oil. Many variables have been deployed in explaining this fact.
158 Karl notes that though it is true that most forms of primary commodity dependence are
159 associated with poverty, not all commodities are equally culpable. Countries dependent on
160 agricultural commodities tend to perform better with respect to poverty, minerals in general
161 are linked to high levels of poverty, and oil dependence in particular is correlated with low
162 life expectancy and high malnutrition rates (Karl, 2004). Oil monomaniac is largely
163 associated with high level of poverty resulting from boom-bust cycle which accompanies it.

164 The saga has always been an early raise up, during first discovered of the resource, and a
165 subsequent backdrop resulting from the total or partial neglect of other revenue generating
166 avenues.

167 Thus, for example, per capita oil exports for North Africa and the Middle East soared
168 from \$270 in 1970 to \$2042 in 1980, and this fueled accelerated economic activity. But the
169 failure to diversify from oil dependence into other self-sustaining economic activities,
170 especially agriculture and labor-intensive industry, becomes a significant obstacle to pro-poor
171 development. For this reason, amidst abundance, a large fraction of people residing in oil
172 exporting countries like Nigeria face a dramatic shift in their welfare which eventually leaves
173 them in lack (*see appendix 2*). Thus, irrespective of significant rises in per capita income,
174 over the past several decades, all oil monomaniac countries have seen the living standards of
175 their populations drop, and sometimes drop very dramatically. The boom–bust cycle is a
176 respecter of no economy, culture, religion or political setting; it affects even the world’s
177 richest oil exporters.

178

179 **Nigeria: From Agrarian Country to Food-insecure Country**

180 The transition from bounty to lack face by Nigeria has raised several questions. First,
181 is the oil discovery and boom in the early 70s a blessing or curse? Second, why oil proceeds
182 cannot help alleviate poverty and hunger in Nigeria. Fundamentally, this rests on the question
183 of what food security really means. As a concept, food security first emerged in the wake of
184 the 70s. It was a period with an overwhelming fear concerning the evils that will befall the
185 countries owing to her drastic shift of concentration from the cultivation of food crops to the
186 cultivation of export crops. From thence, there was this fear that in the future, agriculture may
187 be incapable of sustaining Nigeria. According to Lappe & Collins 1979, it was feared that
188 this could lead to a situation whereby the agricultural sector would increasingly become less
189 capable of supplying the population’s food needs as it became more integrated into the
190 international market and as production shifted to higher priced export crops or crop-
191 derivatives such as sugar, coffee, and palm oil. About 60 years ago, Nigeria depended
192 majorly on agriculture which adequately fed her population and generated huge foreign
193 exchange. The economy of the country was not as poor as it is today amidst oil gains. The
194 country has move from better to worst and oil discovery has often been described as a curse
195 and not a blessing to the country. Also, the activities of food multinationals have not help the
196 amelioration of this crisis in anyway. Recently, food multinationals are able to determine the

197 structure of the food system through the regulation of international trade in raw-materials and
198 processed foods.

199 The opening up of economies to trade which the General Agreement on Trade and
200 Tariffs (GATT) promoted and the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) approach to
201 industrialization through an export market led orientation on cash crops have, since the
202 1970s, been instrumental in promoting famine. They have undermined both food security (the
203 ability of a country to provide adequate levels of nourishments for its population) and food
204 sovereignty (the ability of governments to determine the way in which that food is produced
205 and distributed). What is obtainable now is a situation where cash crops produced by less
206 developed countries through the efforts of the poor who works for the rich owners of farms
207 and machines, are exported in exchange for foreign exchange. Two sad situations are
208 expected from this transaction. First, the reduction in food crop production results in
209 inadequate food supply for the country's increasing population. Second, stipends paid to the
210 poor workers as wages are not enough for them to purchase finished goods from overseas.
211 Today, Nigeria and other developing economies suffer from drastic cases of food insecurity
212 and increased malnutrition (*see appendix 1 and 2*)

213 **International Politics of Food Security and the Activities of Core States**

214 In addition to the issue of uneven dependency, there is an increasing trend to
215 homogenize food-consumption patterns across the world, where the dominant economic
216 actors are large agribusiness multinational corporations (ABMs) orchestrating global food
217 production and dissemination. The most significant ABMs are based in the United States.
218 Although they participate heavily in the international economy, their most significant locale
219 remains the United States (Panitch and Gindin 2012).

220 The new rules of the game seem to fundamentally change the role of state intervention
221 and open the door for ABMs to operate relatively freely in a variety of national markets. This
222 process coincides with the new technical revolution in agriculture represented by
223 biotechnology (Kloppenburg 1988; Otero 2008; Pechlaner 2012), which we see as an
224 enabling technology that was taken over by large ABMs. In their hands, biotechnology has
225 become the central technological form of the neoliberal food regime, extending the modern
226 agricultural paradigm that originated with hybrid corn in the United States in the 1930s
227 (Kloppenburg 1988; Otero 2008).

228 Promoting capital accumulation in the world-economy is the culture of the core states.
229 These states have the political, economic, and military power to enforce unequal rates of

230 exchange between the core and the periphery. It is this power that allows core states to dump
231 unsafe ‘finish’ goods in peripheral nations, pay lower prices for raw materials than would be
232 possible in a free market, exploit the periphery for cheap labor, dump in their environment,
233 abuse their consumers and workforce, erect trade barriers and quotas, and establish and
234 enforce patents. It is the economic, political, and military power of the core that allows
235 significant capital to be accumulated into the hands of the few, the capitalist world-system
236 that produces and maintains the gross economic and political inequalities within and between
237 nations (Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1974).

238 Recently, world markets for food constitute the main obstacle of the development of
239 poor countries. The farmers of these countries need some measures of protection so that a
240 regime of higher producer prices might be established, without substantially increasing costs
241 to consumers and non-agricultural producers. Clearly world markets have to be radically
242 recognized in the interests of the poor. Ideally, the subsidies made to western farmers by
243 tax-rich states should be diverted to the governments of poor countries for similar purpose.

244 **A Case for Developing and Oil Dependent Countries**

245 Much is expected from agriculturalists, stakeholders and governments of developing
246 and oil monomaniac countries like Nigeria. It is important to note that international food
247 politics have been hijacked by three interrelated needs – the protection of big businesses
248 interests and markets in the developed world; the securing of access to raw, unprocessed food
249 products from developing countries; and the securing of access into developing countries’
250 markets for processed good from developed economies. According to Wole Ogundare
251 (2015), earlier consultations in FAO identified that ensuring access to nutritious food through
252 comprehensive approaches to food and nutrition security, recognition of the role of
253 agriculture, sustainable and climate sensitive agriculture, resilience to natural and man-made
254 disasters, responsible investment in agriculture and food system, among others, are key
255 strategic initiatives that must be considered in global food development agenda.

256 If these issues are carefully considered, there is bound to be a drastic reduction in the
257 dependency level of the poor countries on their rich counterparts. Also, whether sold or
258 donated, it is pertinent to know that cheap food from the West has repeatedly frustrated the
259 development of commercial agriculture in poor countries by pricing local farmers out of the
260 markets. The situation is worst in countries like Nigeria where successive governments attach
261 least importance to the welfare of the poor farmers owing to their weakness and excessive
262 dependence on foreign creditors, as opposed to the situation in the West where the

263 government adequately protects their farmers using tax revenues. Therefore, if the elites,
264 governments and agriculturalist in Nigeria join forces together and play their roles
265 adequately, there will be advancement in research and innovation, which will lead to
266 provision of inputs, production and harvest, wholesale and distribution, processing and
267 packaging, trade and storage, retail as well as purchase and consumption. These are economic
268 drivers capable of restoring food security in Nigeria. This will enhance the global call to
269 action as seen below.



273 **Source: Food-Secure 2030: Global Vision and Call to Action (2016)**

274 **Conclusion**

275 The most important point to reiterate is that there is currently the ability to produce
276 enough food to adequately feed the world's population. The primary problem facing the
277 developing world is agriculture, the distribution of food and its control. While there are
278 demands for greater food security and greater access to developed world markets from
279 producers in the developing world, until the chains of exploitation are broken these demands
280 will, at best, only be realized in so far as they provide the major businesses with new business
281 opportunities. In other words, the mechanism used for the integration of the developing world
282 will be one which ensures the continued system of manipulation of the majority of peasants
283 and workers producing food for the world's populations. The geography of exploitation may
284 change but the relations of exploitation of remain. Yet it seems unlikely that even this limited
285 restructuring of the world food industry will occur given the interest at stake in the developed
286 world.

287 In the absence of any such fundamental change in the relations of production it is still
288 necessary to recognize that food security has become a major issue for the developed and
289 developing world. The US and British governments are desperate to ensure that the control
290 over the world's food resources is firmly within the grip of firms they are linked with.
291 Developing countries must also reconstruct, reconsider and explore every available
292 opportunities leading to food security. Current farming techniques, factory-produced meat,
293 and fertilizers-reliant techniques for crop production are unsustainable in Nigeria. Food

294 security and an end to food poverty are the essential criteria, and in so far as alternative
295 farming techniques achieve the same goals they should be welcomed because of their
296 sustainability. If the world's middle classes embrace organic food out of concern for their
297 own health and security, poor farmers will gain an important ally in their struggle for
298 economic equality at the global level.

299 **Recommendations**

- 300 • Oil dependent countries should invest oil proceeds to other sectors of the economy
301 like agriculture, human resource training and development, entrepreneurship, etc.
- 302 • There should be improvement in food storage.
- 303 • Every level of government in Nigeria should institute appropriate economic policies,
304 institutional reforms and massive political will to address the resource curse.
- 305 • There should be adequate protection for poor farmers in developing countries, just as
306 it is the case in the developed ones.
- 307 • There is need to support women skills development.
- 308 • There should be an improved access to safe water, promoting hygiene and sanitation,
309 improving health services and access to them, and promoting timely care-seeking for
310 childhood illness.
- 311 • Agriculture, as the “engine house” of world economies needs to be overhauled and
312 serviced in order that the tears of the Nigerian masses may dry up. This can only be
313 possible when the government starts investing substantial capital into the sector
- 314 • Local production (food security) and consumption of diverse and nutritious foods
315 (nutrition security) through activities such as sustainable home gardens and nutritional
316 counseling should be promoted.
- 317 • There should be mobilization, especially in rural areas, and awareness should be
318 created concerning the importance of proper nutrition, especially for children,
319 pregnant women and nursing mothers.
- 320 • Banks, Insurance companies, Co-operatives and Individual, groups and corporate
321 investors should be encouraged to invest in other sectors of the economy other than
322 oil.

323

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414 **Appendix 1**

415

2015 GFSI overall rankings table								
Weighted total of all category scores (0-100 where 100=most favourable)								
1	United States	89.0	38	Costa Rica	66.9	75	Ghana	46.1
2	Singapore	88.2	39	Turkey	66.0	76	Cote d’Ivoire	46.0
3	Ireland	85.4	40	Panama	65.4	77	Pakistan	45.7
4	Austria	85.1	41	South Africa	64.5	78	Myanmar	44.0

5	Netherlands	85.0	42	China	64.2	79	Uganda	42.8
6	Switzerland	84.4	43	Russia	63.8	80	Benin	41.7
7	Canada	84.2	44	Belarus	63.5	81	Senegal	41.7
8	Germany	83.9	45	Romania	63.3	82	Cameroon	41.5
9	Australia	83.8	46	Botswana	63.1	83	Kenya	41.2
10	France	83.8	47	Egypt	61.8	84	Syria	40.6
11	Norway	83.8	48	Venezuela	61.7	85	Nepal	40.5
12	Sweden	82.9	49	Serbia	61.5	86	Ethiopia	38.5
13	New Zealand	82.8	50	Bulgaria	61.0	87	Mali	38.3
14	Denmark	82.6	51	Tunisia	60.1	88	Tajikistan	38.3
15	United Kingdom	81.6	52	Thailand	60.0	89	Bangladesh	37.4
16	Portugal	80.5	53	Colombia	59.6	90	Yemen	37.3
17	Finland	79.9	54	Peru	58.6	91	* NIGERIA	37.1
18	Belgium	79.5	55	Jordan	58.5	92	Sudan	36.5
19	Israel	78.9	56	Dominican Rep.	56.8	93	Malawi	35.3
20	Spain	78.9	57	Kazakhstan	56.8	94	Angola	35.1
21	Japan	77.4	58	Azerbaijan	56.6	95	Rwanda	35.1
22	Italy	77.0	59	Ukraine	56.1	96	Cambodia	34.6
23	U A E	75.6	60	Ecuador	56.0	97	Guinea	33.9
24	Kuwait	75.5	61	Paraguay	54.5	98	Tanzania	33.7
25	Czech Republic	74.9	62	Morocco	53.9	99	Burkina Faso	33.6
26	South Korea	74.8	63	Sri Lanka	53.7	100	Niger	33.6
27	Chile	74.2	64	Uzbekistan	53.6	101	Togo	33.4
28	Poland	74.2	65	Vietnam	53.4	102	Zambia	32.9
29	Greece	73.5	66	El Salvador	53.3	103	Mozambique	32.6
30	Saudi Arabia	72.8	67	Bolivia	52.8	104	Haiti	31.1
31	Hungary	71.4	68	Algeria	50.9	105	Congo (D. R.)	30.1
32	Slovakia	70.7	69	India	50.9	106	Sierra Leone	29.0
33	Uruguay	69.4	70	Guatemala	49.7	107	Madagascar	28.8
34	Malaysia	69.0	71	Nicaragua	49.7	108	Chad	27.9
35	Mexico	68.7	72	Philippines	49.4	109	Burundi	25.1
36	Brazil	67.4	73	Honduras	49.3			

37	Argentina	67.1	74	Indonesia	46.7		
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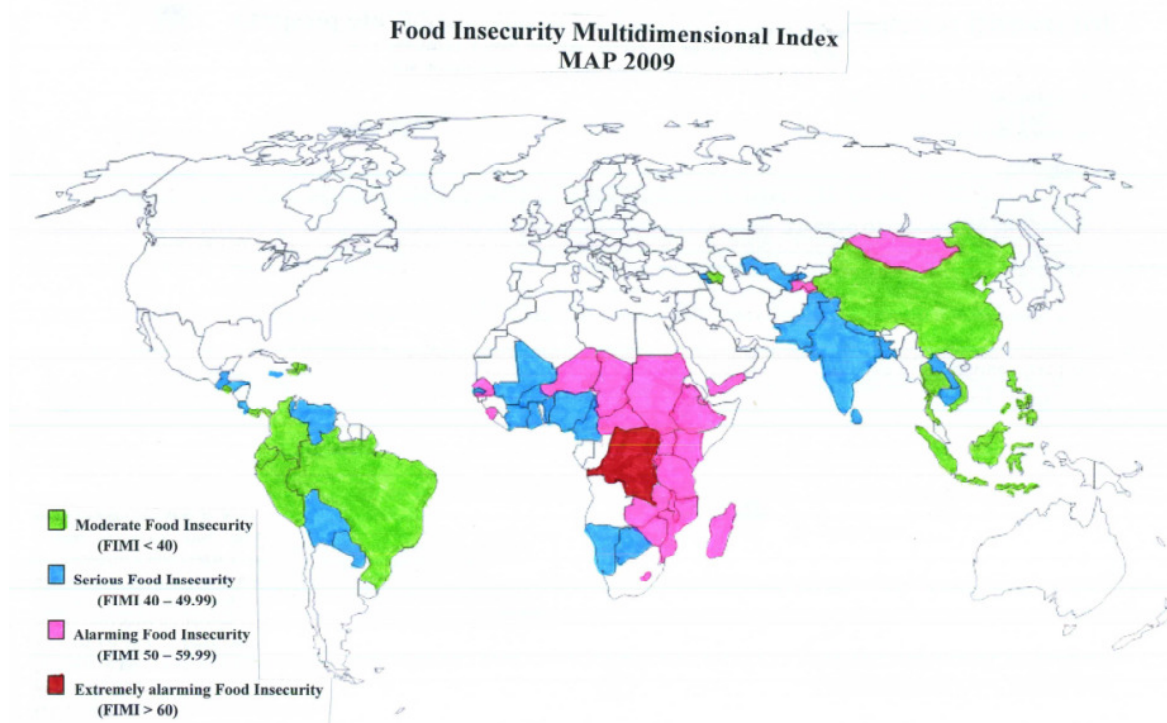
416 **Source:** Global Food Security Index (2015).

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Appendix 2



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421 **Source:** Marion Napoli (2011)