

6 *The Unfinished Agenda: Perspectives on South Africa's Food (In)Security*

Introduction

Despite being enshrined in several (inter)national human rights instruments, right to food remains one of the most frequently violated rights in contemporary (South) Africa.¹ As discussed in the previous chapter, millions of South Africans are battling food insecurity even though the country is food secure and remains a net exporter of agricultural commodities. This stark reality has its roots in a gloomy legacy of colonialism and subsequent neoliberal economic policies which have triggered a considerable food affordability crisis (Rose and Charlton, 2002). Hit by other broad-based price increases, such as rising costs of rent and electricity and petrol price hikes, the poor are left with even less to spend on staple food (TimesLive, 2019). While the affluent and working class might have experienced a salary hike to adjust to economic shocks, the poor and non-working classes often bear the blunt of uptick in food prices. To the ordinary household in a township, food is the equivalent of fuel in the suburbs and they expect the state to intervene when prices inflate.

In addition, any retrenchment, reduction in wage, increased electricity usage in winter, transport/petrol price hikes, and loan repayment exacerbates food insecurity. In fact, in a food-secure country like South Africa, the government does have the ability to bring down food prices. However, responses by policymakers and politicians have at best been marked by indifference or been less than encouraging as chronic hunger triggered by high food prices is rarely a major motion tabled in the National Assembly or policy action at the executive level. This has had

¹ Food insecurity is used here to refer to people's experiences with hunger and deprivation. It is important to highlight that there is a fine line between food insecurity and hunger. By all practical definitions, while the former implies lack of access to food, the latter connotes a feeling of weakness or discomfort triggered by inadequate or lack of food.

the spectacular, yet defective ramification of leaving the food market unchecked while national food security strategies are left fragmented. To some, the government's adoption of the *Household Food and Nutrition Security Strategy* (HFNSS) and *National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security* (NPFNS) in 2013 held the promise of alleviating food insecurity (Hendriks and Olivier, 2015). Despite their noble aspirations, these policies have not translated into reality or improved the living standards of the target group.

This chapter contends that the promotion of food security is a specifically neglected arena in contemporary South Africa. While the state has adopted specific binding legal instruments in the form of Acts and backed by established departments to give effect to rights such as health (2003 Health Act 63, and Department of Health), education (1996 Schools Act 84, and Department of Basic Education), water and sanitation (1998 Water Act 10 and Department of Water and Sanitation), and housing (1997 Housing Act 107 and Department of Human Settlement), food security is only guided by non-binding policies and with no particular institution to ensure its operationalisation. To be exact, food security mandates are stretched among the aforementioned institutions which have further exacerbated the problem of incoherence and ineffective operationalisation. The lack of specific food security instruments and implementation has a negative ramification on people's access to food as there is no effective regulatory body to clamp down on food cartels or ensure that food prices are within the reach of the poor and unemployed. Nonetheless, one must not rubbish these legislations as food (in)security is inextricably tied to other developmental questions including nutrition, education, retail markets, water, land, health, urban and rural development, sources of income and social protection issues.

This chapter, therefore, outlines the colonial legacy, contemporary political engagement and policies that impacts on food security in South Africa. An essential element of this chapter is an observation that the framing and operationalisation of food security interventions are often done piecemeal, often with overlapping mandates by different departments. In this sense, the chapter will discuss the food security mandates of relevant departments to contest studies which argue that the HFNSS and NPFNS have integrated, harmonised and streamlined food security programs. Through a discussion of key findings and crosscutting issues impacting food security, the chapter suggests that

the state needs to adopt an overarching Food Security Act backed by a particular department to ensure effective implementation of the instrument.

From Farm-Owner to Farm-Labourer

In their daily effort to prescribe medicine, medical practitioners normally look to the causes of the illness or more commonly to its root cause. In most instances, the cause of the sickness dictates the type of medication to be administered. Such is the case with South Africa's food insecurity. As society and scholarship has shown, the current challenges of unemployment, poverty and chronic hunger echo or perhaps rather amplify, the country's ugly past, namely apartheid land policies and practices (Westaway, 2012).

For a period of over three centenaries, European colonists – predominantly British and Dutch settlers – began occupying the Cape of Good Hope in the 1650s and subsequently progressed eastward and northward (Oliver and Oliver, 2017). To legitimise their land claim and expropriation, a plethora of restrictive legislations were adopted which culminated in the transfer of a greater percentage of the best lands to whites. To Msimang (2018: 29), '[i]n spite of their smaller numbers, whites were free to own or lease land in the other 93 percent of South Africa'. This implies that the majority African population was confined to only 5 per cent of the land. The most compelling of these instruments included the 1913 Black Land Act 2, the 1936 Development Trust and Land Act 1, the 1945 Urban Consolidation Act, the 1951 Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act 52, the 1956 Blacks or Prohibition of Interdicts Act 64, the 1959 Trespass Act 6, the 1964 Black Labour Act 67, the 1973 Proscription of Labour Tenancies Act and the 1979 Slums Act 76.

Needless to say, that whereas the 1952 Blacks or Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act 67 define African populations as non-citizens in their own lands, the 1966 Group Areas Act 36 created a segregated society where black populations were proscribed from residing or embarking on any economic activity within specific areas. With Africans confined to less than 10 per cent of the land often termed Homelands or Native Reserves, by the early twentieth century, whites controlled the best agricultural land and a disproportionate percentage of the country's natural resources such as water sources (Pearce, 2017).

The occupation and wresting of land from the indigenous people continued for a very long time, resulting in a massive transfer of land from the majority black indigenous population to the white minority settlers (Hall and Keep, 2017). The operationalisation of these instruments transformed many blacks from farm owners to farm labourers (Clark, 2019). The use of administrative and legal machinery to rob black rural populations of their land could be considered as a death trap, as hunger forced rural men, women and children to offer themselves as peasants and rural labourers to white farmers. In other words, most black farmers whose lands were arbitrary expropriated by the suppressive laws remained on their former lands as labourers employed to enhance the development of the white agricultural sector (Hall, 2004; Jankielsohn and Duvenhage, 2017). This form of occupation was immoral as they were given meagre wages which had a negative impact on their standard of living. Moreover, population explosion coupled with poverty in the Native Reserves compelled many to accept low-paying plantation jobs under harsh conditions (Mpeta *et al.*, 2018). In this way, blacks lost control over their environment, land, rights and their independence as they were reduced to human labour for major agribusiness corporations.

While many African countries embarked on and won their liberation from various colonisers in the latter part of 1950s and early 1960s, South Africa was still locked in the racist apartheid regime until three decades later in 1994 (Jankielsohn and Duvenhage, 2017). Unlike a full-blown liberation struggle, the country's transition occurred within the framework of political compromise or negotiated settlement which kept the right to property of the unconquered Afrikaner intact. Evidently, political independence did not come with economic liberation. In the course of the country's negotiated transition, the 60,000-person white minority, making up about 10.9 per cent of the population, owned 86 per cent of all farmland. To be specific, the white minority withheld approximately 82 million hectares of commercial farmlands from over 13 million Africans.

With the 1983 Constitution in force, rights of poor Africans to lay claim or contest unjust treatment was denied as existing instruments legitimised arrest, torture and imprisonment of blacks who attempted to reclaim their lands. Consequently, famished black populations remained confined and crowded in the Bantustans or former homelands. In stark contrast to other parts of the country, these locations

were marked by poor crop yield, diseases, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty and high mortality (Seidman, 1999). The few who secured jobs as farm workers on private farms faced constant abuse including low wages, severe tenure insecurity, insufficient access to medical services when injured and unwarranted evictions from farmhouses (Levin and Weiner, 1996). Due to very restrictive legislation, Africans had limited job opportunities besides serving as labourers in the mines or farms which ultimately coerced several youths to migrate to cities to either partake in liberation struggles or in search of industrial wage employment in neighbouring countries (Wolpe, 1972). The mass migration impacted on the living conditions of the elderly, women and children left behind as this vulnerable group was incapable of generating the same volume of supplies and the soil lost its fertility due to over tilling.

The black farmers, who were successful in producing cash crops were prevented from competing with their white counterparts through the operationalisation of a complex web of quota systems and marketing arrangements. Moreover, state agencies incentivised white farmers to expand their supplies through massive provision of financial and technical assistance, especially in periods of economic fluctuations in the global market. Without being accorded similar support and reinforced by state oppression, black commercial farmers and peasants had little prospect of surviving in this hostile environment (Bromberger and Antonie, 1993). The prevailing discriminatory practices resulted in a highly dualistic agrarian structure, where large numbers of subsistence agriculture plots on communal lands coexisted with developed and mechanised commercial farms.² Consequently, these two forms of farming could be perceived as symbols of 'tradition' and 'modernity', respectively. While the small-scale farms are dominated by black populations, the latter were largely owned by the white population.

Besides social grants and occasional remittances, the subsistence farms serve as the primary source of food for some blacks even though they are marked by low input as practised by impoverished women and children. Also, apart from the fact that most youths have abandoned the practice of small-scale farming in pursuit of greener pastures in urban centres, this form of agriculture is still predominant in the former

² Subsistence farming occurs when individuals cultivate crops or rear animals to feed themselves and their households; commercial farming crops are grown on a large scale to be sold.

Native Reserves. In contrast, the modern sector is engaged in large-scale food production, which is strongly linked to the global market, dominantly in the former 'white' rural areas and capital intensive. The black traditional farming practice tends to merely supplement the large-scale food produced by 'white' South African food producers.

To proscribe rural black population from reclaiming their land, the apartheid regime adopted the 1983 Constitution Act 110 which reinforced property and land rights of white settlers. Yet, in seeking to correct the errors of the past, the 1996 Constitution – which has been hailed globally for its groundbreaking provisions – reaffirms basic human rights as its guiding star. It further obliges the three arms of government to adopt progressive measures to address past injustices and ensure fulfilment of key socioeconomic rights, including access to land. Against this backdrop, the instrument strikes a balance between the rights of previously disadvantaged groups to access land for food production while safeguarding the property rights of landowners. This somewhat goes to explain why the country produces sufficient food, yet many do not get access as they lack land and/or money to purchase from food retailers. Thus, the dispossession of indigenous Africans of their land by the colonial settlers continues to have a devastating impact on the livelihood and food security of the present generation.

The most overt manifestation of the lingering legacy of apartheid is felt in the limited contribution made by African small-scale farming to the overall export economy of the state (Pereira and Drimie, 2016). Additionally, due to inadequate access to land, poor marketing, and insufficient financial and technical assistance, black people still constitute the larger percentage of farm workers in post-apartheid South Africa (Van Wyk, 2017). Hence, in light of the far-reaching ramifications of the country's past, it is imperative that the state addresses the overarching question of land scarcity as well as the technical/financial assistance needed as a means of improving African's own food production.

In sum, the historical wrongs perpetuated by the country's white settlers have had a long-term effect on the current food insecurity situation in South Africa. The forceful dispossession of blacks of their productive land deprived them of their entitlement to generate food for their survival. To this end, they were reduced to farm labourers where they were paid meagre wages and worked under harsh conditions. This practice has transcended the apartheid regime, rebranded as

commercial or agribusiness in contemporary South Africa whereby white farmers still control most agricultural lands and produce large quantities of food mainly meant for export (Yobe *et al.*, 2019). This trend has left millions of blacks unemployed, deprived and unable to afford staple food cultivated by their white compatriots (Shackleton *et al.*, 2019). But, is the question of land dispossession the only economic woes of the poor? A response to this crude inquiry entails assessing the economic policies of the post-apartheid regime as to whether they have improved, stabilised or exacerbated the crisis? The next section will argue that the level of poverty which is perpetuated by the legacy of exclusion has created an economic system which is not pro-poor and does not generate adequate job creation.

Transitioning from Apartheid to Neoliberalism

In the early 1990s, approximately thirty sub-Saharan African countries witnessed a wave of neoliberalism which swept across the continent (Hanson and Hentz, 1999: 479). South Africa is one of these countries. After years of institutionalised racism and global isolation, the leading anti-apartheid movement, the African National Congress (ANC), came under significant political pressure from the former apartheid (National party) regime, international investors and financial institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank) to chart a particular economic course. In discarding its formerly held developmental principles, the newly elected ANC party embraced the so-called neoliberal doctrine marked by compliance with stringent conditions (Cheru, 2001). As a principle, shifting a state's areas of competence to the private sector marks neoliberalism. This includes privatisation of parastatals and government-held entities, free market or trade liberalisation, currency devaluation, deep cuts to social programmes, abolishment of agricultural and/or food subsidies, and a switch to cash crop production (Nkrumah 2016). Operationalisation of these conditions essentially gives rise to massive layoffs in the civil/public service sector, (il)legal dumping of foreign goods, reducing the value of domestic commodities, shifts towards cash crop, and local farmers cutting down production due to insufficient government support. As a result, the state opens up the local market for external investors and embarks on deregulation, fiscal austerity and large-scale privatisation of major sectors of the economy.

To some observers, the ANC's eventual acceptance of neoliberal orthodoxy may be linked to the World Bank's expansive power being brought to bear on the inexperienced regime (Peet, 2002). Regardless of the justification, the adoption of this global agenda could be seen as demonstrating a blatant disregard for the traumatic social consequences emanating from the operationalisation of hostile structural reforms. To Habib and Padayachee (2000: 259), '[i]ncreasing unemployment and economic inequalities associated with the neoliberal economic policies have also pushed even more of South Africa's population into the poverty trap'. Though many African populations continue to bear the brunt of poverty due to spiralling unemployment, the gap between atypical and permanent workers continues to widen due to the significant variation in wages and benefits. For while a 'conglomerate (white) business, the aspirant black bourgeoisie, and black professionals [...] benefitted from the tax concessions, the lowering of inflation, and the privatization programme', those at the bottom of the social ladder are ignored (Habib and Padayachee, 2000: 258).

In pursuit of recognition in the international community, the state became a party to the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) under the aegis of the newly established World Trade Organization in 1995 (Streak, 2004). Operationalisation of the instrument meant a shift to imported goods and phasing out basic food subsidies which has steadily increased prices from the 1990s onwards. Against this backdrop, the state opened up its market to other parties of the AoA by cutting down its import tariffs from an average of 28 per cent to 7 per cent and ended all import quotas for agricultural commodities (Vink *et al.*, 2002: 2). This served as stimulus for agribusiness, particularly as emerging black farmers were unable to compete with established white agribusiness and opened the door for foreign investors to enter and gain monopoly over key agricultural sectors. As a consequence, many smallholders were displaced as agribusiness from the global North found a dumping site for their surplus food products.

Threatened by external markets, local cooperatives which had previously supervised processing and storage of agricultural products changed their status into corporatives and listed on the stock exchange (Williams and Taylor, 2000). As their status shifted, so did their objective. These large corporations and agribusinesses shifted their attention to mainly accruing wealth, which adversely impacted on

their consumers. In addition, as the impact of cheap imports penetrated into rural areas, many small-scale farmers were pushed out of business as natives developed a taste for processed food. This development resulted in widespread land grabbing as agribusinesses paid only a small ransom to subsistence farmers for their abandoned lands. As an illustration, after procuring two of the largest dairy processing companies in the mid-1990s, Pamalet triggered a price war by subsidising its products that pushed smaller rivals from production.

The height of the ANC's neoliberal agenda manifested in the entry into force of the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act No. 47 of 1996 which scrapped the agricultural board responsible for regulating producer prices and acting as a single channel marketer (Phukubje and Moholwa, 2006: 198). In the absence of a national regulating entity, prices of agricultural commodities have come to be determined by multinational entities, private corporations and international markets without government intervention. Along with the influence of the global commodity markets, agricultural conglomerates such as Nestlé, Unilever, Seaboard and Cargill set prices of many staple foods such as soybean, sunflower seed, wheat and yellow and white maize. While this new phase of supply and demand somewhat enables local commercial farmers to compete at the global level, it militates against small-scale farmers as they lack the subsidies to compete fairly against cheap Northern competitors who have state subsidies (Narsiah, 2002).

Suffice it to note that the onset of deregulation has been marked by price fixing. The private regulation of prices has inevitably resulted in price hikes, as the prime objective of corporations is interest accumulation and they are not particularly concerned with social impact. By gaining monopoly over the country's supply chain, the (inter)national entities decide when consumers should pay more. For instance, while the price of (super) maize meal soared 64 per cent between 2008 and 2017, the price of bread has more than doubled from ZAR 5.89 (US\$ 0.4) in 2008 to ZAR 13.49 (US\$ 0.9) in 2018 (GrainSA, 2018). This is clearly visible in the recent food-price gauging in chain stores such as Makro, Checkers and PicknPay due to the onslaught of the coronavirus and panic buying ahead of the twenty-one-day lockdown (Comins and Pillay, 2020; Hunter 2020). This trend is much like what Sen (1981) refers to as 'entitlement failure', where the widening gap between people's expectations and reality is worsened by their inability to purchase food on the open market. To overcome

exorbitant food prices at the retail end, it is imperative the government reverts its stance on neoliberalism by adopting measures which provide sufficient land and subsidies to subsistence farmers, cutting down on imported goods and establishing a national body for effective price control.

Losing the War against Food Insecurity: The State of Hunger

Since 1996, South Africa has remained a dual economy with one of the highest inequality rates globally (Kollamparambil, 2019). Despite political promises of radical socio-economic transformation and improved standard of living, poverty levels have risen with 30.4 million people living in deprivation (Du Plessis 2017; StatsSA, 2017a: 14). Although the country's gross domestic product (GDP) has gathered pace over the last two decades, there has been little corresponding shift in inequality (Padayachee, 2019). This pattern is inevitable as poverty is handed down from one generation to another as intergenerational mobility is low in contemporary South Africa. Only 7 per cent of the net wealth is held by the bottom 60 per cent of the population; approximately 71 per cent of the net wealth is held by the richest 10 per cent (World Bank, 2019). Poverty remains most severe in the seven less-resourced provinces, but most residents in Gauteng and Western Cape tend to have a decent standard of living. The latter camp often tends to have sufficient access to education, transport, sanitation, social security, water and health services as compared to the other seven provinces (StatsSA, 2017b). Despite a slight decline in poverty between 2006 and 2011, South Africa has been marked by widespread income poverty since 2015. This trend, along with population explosion, has triggered an increase in the number of people with little or no income for sustenance, with the number of people living on less than \$1.90 per day escalating from 16.8 per cent in 2011 to 18.8 per cent in 2015 (StatsSA, 2017b: 14). Primarily, while poverty gaps for coloureds increased from 6.2 per cent in 2011 to 8.3 in 2015, black Africans witnessed an increase of 17.2 to 19.8 per cent within this period (StatsSA, 2017b: 20). As indicated in Table 6.1, while the poverty level of coloured females and males increased from 6.3 to 8.2 per cent and 6.1 to 8.4 per cent, respectively, within this duration, percentage of poor black African females and males soared from 18.1 to 20.8 per cent and 16.3 to 18.6 per cent, respectively (StatsSA, 2017b: 20).

Table 6.1 *Percentage increase (+) or decrease (–) in level of poverty*

Ethnicities	Female	+-	Male	+-
African	18.1⇒20.8	+2.7	16.3 ⇒18.6	+2.3
Coloured	15.0⇒17.7	+2.7	6.1 ⇒ 8.4	+2.3
Indian/Asian	0.5⇒0.1	-0.4	0.6 ⇒ 0.4	-0.2
White	0.2⇒0.1	-0.1	0.2 ⇒ 0.1	-0.1

Source: StatsSA (2017b)

As one can discern from Table 6.1, the impact of the country's segregated past continues to have far-reaching ramifications on the most oppressed groups, namely Africans and coloured or mixed-race populations. Even though there was considerable improvement in the percentage of whites and Indians living with poverty, the same can not be said of the others. On the one hand, the percentage of white (fe) males living with poverty was halved, Indian/Asians also witnessed a decline of 0.4 and 0.2 per cent for females and males, respectively. On the other hand, the percentage of Coloured females and males living with poverty soared by 2.7 and 2.3 per cent, respectively, while African females and males in the same domain hiked by 2.7 and 2.3 per cent, respectively (StatsSA, 2017b: 20). In essence, despite being a middle-income economy with fiscal sustainability, South Africa has lost ground in the war against poverty and food insecurity, and urgently needs to cut down on poverty at a faster rate than initially conceived.

It is imperative to underscore that individual or household access to food is highly influenced by various forms of entitlement, incomes, social transfers or own food production (Nkrumah, 2018a). Hypothetically, promoting household incomes through job creation would be one of the avenues of eliminating poverty and food insecurity. Yet, whilst the state has adopted (what some call) positive discrimination such as the 1998 Employment Equity Act 55 or the 2003 Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 (BBBEE) as means of enhancing the welfare of Africans, this intervention has not trickled down to the poorest of the poor who continue to battle with food scarcity and income insecurity (Ponte *et al.*, 2007). Even though this measure has somewhat opened up job avenues to some few blacks, particularly in the public sector, it has not sufficiently alleviated large-scale household food insecurity. It was

against this backdrop that Mbeki (2009: 61) vehemently bemoaned that, despite being launched to give Africans certain economic privileges, the BBBEE has merely struck a 'fatal blow against the emergence of black entrepreneurship by creating a small class of unproductive but wealthy black crony capitalists made up of ANC politicians'.

In light of the shortfall in the job market, some observers have argued that cash transfer in the form of social wages and grants are instrumental in addressing the individual and household food insecurity situation (Triegaardt, 2005; Potts, 2012; Nkrumah, 2018a). These social safety nets are channelled through diverse mechanisms such as the provision of free basic services including subsidised electricity, water and sanitation, RDP housing, social protection in the form of child support, disability and old-age grants, no-fee paying schools and free primary health care (Hassim, 2008). While these interventions may be perceived as helpful in overcoming food insecurity, particularly as money meant for these services could be channelled towards groceries, StatsSA (2017a: 9) noted that the financial stability of many households was threatened between 2011 to 2015. According to the StatsSA, the underlying factors for the harsh socioeconomic conditions stem from an unstable policy environment, poor consumer confidence, higher prices, increasing unemployment and stagnant economic growth (StatsSA, 2017a: 9). It might not be far-fetched to project that instead of serving as an exit strategy for poverty-ridden families, the number of households dependent on grants will increase in the coming years considering the large-scale retrenchment and economic downturn (Plageron *et al.*, 2019). Yet, though this form of economic redistribution is very essential in enhancing social cohesion in a highly unequal state like South Africa, it renders poor households susceptible to the whims and caprices of politicians and national government. A key exit strategy for the mounting marginalised and (un)skilled job-seekers is the framing of a meaningful exit strategy, such as entrepreneurial skills, education, technical development, skills acquisition, land and financial/technical support to those interested in agriculture. It is perceived that these measures will ultimately serve as a means of overcoming the current situation of food insecurity. As argued elsewhere, this call is tied to the promotion of a neglected area, subsistence agriculture, which has been identified as playing a key role in enhancing the food baskets of several families in the Global North and South such as Ghana and Malawi (Nkrumah, 2019a). Given that subsistence farming

remains a major economic activity among many black households, it remains quite ironic why it has received little government support in contrast to commercial farming.

It is worth noting that in order to frame suitable intervention(s), one needs to understand the challenges confronting accessibility and distribution of food at the national and provincial levels. Specifically, one needs to survey the resources or capabilities of households/individuals and the mechanisms of food distribution in the country, in order to fully understand the scale of food (in)security (Nussbaum, 2009). Just as different observers may subscribe to different conceptualisations and definitions of food (in)security, there is also disagreement on the actual experience of household food (in)security and national food security (McGarry and Shackleton, 2009; Hundenborn *et al.*, 2019; Nkrumah, 2019b). Even more disturbing is the fact there is no exact composite threshold which defines access to food to enhance the creation of food security monitoring systems and goals. Moreover, there are no nationally acceptable benchmarks or targets for measuring and monitoring the country's food security. In contrast to the sum of agro-food output (often termed as national food security), household food security or access is dependent on how food is distributed, who has the access to purchase and how markets operate. The complexity with policy targeting and accurate measurement is exacerbated by the challenges in identifying targets and strategies for the country's food security (Nkrumah, 2017).

In a semi-industrialised economy with such a high rate of food-insecure households, it is important to have an overarching food security strategy and threshold to ensure regular monitoring of the state of chronic hunger and state interventions to address this problem. The difficulty in identifying suitable interventions for food security can also be traced to the lack of understanding of the complex factors which impact on household food security. Beyond the conceptual challenges, there are operational or institutional setbacks which fuel food insecurity. These range from: (i) weak or absent corroboration between CSOs, the private sector and government departments; (ii) lack of expertise at state departments to identify and formulate suitable policies to adequately address hunger; (iii) insufficient budget allocation to successfully translate policy to implementable programmes; and (iv) corruption and siphoning of resources meant for improving small-scale farming and job creation. Ultimately, the solution to individual/household security lies in human development, structural transformation and employment expansion.

Besides the aforementioned constraints limiting the capabilities of policymakers to improve household food security, the plight of the famished is worsened by an array of additional costs including rising oil and electricity prices which have exacerbated the price of food. In March 2019, South African road users were advised to brace themselves for more tough times at the pumps as petrol prices skyrocketed by up to a ZAR 1.34 (US\$ 0.1) per litre (Nicolaides and Kajee, 2019). This will ultimately trigger a hike in agro-food commuter transport as well as chemical fertilizer as inorganic compounds such as worm castings, seaweed, manure, compost and blood meal are derived from by-products of the petroleum industry. Furthermore, keeping in mind that urban farming makes little contribution to the available food in the market, an increase in petrol will ultimately have a long-term impact on food markets in light of the cost of transportation of these commodities from the rural to urban centres.

Additionally, the manipulation of food prices by actors in the food supply chain, namely distributors, processors and supermarkets, coupled with speculation in commodity markets and biofuel production, have adverse effects on food prices. For instance, by April 2019, these factors culminated in an increase of the cost of grain, cereal, meat and dairy prices by 2.90 per cent over the same period in 2018 (TradingEconomics, 2019). Given they are heavily dependent on grains, mainly wheat and maize, a price increase on these staple food poses a serious threat to the survival of the rural and urban poor. More alarmingly, it has been estimated that biofuel production and growing demands from emerging markets are expected to drive up farm commodity prices leading to a 40 per cent spike in food prices by 2020 (OECD and FAO, 2019). This implies that not only will urban residents be affected, but the rural population as well due to the interconnection between the (inter)national economic networks and local commodity chains. Specifically, the landless, rural and urban poor would be compelled to either channel more of their resources to food or consume cheaper and less nutritious diets.

Refocusing on Urban Hunger

It is often said that food insecurity is rare in urban places (Hadley and Patil, 2006). Local and national policymakers often focus their attention on rural hunger mainly due to the (mis)perception that food

insecurity is largely prevalent only in rural areas. This belief is somewhat shaped by the dominant ideologies of some observers who affirm that urban populations disproportionately benefit from public policy due to their socioeconomic and political power (Lipton, 1977; Bates, 1981; Andrea and Beckman, 1985; Burkey, 1993). Even though these theories were framed in the twentieth century, they have greatly swayed contemporary development policies and practices to be more sympathetic towards the rural poor. For instance, the National Development Plan (SA Gov, 2012: 231) argues that due to improved storage facilities, effective transportation systems and high competition in the food markets, urban dwellers tend to pay less for food than their rural counterparts (SA Gov, 2012). Clearly, this argument betrays the NDP's insufficient awareness of widespread hunger in urban areas triggered by overdependence on food markets and higher cost of living including electricity, rent and transportation. Hence, coupled with the notion that urban wages are higher, urban food insecurity has primarily been relegated to the background.

Yet, the locus of poverty, which was historically linked to rural communities, has now shifted to urban centres due to mass influx of rural poor. Many youths migrate to cities as they 'continue to serve as platforms that provide greater socio-economic opportunities' (Nkrumah, 2019b: 305). It is estimated that with over 63 per cent of the global population already residing in urban centres, this figure will increase to 71 per cent by 2030 and ultimately 80 per cent in 2050 (NPC, 2011: 29). With urbanisation, the shifting of rural poverty to cities is steadily rising, which implies that urban food insecurity will intensify in the coming decades and dealing with urban food poverty through key institutional intervention is inevitable.

However, in the context of South Africa, food interventions have been skewed towards rural areas and neglected in cities. Presently, there is no clear policy engagement with urban food systems or food security, which, in the framework of recent economic downturn and sharp rise in food prices, has negatively impacted on urban dwellers' ability to purchase food. Indeed, major political actors such as incumbent president, Cyril Ramaphosa of the ANC, Julius Malema of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and Mmusi Maimane of the Democratic Alliance (DA) have openly indicated their commitment to alleviate hunger (Bhengu, 2019; Hogg, 2019; Ngatane, 2019a). Despite this rhetoric, the reality of urban food insecurity is rarely on

national policy agenda. This continuous disregard of city food crises is better demonstrated in the several food security policies that remain rural in focus. These include the Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS), National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security (NPFNS) and the Household Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (HFNSS), which are mainly protectionist in response and overwhelmingly rural in focus (SA Gov, 2002; DSD and DAFF, 2013; Nkwana, 2015). This indifference to city food insecurity may be linked to four different, but somewhat overlapping factors.³

First, the marginalisation of the urban food insecure in public policy has its roots in the (mis)application of the concept 'urbanisation'. The term 'urban' is often used to define locations with visible and publicly declared local authority. Given that there is no universally acceptable definition of this term, contemporary South Africa (while drawing from classic apartheid working definition of this notion) only considers a site as 'urban' when it has a publicly visible local government. The Local Government 1998 Municipal Structures Act 117 emphatically states that an urban or metropolitan area must have metropolitan councils with single-employer bodies, service-tariff systems, common property ratings and single metropolitan budgets. Based on this categorisation, the state recognises only eight metropolitan municipalities which can be classified as 'cities' or 'urban': the City of Tshwane (Pretoria), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (Port Elizabeth), Mangaung Municipality (Bloemfontein), City of Johannesburg, City of eThekweni (Durban), Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (East Rand), City of Cape Town and Buffalo City (East London). Thus, even though by all conventional definitions some areas may qualify as urban, they have otherwise been relegated to the rural camp (Nkrumah, 2018b). As an illustration, despite considerable infrastructural development with a population of approximately 1.2 million, Mopani is considered rural under the official definition (SALG, 2017). In light of the fact that this location was earmarked during the apartheid era for labour supply for commercial farms which have, mostly now, been replaced with farm technologies, this group has been plunged into poverty. This has led to

³ Policymakers often justify their ruralist tendencies on general surveys which find food insecurity to be prevalent in rural and not urban sectors, thereby reinforcing the conventional theory of widespread rural food insecurity. The most credible of these are the *Income and Expenditure Survey* (IES) and *General Household Survey* (GHS) which are administered by Statistics South Africa.

several poor urban areas and populations being wrongly considered as rural, thereby fuelling the argument that the poor are in rural areas and their food insecurity exit strategy lies in small-scale farming. To this end, South Africans residing in sites without a proclaimed political jurisdiction continue to be ignored in key policy areas on the question of access to food. The (mis)application of the notion of rural/urban binary evidently skews the percentage of the food insecure towards the rural population, rather than low-income urban areas.

Second, due to budgetary constraints, policymakers and politicians are often inclined to prioritise more visible needs than household food. A typical analogy of this preference is reflected in the daily service-delivery protests which rock many townships where residents take to the streets to demand medications for the infirm, textbooks, water, electricity supply and basic amenities rather than food. While this may hold true for all the major cities, there is no budgetary allocation to support food security interventions at the municipal levels. Besides the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD previously Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) serving as the national operational home of food security, the national government does not allocate resources meant for food needs to local administrations. Therefore, any attempt in this domain by a municipality will have to be drawn from other allocations without national support. Furthermore, unfortunately perhaps for some, the DALRRD has demonstrated rural bias in its mandate with emphasis on a productive farming sector as a means of overcoming rural food insecurity. An important document which could have perhaps provided some leverage in this regard could have been the National Development Plan (NDP) and its operational body, the National Planning Commission (NPC, 2011). In seeking to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality, the document drew a fine line between national and household food (in)security, and highlighted the need to focus on the latter. Arguably, the framers of the document faced a dilemma when they recommended land reform programmes yet cautioned that higher levels of productivity in urban farming would depress domestic prices (NPC, 2011). This recommendation seems to be informed by the rural bias of food insecurity and does not seem to appreciate the daily struggles of urban poor households.

Third, the lack of urgency around urban food insecurity on the part of key (inter)national actors and policymakers may be linked to the

perception that providing intervention or development-oriented assistance for city dwellers is perhaps perpetuating existing rural-urban inequality. As discussed, in pre-1994, rural areas were locations of socioeconomic exclusion and widespread poverty. With these sites densely populated by blacks who were systematically removed from urban to rural areas, an urban food-insecurity agenda may be seen as reinforcing apartheid-era inequalities instead of redressing past wrongs.

Finally, urban food insecurity often walks in disguise behind the ruralist imperatives of micro-economic development and sustainable food supply. Often tied to food shortage as a result of drought or flood, hunger in rural areas often affects a larger proportion of people at the same time and within close proximity as compared to cities where food is in abundance and some dispose of surplus. Put differently, policy-makers are more inclined to rural hunger as it often affects a whole community, one often with little or no coping strategy, for there is a strong seasonality when rural families are confronted with insufficient access to food primarily due to agricultural cycles. On the other side, urban manifestation of hunger is typically at the household level with families resorting to different kinds of coping strategies such as contacting family members, colleagues or loan shacks. This implies that, based on Sen's (1981) entitlement theory, different families will have different access or lack of access at different times, which can render the urban food insecure somewhat invisible.

In seeking to circumvent this conceptual wrangling, StatsSA (2017b: 14) collapses this rural/urban binary into unified national data and finds that the poverty headcount has increased from 53.2 per cent in 2011 to 55.5 per cent in 2015. This implies that one out of every two South Africans is poor. By adopting the cost-of-basic-needs approach, it relies on three poverty lines or benchmarks to demonstrate the different degrees of poverty in order to enable the state to monitor this trend at the national level: (i) upper-bound poverty line (UBPL) or people who can afford to purchase and consume food and non-food items; (ii) lower-bound poverty line (LBPL) or persons, who, due to meagre income and other forms of entitlement are compelled to forfeit food in order to attain other basic non-food items; and (iii) food poverty line (FPL) for individuals who are unable to afford and eat sufficient food required for healthy living. According to the survey, while only 13.4 million South Africans could not afford food in 2006, this figure spiked to 13.8 million in 2015, with

Table 6.2 Poverty levels in South Africa

	2006	2009	2011	2015
Poverty lines	(in millions)	(in millions)	(in millions)	(in millions)
FPL	13.4 (28.4%)	16.7 (33.5%)	11.0 (21.4%)	13.8 (25.2%)
LBPL	24.2 (51.0%)	23.7 (47.6%)	18.7 (36.4%)	21.9 (40.0%)
UBPL	31.6 (66.6%)	30.9 (62.1%)	27.3 (53.2%)	30.4 (55.5%)

Source: StatsSA (2017b)

the figure of those with the ability to purchase food decreasing from 31.6 million to 30.4 million within the same period (StatsSA, 2017b: 14). Table 6.2 provides a breakdown of the percentage and figure of people falling under the three categories.

A visualisation of Table 6.2 depicts a meandering snake with poverty escalating from 2006 to 2009, declining in 2011 and ultimately soaring yet again in 2015. Although not clearly stated, it is apparent that the adverse effect of the 2008/09 global financial crises had a considerable impact on poverty in 2009 (Helleiner, 2011). Yet, as indicated in Table 6.3, despite the introduction of (inter)national food security interventions since the global crisis, there has not been significant improvement in the proportion of South Africans living with hunger (NPC, 2011).

As shown in Table 6.3, while one in three was poor in 2009, the ratio hiked to a one in four in 2015. In essence, the ratio of hungry people in 2015 was higher as compared to 2011 where the ratio was one in five. The zig-zag trend of FPL signifies that if the state operationalises feasible policies, the question of food poverty could be addressed. It is in this light that the chapter now turns to survey why prevailing food security interventions are failing to forestall hunger.

Table 6.3 Ratio of South Africans living under food poverty line

Year	2015	2011	2009	2006
Ratio of food poor	1/4	1/5	1/3	1/4

Source: StatsSA (2017a)

Loopholes in Food Interventions

Over the last two decades, there has been a radical shift on perspectives regarding the causes of food insecurity, from identifying single factors such as low household income, to increasing awareness of the complex relationships between micro and macro factors, such as translating food security on paper (*de jure*) into practice (*de facto*). Despite being perceived as a threat to the life, dignity and health of millions, there is no particular government department with an overarching mandate to address daily struggles of food insecurity. Rather, food security mandates have been partitioned among various departments. This has eventually resulted in the piecemeal development of food security policies with resultant poor coordination at the institutional level.

As said in the previous chapter, although it could be argued that food security is interlinked and interrelated with other rights and, thus, the need for multi-sectoral or multi-departmental intervention, this fragmentation hinders attempts to address this challenge comprehensively. To be exact, the lack of coordination among relevant government departments has the potential of duplicating state efforts or wasting resources in terms of energy, funds and time which could otherwise be redirected to cover millions of people excluded from social welfare programmes (Nkrumah, 2018c). To ensure that the hungry are satiated, the next section takes a look at some of the responses to address the incoherent food (in)security policies and programmes.

The 2002 Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS) policy was initially considered as the magic bullet as it called for broader collaboration among departments with food security mandates as a means of enhancing household food security. Yet, hampered by poor alignment of sectors and insufficient cooperation between and among departments, it failed to achieve its intended objective of streamlining all food security interventions, increasing income opportunities and household food production (DAFF, 2015). In response to this shortfall, the DALRRD (2005) framed the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) to promote agricultural development by providing training and capacity building to new entrants into the farming sector, especially those who acquired land through own purchase or as beneficiaries of land reform (DAFF, 2005). For its operationalisation, the DALRRD established within its framework a Chief Directorate of Food Security (CDFFS) which was sub-divided into three directorates,

namely Infrastructure Support, Small-Holder Development and Subsistence Farming (Drimie and Ruysenaar 2010). As its name implies, the directorate was charged with the overall mandate of boosting rural and household food production, while establishing efficient support systems for commercial and subsistence farmers through training and information dissemination. Further, to provide financial assistance to emerging farmers, the Micro-Agricultural Financial Institution of South Africa (MAFISA) was established in the same year to facilitate the disbursement of loans to four main beneficiaries: smallholder, commercial, subsistence and household food producers (DAFF, 2016). With loans up to R500,000, the bulk of the borrowed funds were to be used to pay suppliers of production inputs (animal feed, pesticides, seeds and fertilizers), small equipment (spades, wheel barrows and knapsack spray), harvesting and agro-processing (GTAC, 2015).

Yet, a ten-year assessment of CASP and MAFISA reflects that there is a noticeable exclusion of persons with disability and youths (DPME, 2015: vii). For instance, of the total number of CASP beneficiaries, only 3 per cent were persons with disabilities (PwDs), and youths constituted a mere 14 per cent (DPME, 2015: vii). This could be overcome by widening the benchmark for accessing the programme in order to enable a greater percentage of the youths and PwDs to access these food programs. The second challenge is that the few beneficiaries were frustrated at their lack of sufficient access to formal markets for their products as it was difficult to compete with big cooperations and supermarket chains. This setback could be addressed through effective partnership between the CDFS and Department of Trade and Industry to boost the commercialisation and market access of these farmers. Also, the DALRRD should strive to sharpen the commercial and marketing skills of smallholders through capacity building and skills transfer to enable them to compete fairly in the local market.

In light of the prevailing challenges confronting subsistence farmers and to encourage more emerging black farmers, Cabinet in 2013 approved three different, yet overlapping food security strategies: the National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security Policy (NPFS), the Household Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (HFSS) and the Fetsa Tlala Production Plan (Fetsa Tlala). These policies were subsequently complemented in 2015 with yet another, termed the National Food and Nutrition Security Implementation Plan (NFSP). The golden

thread which runs through all these instruments is their emphasis on cooperation between community-based organisations (CBOs) and relevant government departments by pulling resources together to ensure the effective operationalisation of feeding programmes. As set out in section 152 of the 1996 Constitution, given that the promotion of socioeconomic development including food security falls within the ambit of local government, it is important that they are not sidelined in the operationalisation of these strategies. Indeed, while the NPFS underscores the creation of parallel food security structures at the local level, it fails to clearly spell out the specific functions to be played by provincial, municipal and district officials. Specifically, the document fails to outline the role of local administrators in policy analysis, formulation, operationalisation, monitoring and evaluation. In light of the role of municipalities as primary providers of service delivery, including water, sanitation and electricity which all (in)directly impact on food production, use, access and supply, allocating major food security mandates to the local administration will be vital in overcoming household food insecurity.

In anticipation of the problem of (non)cooperation and (non)integration of the visions of these strategies into the programmes and budgets of different departments, the NPFS further calls for the establishment of a National Food and Nutrition Security Advisory Committee (NFNSAC) composed of representatives from the DALRRD and the Department of Social Development (DSD), chaired by the Deputy President (Nkwana, 2015). Yet, at the time of writing, the committee only existed on paper. The absence of such an overarching body has limited the prospect of the NPFS as there are some six different institutions with different food-related mandates: while the Department of Economic Development (DED) has framed its own individual food security programme, others such as the Department of Basic Education (DBE), Department of Labour (DoL), Departments of Health (DoH), DALRRD and DSD have overlapping mandates without a primary structure to coordinate their activities. In light of the fact that the impact of ineffective food security policies and their poor operationalisation cuts across the various sectors of the country's population, the last sentence entices one to first step back and attempt to excavate the respective food security interventions, while paying attention to the various constraints confronting them. In spite of the fact that it might be prudent to access the respective interventions and their weaknesses,

we will assess only one of these programs due to the word limit of the chapter⁴: the social grant, administered by the DSD.

The State of Social Grants

Given that majority of South Africans are food buyers and not producers, adequate government subsidies may play key role in countering rising food prices. Yet, some commentators dispute this claim, asserting that the poor do not require this form of intervention as the state has already instituted intervention in the form of social security that adequately addresses this concern (Vink and Kirsten, 2002). Indeed, besides mainstream salaries, wages, occasional remittances and cash transfers to households, social grants serve as the main source of income for over 17 million South Africans (Ngatane, 2019b). Grants constitute the second-highest government spending of ZAR 1.67 trillion (US\$ 1.10 billion) in the 2018/19 financial year (SANT, 2019: 51). According to the South African National Treasury (SANT, 2019: 56), in light of the increase in the number of beneficiaries, it was expected that spending would soar at an average annual growth rate of 7.6 per cent from ZAR 162.6 billion (US\$ 107 million) in 2018/19 to ZAR 202.9 billion (US\$ 134 million) in 2021/2. As demonstrated in Table 6.4 below, the figure of 17.9 million social grant beneficiaries was expected to rise to 18.9 million over the same period (SANT, 2019: 56). The grant is disbursed based on seven main categories, namely care dependency (CDG), child support (CSG), disability (DG), foster care (FCG), old age (OAG), grant-in-aid (GIA) and war veterans (WVG).

While the grant may be perceived as playing a key role in alleviating poverty and enhancing food security, its impact is plagued by six internal weaknesses: (i) special-needs based; (ii) no exit strategies; (iii) insufficient take-home amount; (iv) pilfering of grant funds by state officials; (v) diversion of funds for non-food purposes; (vi) overdependence on grants.

First, the DSD's cash transfers are not meant for individuals who simply fall below the FPL. In other words, it is not meant for people who are simply unemployed or poor, but rather it is targeted at those who can attribute their deprivation or poor socioeconomic condition to natural

⁴ For extensive discussion of each of the programmes pursued by the aforementioned departments and their respective challenges, refer to Nkrumah (2017).

Table 6.4 Number of grant beneficiaries

Province	WVG	OAG	GIA	FCG	DG	CSG	CDG	Total
Western Cape	28	354,312	21,821	31,872	155,604	1,021,092	15,763	1,600,492
Northern Cape	3	89,126	13,006	11,970	48,572	314,069	5,959	482,707
North West	-	264,790	12,446	29,553	67,149	856,779	9,916	1,240,633
Mpumalanga	1	257,160	20,010	27,768	78,308	1,105,791	11,580	1,500,618
Limpopo	3	474,289	49,971	44,314	96,729	1,846,762	16,012	2,528,080
Kwazulu Natal	9	705,290	65,674	75,177	228,743	2,838,909	39,715	3,953,517
Gauteng	33	620,417	7,286	45,848	116,710	1,867,017	19,834	2,677,145
Free State	1	206,444	6,561	28,813	74,047	693,003	8,439	1,017,308
Eastern Cape	14	581,489	25,214	90,704	182,393	1,908,650	22,783	2,811,247
Total	92	3,553,317	221,989	386,019	1,048,255	12,452,072	150,001	17,811,745

Source: SASSA (2019a): 27

causes. At the risk of stating the obvious, CDG is reserved for parents/caregivers of disabled children, CSG applies to only children under the age of eighteen, only a limited category of disabled people benefits from DG, families caring for foster children are beneficiaries of the FCG, OAG is reserved for the aged (those above sixty years), GIA applies to those caring for vulnerable grant holders, and as its name depicts, WVG is reserved for ex-soldiers (SASSA, 2019a). Table 6.5 simplifies these categories.

The grant's special-needs-based system conceptually demonises those who do not qualify as it implies the excluded are not worthy of state assistance as they cannot link their deprivation to natural causes besides being simply poor. Thus, irrespective of their dire food needs, millions of able-bodied yet unemployed youths are cut off from assistance. Presumably, the only available remedy for this group is the Social Relief of Distress Grant (SRGD) which provides a certain amount of food stamps or vouchers to people in distress for a limited period. Unlike conventional grants, the SRGD is a temporary assistance for individuals in dire material need. A successful applicant can assess it for a maximum of three months, and in an exceptional circumstance, for an extended three months (SASSA, 2019b). In order to assess this limited assistance, a candidate must meet at least one of these restrictive thresholds: (i) a denial of one's application for the grant will cause undue hardship; (ii) the applicant does not receive external assistance; (iii) the applicant has been plagued by a disaster such

Table 6.5 *List of grants and beneficiaries*

Grant	Criteria
CDG	Children with disability
CSG	Children under 18 years
FCG	Children under 18 who are orphaned, abused, abandoned, at risk or neglected
DG	Persons with disability
OAG	60 years and above
GIA	Caregivers of beneficiaries of disability, war veterans or older persons grant
WVG	Ex-soldiers engaged in the Second World War (1939–45) or the Korean War (1950– 3)

Source: SASSA (2019a)

as building collapse or fire outbreak; (iv) the bread winner has been admitted to a state-owned facility, including psychiatric institution or prison; (v) the application is filled within three months after the death of the bread winner; (vi) no maintenance is received from parent; (vii) the applicant is medically unfit to undertake work for a period less than six months; and (viii) the applicant is awaiting payment of an approved mainstream social grant (SASSA, 2019b). Clearly, these complex conditions are not couched to assist the poor as they are not only burdensome to prove, but could be expensive and time-consuming to pursue.

In addition to the DSD's narrow eligibility criteria, the scheme is woefully insufficient in terms of uptake rates. As shown in Tables 6.6 and 6.7, grant increases have not kept up with inflation.

Table 6.6 *Values of maximum social grants*

Grant	2018/19	2019/20	% increase
FCG	R960 (\$63.4)	R1,000 (\$66.0)	4.2%
CSG	R405 (\$26.8)	R425 (\$28.1)	4.9%
CDG	R1,695 (\$110)	R1,780 (\$117.6)	5.0%
DG	R1,695 (\$110)	R1,780 (\$117.6)	5.0%
WVG	R1,715 (\$113.3)	R1,800 (\$118.9)	5.0%
OAG (over 75)	R1,715 (\$113.3)	R1,800 (\$118.9)	5.0%
OAG (below 75)	R1,695 (\$110)	R1,780 (\$117.6)	5.0%

Source: SANT (2019: 57)

Table 6.7 *Changes in the price of commodities*

Commodity	Weight	2018 index	2019 index	% increase
Fish	0.40	105.4	111.6	5.9
Vegetables	1.30	102.0	113.3	11.1
Cold beverages	1.11	103.7	115.3	11.2
Water	3.16	107.7	119.2	11.0
Electricity	3.80	102.2	110.0	7.6
Medical services	0.87	106.4	113.4	6.6
Public transport	2.30	100.8	110.7	9.6
Books	0.64	103.9	111.2	7.0

Source: StatsSA (2019a: 7–8).

While the projected increase of 4.2 per cent for FCG, 4.9 per cent for CCG and 5 per cent for the rest theoretically implies that recipients will be able to spend more on food, this increase has not been able to stave off food insecurity. While the highest increase was 5 per cent, the current consumer price index (CPI) inflation between 2018 to 2019 alone stands at 5.2 per cent (SANT, 2019: 5). As indicated in Table 6.7, the inflation was not only in the agricultural sector, but cuts across other basic needs.

This implies that the price increase in basic necessities such as electricity, water, transportation and food outstrip the increase in the grant, thereby exacerbating the prevalent poverty, including starvation.

It should further be noted that this minor increase in grant will not win the battle against food insecurity as the grants have multiple uses and users. The amount is diluted among many needs and dependents apart from the intended recipient as it forms part of the household income and is spent on non-food items for the entire family (Nkrumah, 2018a). With 28 per cent of South Africa's population affected by medium- to long-term unemployment, in some cases for periods exceeding twelve months, more than a quarter of the population mainly depends on the insufficient grants for survival (StatsSA, 2019b). To this end, even the two largest forms of relief – the OAG and WVG – are incapable of making inroads into poverty or enhancing quality of life of the recipients.

As a matter of fact, the social grant has been an instrumental device for enhancing the food entitlement of many, even though it lacks an elaborate exit strategy. As a means of cutting down overdependence on state welfare, the strategy should incorporate a programme which enhance the capabilities of beneficiaries while linking them to economic opportunities. Yet, a reader may moot that there is some form of in-built strategy, such as the pensioner exiting the OAG at death or children exiting the FCG or CDG at eighteen. But does this explicitly or implicitly address the larger question of: 'how can the unemployed eighteen-year-old former beneficiary access food?' for while the grant has been instrumental in the arena of food security, it does not provide sufficient funds, skills or job experience for beneficiaries to fall back on when they are no longer eligible. One may, thus, conclude that the grant has become a double-edged sword: its roll-out has enhanced standard of living while failure to adequately increase its value and

expand its scope to cover the excluded millions has seen living standards stagnate and even slip for some households (Nkrumah, 2018a). It is, as a consequence, imperative that the state adopts and broadens entrepreneurship programmes for grant beneficiaries and their dependents to facilitate a sustainable standard of living.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the apparent policy fragmentation and insufficient coherence between and among relevant government departments has led to the ineffective operationalisation of well-intended policies from averting household and individual food insecurity. It further observes that while social transfers and commercial food production have become a springboard to enhance people's ability to cope with hunger, household food security cannot be attained by these interventions alone. Overcoming prevalent hunger requires the adoption of holistic food security legislation and a department which will ensure a systemic approach that cuts across departmental boundaries. Moreover, to ensure the effective operationalisation of such an overarching instrument, the state must transcend the use of polices and inter-departmental working groups and rather adopt an overarching food security instrument which clearly stipulates the resources and/or the means to address the problem, especially in the case of pregnant women. The setting up of a specific food security department will ensure the effective monitoring and regulation of food prices, see that adequate grants are provided to cater for the needs of vulnerable groups, provide the platform for (re)examining and expanding the scope of social welfare beneficiaries, develop a programme to impart skills, and possibly oversee the allocation of lands for prospective farmers. In sum, there is the need for further research on feasible exit strategies which should focus on answering the question: can land (re) distribution serve as an exit strategy for grant recipients and the many excluded? This question forms the crux of the next chapter.