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The Perspective, History and Solutions to Food Insecurity in France

Department *of* International Studies



The Perspective, History and Solutions to Food Insecurity in France

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I hereby recognize and pledge to fulfill my responsibilities as defined in the Honor Code and to maintain the integrity of both myself and the College community as a whole.

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Abstract

Food insecurity is a global health threat that violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In France, this problem disproportionately affects certain groups, including single-parent families, people with low levels of education, migrants and refugees and those living in poverty-stricken regions. The findings suggest that food insecurity in France is a denominator of poverty in certain regions, with *Le Monde Diplomatique* reporting eight million people falling victim to hunger. This thesis focuses on the perspectives of food insecurity in France, specifically examining the impacts of food insecurity and food distribution as it affects the body functions and the development of a certain country. Additionally, there was an examination of the policies and solutions created by created by the French government, the European Union and the United Nations.

The methodology used in this thesis was based on a literature review of primary sources from various databases, including PubMed, JStor, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, United Nations, and others. The study recorded information on France's historical and political background, economy, geography, agriculture, and demography. This paper will have a comprehensive conclusion as to why this issue exists in a developed country.

Introduction

Ever since my first year as an undergraduate student, I have relished the prospect of studying abroad. I remember the joy I felt when taking my first trip outside of Brazil, a two-week vacation to Disney World with my family. My father encouraged me from my youth to broaden my exposure to foreign cultures and learn as many languages as possible. Being an international student from Brazil at Allegheny College has allowed myself to grow as a person and learn about the different cultures, traditions, and beliefs on campus. Since then, I decided to major in International Studies and minor in Global Health Studies and French. During my junior year, I had the opportunity to take a political science class with Professor Kirchner called “War and Peace in the Middle East”, in which I learned about the reasons why countries have armed conflicts. Although this course did not focus on Europe specifically, I gained an understanding of how nations become enemies unexpectedly. She also focused on how countries violate the International and Universal Human Rights laws, in which it can be tied back to my topic, as Food insecurity violates these principles.

Further, during my Study Abroad program in France at the "Institut Catholique de Toulouse" (*Catholic Institute of Toulouse*), I took a Political Science class that talked about Human Rights regarding minority groups in France. This course showed me how France has issues accepting refugees by making them feel unwelcomed due to its discrimination regarding their nationality, ethnicity, race, and religion. Concerning this, I was curious to learn more about how bias and discrimination plays a role within the French Society.

Nevertheless, I had the opportunity to explore French culture and its diversity of people, cultures, traditions, and beliefs. Within those few months, I learned how Wheat, Canola, and Sunflower oil were a part of every French food. With the Russo- Ukrainian War, these products

were not imported to France. Therefore, the French diet drastically changed, which led to food insecurity among many people, more specifically, the low- income community in France.

My interest in France as a case study was heightened last fall through my experiences and observations regarding the culture. Volunteering with the Red Cross in Toulouse, I noticed that many refugees suffered from food insecurity, malnutrition, and hunger. This chapter of my life was essential for the creation of this thesis as I was able to see that even the developed countries have flawless laws and guidelines regarding the distribution of food and the practices towards human rights. The four dimensions of Global Health Studies at Allegheny College (Science and Environment, Power and Economics, Cultures and Societies, and Ethics and Social Responsibility) will allow me to analyze the impacts of Food Insecurity around the world, but more specifically in France.

For this project, I intend to examine the impacts of food insecurity and food distribution around the world, but more specifically in France. Secondly, I will analyze the effects of this issue on body function. Thirdly, I will investigate the policies created by the French government, the European Union, and the United Nations regarding food security and low-income inhabitants. Finally, I will explore the solutions that the French government and the NGOs created to alleviate this problem in its society. To me, the notion that a specific group of people must consider whether they will have food for the following day constitutes a global health problem that violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights because it demonstrates the suffering that people endure based on their race, nationality, culture, and socioeconomic status.

The methodology used in this thesis was based on a Literature Review. I used PubMed EconLit, JStor, Agricultural Science Collection, Le Monde Diplomatique, Ouest France, Radiofrance, Franceinfo, and United Nations, L' Ministere de l' Agriculture, Elsevier, Persee and

Cairn, Secours Catholique, Emmaus, L'Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, UNICEF, WHO, Croix Rouge, Médecins Sans Frontières as my database because they are heavily based on primary sources that contain international, economic, governmental and global health materials. The key terms "Food Insecurity," "Refugees," "Food Security," "France," "Russo-Ukrainian War", "Wheat," "Sunflower oil," and "Canola oil" "Low- Income" "Food Deserts" were essential for the construction of each argument in every chapter. I recorded the information regarding the studies of France's historical and political background, economy, geography, agriculture, and demography. I documented the strengths and limitations of these scholarly articles regarding the factors contributing to the increase of food insecurity in this country. Finally, explained what policies and solutions have been in place to decrease this global health problem in this area.

In France, Food Insecurity, according to Eric Birlouez, is a denominator to show the poverty levels in a certain region in France¹. Even though the United Nations declared that Everyone has the right to eat and to have food², the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 report claims that the number of people who were hungry increased drastically due to the Covid - 19 Pandemic. According to the Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition: Europe and Central Asia 2018 report say that " More than 14 million adults and some 4.7 million children in Europe and Central Asia suffer from severe food insecurity", ³ but in France, The article "*Hunger in France's land of plenty*" published by Le Monde Diplomatique and written by Gatien

¹ Birlouez, Éric. "L'insécurité alimentaire en France." *Pour* 4 (2009): 73-78.

² United Nations The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "OHCHR | Fact Sheet No. 34: The Right to Adequate Food," OHCHR, April 1, 2010, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/fact-sheets/fact-sheet-no-34-right-adequate-food>.

³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Europe and Central Asia Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition: The Role of Migration, Rural Women and Youth in Sustainable Development," *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, 2018, <https://www.fao.org/3/CA2703EN/CA2703EN.pdf>.

Elie in October 2021, specifies that France has 8 million people that fall victim to this issue⁴. This global problem has impacted one particular group: the low-income population. According to the article “ *La crise sanitaire a accentué la précarité des bénéficiaires de l’aide alimentaire,*” written by Aliocha Accardo, Agnes Brun, and Thomas Lellouch informs that 2 to 4 million low-income families with a single parent and immigrants utilized the food program promoted by the French government around the metropolitan areas during the years 2020 and 2021.⁵ For example, Bocquier et al. argue that these numbers are increasing due to the biggest financial crises since the Second World War⁶. As defined by the Federal Trio Programs, a low-income population highly depends on one's living location and marital status. Still, it is exceptional when one's income does not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level amount for that area⁷. Unfortunately, less attention than necessary is paid to the nutritional status of underprivileged groups.

In Paris, food and supply availability has been affected by Europe's recent coronavirus outbreak. One example is the food scarcity problem among France's student population.⁸ Professionals were not immune to the economic toll that the COVID-19 pandemic exacted on individuals. Since the pandemic began, it has become increasingly difficult for people to obtain adequate nutrition. Furthermore, the neighborhood in Paris called Clichy- sous- Bois is considered to be an area with higher rates of food insecurity than other places around this metropolitan area.

⁴Gatien Elie, “Hunger in France’s Land of Plenty,” *Le Monde diplomatique*, October 1, 2021, <https://mondediplo.com/2021/10/13food-box>.

⁵ Insee - Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, “La Crise Sanitaire a Accentué La Précarité Des Bénéficiaires de l’Aide Alimentaire - Insee Première - 1907,” *www.insee.fr*, June 2022, <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/6466177>.

⁶ Aurélie Bocquier et al., “Socio-Economic Characteristics, Living Conditions and Diet Quality Are Associated with Food Insecurity in France,” *Public Health Nutrition* 18, no. 16 (January 7, 2015): 2952–61, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1368980014002912>

⁷ U.S. Department of Education, “Federal TRIO Programs Current-Year Low-Income Levels,” *Ed.gov*, February 21, 2019, <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/incomelevels.html>.

⁸ Lorenzo Cotula and M. Vidar, “The Right to Adequate Food in Emergencies,” *FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS*, no. 1 (January 1, 2002), <https://www.fao.org/3/y4430e/y4430e.pdf>.

Degrading the environment due to inefficient farming practices and increasing the frequency and severity of natural catastrophes hurts food production, distribution networks, and crop yields⁹. Because of the release of potentially deadly levels of biogas in dumps, food loss contributes significantly to global warming as it prevents nutritious food from reaching those in need. Additionally, Joseph Klatzmann, in his article “La France dans la prospective alimentaire mondiale” explain that France has fertile soil, but it does not have the agricultural infrastructure to plant the essential crops for human consumption and survival¹⁰. Further, the article “Comment la guerre en Ukraine menace la sécurité alimentaire du monde entier” written by Yiqing QI explains that the Russo- Ukrainian war increased food insecurity among the French population because they depend heavily on Ukraine’s agricultural products such as wheat, sunflower oil, and Canola oil in order to make their food and to have a balanced diet¹¹.

In January 2021, the French President Emmanuel Macron proposed a relief initiative to solve this problem¹². Aid organizations in Europe have all been sounding the warning when the pandemic enters its second year, citing a startling increase in food feelings of inadequacy among youths due to a continuous trickle of campus closures, rising unemployment, and family

⁹ Judith Martin-Fernandez et al., “Prevalence and Socioeconomic and Geographical Inequalities of Household Food Insecurity in the Paris Region, France, 2010,” *BMC Public Health* 13, no. 1 (May 20, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-486>.

¹⁰ Joseph Klatzmann, “La France Dans La Prospective Alimentaire Mondiale,” *Économie Rurale* 155, no. 1 (1983): 9–12, <https://doi.org/10.3406/ecoru.1983.2956>.

¹¹ Yiqing QI, “Comment La Guerre En Ukraine Menace La Sécurité Alimentaire Du Monde Entier,” *Ouest-France.fr*, June 1, 2022, <https://www.ouest-france.fr/monde/guerre-en-ukraine/comment-la-guerre-en-ukraine-menace-la-securite-alimentaire-du-monde-entier-c9af4774-dd86-11ec-8402-b465269db5a0>.

¹² Pierre-Emmanuel Arduin and Doudja Saïdi-Kabeche, “Dignity in Food Aid Logistics Is Also a Knowledge Management and Digital Matter: Three Inspiring Initiatives in France,” *Sustainability* 14, no. 3 (January 19, 2022): 1130, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031130>.

dismissals¹³. Imbalances among the least defenseless are widening as a more significant percentage of people are going hungry and experiencing rising monetary and mental distress

As a means of resolving this inequity and ensuring that everyone on the planet has access to adequate food, we must revamp our agricultural and food production systems. Agricultural production, human health, and national and international development depend on more economically, socially, and environmentally friendly and profitable agriculture.¹⁴ Fortunately, France is leading efforts to improve farming practices and food distribution networks that contribute to food insecurity worldwide. France has outlined a five-point proposal, the International Strategy towards nutrition, Food Security, and Resilient Agriculture, that it intends to implement throughout 2019 and 2024. This strategy takes on the underlying reasons for malnutrition and is a model for the rest of Europe and the world as they work to eradicate it.¹⁵ French efforts to reduce food waste are focusing on the neighborhood level. For example, Guillaume drafted a bill to regulate the disposal of edible food waste. The bill mandates that supermarkets donate perishable items which they would have had to rip up without the law. Furthermore, the European Union promptly followed suit without equivalent intentions, making this bill the first of its kind.

¹³ Judith Martin-Fernandez et al., “Prevalence and Socioeconomic and Geographical Inequalities of Household Food Insecurity in the Paris Region, France, 2010,” *BMC Public Health* 13, no. 1 (May 20, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-486>.

¹⁴ Caillavet France, Touazi Djilali, and Nicole Darmon, *Food Insecurity, Health Restriction and Poverty among French Adults: Implications for Public Policies*, ed. France Caillavet, Djilali Touazi, and Nicole Darmon, *AgEcon Search* (AgEcon, 2011), <https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/114326>.

¹⁵ S. Laurence et al., “Food Insecurity and Health Status in Deprived Populations, 2014: A Multicentre Survey in Seven of the Social and Medical Healthcare Centres (CASOs) Run by Doctors of the World, France,” *Public Health* 143 (February 2017): 97–102, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2016.11.004>.

Chapter 1

Food insecurity is becoming an issue of public concern worldwide. Statistics indicate the existence of a global food crisis. Forecast reports also suggest that the global food crisis is bound to worsen in the long run. Annual reports by the World Food Program (WFP), a specialized international agency within the United Nations, show that a significant portion of the global population faces acute food insecurity. The WFP organization estimates that as of 2022, about 349 million people worldwide are facing acute food insecurity as compared to 287 million in 2021.¹⁶ Furthermore, over 900,000 individuals worldwide are fighting to survive in famine-like conditions.¹⁷ Growth in domestic food price inflation is a further indication of rising food insecurity. It is worth noting that domestic food price inflation remains high around the world.¹⁸ Statistics, for instance, show that 83.3 percent of low-income countries experienced domestic food price inflation levels of above 5%, between October 2022 and January 2023.¹⁹ Middle and high-income countries are also facing the same predicaments.

Studies suggest a correlation between food insecurity, malnutrition, and hunger. Food insecurity can be described as the situation whereby individuals or households cannot acquire adequate food.²⁰ More precisely, food insecurity translates to an inadequate food supply. In other words, populations facing food insecurity lack regular access to “nutritionally adequate foods” necessary for “normal growth and development.”²¹ Hunger, on the other hand, is a direct

¹⁶ World Food Program. “A Global Food Crisis.” World Food Program. 2022. <https://www.wfp.org/global-hunger-crisis>

¹⁷ World Food Program. “A Global Food Crisis.” World Food Program. 2022. <https://www.wfp.org/global-hunger-crisis>.

¹⁸ World Bank. “Food Security Update: World Bank Response to Rising Food Insecurity.” World Bank. February 13, 2023. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-update>

¹⁹ World Bank. “Food Security Update.” 2023.

²⁰ Sassi, Maria, Sassi, and Acocella. “*Understanding Food Insecurity*.” Cham: Springer, 2018.

²¹ Sassi, Maria, Sassi, and Acocella. “*Understanding Food Insecurity*.” Cham: Springer, 2018.

consequence of food insecurity. Hunger in the context of food insecurity refers to situations when people go days without food. Food insecurity triggers hunger as it means that individuals and households lack food. Food insecurity and hunger are risk factors for malnutrition.²² Malnutrition is caused by “imbalances or deficiencies of essential nutrients” required for normal growth and development.²³ These definitions highlight the need for urgent interventions to enhance global food security for all.

The World Bank defines poverty as “lacking enough resources to provide the necessities of life”. Further, they state that this condition is measured only if an individual lives on less than \$1.90 a day.²⁴ This statistic can be related to the recent studies that show that poverty, lack of infrastructure, resource, and access leads to an increase in food insecurity as it can affect the purchase and consumption of food. It is believed that individuals that live in communities with developing economies have a higher prevalence of living in a food desert²⁵. According to the article “Food Insecurity, Food Deserts, and Waist- to- Height Ratio: Variation by Sex and Race/ Ethnicity” by Alexander Testa and Dylan B. Jackson, Food deserts are areas that lack low priced foods as they rely on convenience stores²⁶. Low-income nations, account for 58% percent of “total global food insecurity” as compared to only 11% of high-income countries.”²⁷ Research also finds that most of the rural population migrate to urban centers and abandon farming in

²² Alaimo, Katherine, Mariana Chilton, and Sonya J. Jones. "Food insecurity, hunger, and malnutrition." In *Present knowledge in nutrition*, pp. 311-326. Academic Press, 2020.

²³ Alaimo et al. "Food insecurity, hunger, and malnutrition." 2020.

²⁴ “Understanding Poverty,” World Bank, n.d., <https://www.worldbank.org/en/understanding-poverty>.

²⁵ Alexander Testa and Dylan B. Jackson, “Food Insecurity, Food Deserts, and Waist-to-Height Ratio: Variation by Sex and Race/Ethnicity,” *Journal of Community Health* 44, no. 3 (June 1, 2019): 444–50, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-018-00601-w>.

²⁶ Alexander Testa and Dylan B. Jackson, “Food Insecurity, Food Deserts, and Waist-to-Height Ratio: Variation by Sex and Race/Ethnicity,” *Journal of Community Health* 44, no. 3 (June 1, 2019): 444–50, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-018-00601-w>.

²⁷ UNICEF. "The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2021." (2021).

search of a better income²⁸. This factor contributes to low yields as farmers have limited access to equipment and farm supplies necessary to boost productivity.²⁹ These observations help explain why populations from low-income countries frequently rely on humanitarian food programs.

Further, ineffective public policies and practices are detrimental to socioeconomic progress regarding the full access of food to every individual.³⁰ Public policies influence various aspects of social- economic development including industrialization and distribution of resources, but on the other hand, they are also a risk factor for wars and armed conflicts as they trigger political tensions.³¹ .As defined by the International Committee of the Red Cross, Armed conflict is “a fight between the government, the state, and the civilians due to an opposite ideology”³². The conflict in Ukraine for example, led to an increase in food insecurity globally, as they export more than 10% of wheat around the world, but more specifically to France³³. Wheat is considerate to be the source of energy in many agricultural products, such as rice, maize, potatoes, and others, removing or not ingesting them, can change your intake of fiber, vitamins, and other nutrients, in which, it can increase food insecurity³⁴. Statistics indicate that about 60% of individuals facing severe food insecurity live in regions affected by armed

²⁸ UNICEF. "The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2021." (2021).

²⁹ Thurlow, James, Paul Dorosh, and Ben Davis. "Demographic change, agriculture, and rural poverty." *Sustainable food and agriculture* (2019): 31-53.

³⁰ Väyrynen, Raimo. "Complex humanitarian emergencies: Concepts and issues." *Raimo Väyrynen: A Pioneer in International Relations, Scholarship and Policy-Making: With a Foreword by Olli Rehn and a Preface by Allan Rosas* (2023): 301-343.

³¹ Väyrynen, Raimo. "Complex humanitarian emergencies: Concepts and issues." *Raimo Väyrynen: A Pioneer in International Relations, Scholarship and Policy-Making: With a Foreword by Olli Rehn and a Preface by Allan Rosas* (2023): 301-343.

³² "How Is the Term 'Armed Conflict' Defined in International Humanitarian Law?," ICRC, n.d., <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/article/other/armed-conflict-article-170308.htm>.

³³ World Bank Group, "The Impact of the War in Ukraine on Food Security | World Bank Expert Answers," World Bank, April 5, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2022/04/05/the-impact-of-the-war-in-ukraine-on-food-security-world-bank-expert-answers>.

³⁴ "Gluten-Free Diet," Mayo Clinic, December 11, 2021, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/gluten-free-diet/art-20048530>.

conflict.³⁵ It is also worth highlighting that ineffective public policies hamper environmental sustainability.³⁶ For instance, poor industrial waste management policies can lead to an increase in environmental waste³⁷. Environmental waste is harmful to ecosystems and biodiversity and so a risk factor for food insecurity in the affected regions³⁸. It contributes to a growth in carbon emissions, loss of soil fertility, and climate change. These factors impact agricultural activities resulting in a scarcity of food resources³⁹.

Global warming exacerbates the global food crisis. Indeed, populations worldwide are experiencing the effects of global warming and climate change. It is worth noting that global warming impacts agricultural production. Global warming has led to a change in weather patterns.⁴⁰ The unpredictable weather patterns make it difficult for farmers to plan their farming cycles. This observation further implies a disruption of agricultural activities. Global warming also impacts crop yields. The rising temperatures associated with global warming “alter the suitability of areas for specific crops and cultivation systems.”⁴¹ More precisely, global warming leads to a rise in temperature and carbon dioxide levels. These changes increase the rate at which plants and soil lose moisture. Faster evapotranspiration rates lead to a reduction in crop yields, a

³⁵ Väyrynen, Raimo. "Complex humanitarian emergencies: Concepts and issues." *Raimo Väyrynen: A Pioneer in International Relations, Scholarship and Policy-Making: With a Foreword by Olli Rehn and a Preface by Allan Rosas* (2023): 301-343.

³⁶ Scherer, Laura, Jens-Christian Svenning, Jing Huang, Colleen L. Seymour, Brody Sandel, Nathaniel Mueller, Matti Kummu et al. "Global priorities of environmental issues to combat food insecurity and biodiversity loss." *Science of the Total Environment* 730 (2020): 139096.

³⁷ ³⁷ Scherer, Laura, Jens-Christian Svenning, Jing Huang, Colleen L. Seymour, Brody Sandel, Nathaniel Mueller, Matti Kummu et al. "Global priorities of environmental issues to combat food insecurity and biodiversity loss." *Science of the Total Environment* 730 (2020): 139096.

³⁸ Scherer, Laura, Jens-Christian Svenning, Jing Huang, Colleen L. Seymour, Brody Sandel, Nathaniel Mueller, Matti Kummu et al. "Global priorities of environmental issues to combat food insecurity and biodiversity loss." *Science of the Total Environment* 730 (2020): 139096.

³⁹ Scherer, Laura, Jens-Christian Svenning, Jing Huang, Colleen L. Seymour, Brody Sandel, Nathaniel Mueller, Matti Kummu et al. "Global priorities of environmental issues to combat food insecurity and biodiversity loss." *Science of the Total Environment* 730 (2020): 139096.

⁴⁰ Dasgupta, Shouro, and Elizabeth JZ Robinson. "Attributing changes in food insecurity to a changing climate." *Scientific Reports* 12, no. 1 (2022): 1-11.

⁴¹ Tito, Richard, Heraldo L. Vasconcelos, and Kenneth J. Feeley. "Global climate change increases risk of crop yield losses and food insecurity in the tropical Andes." *Global Change Biology* 24, no. 2 (2018): e592-e602.

factor that further exacerbates food insecurity and hunger worldwide. Global warming also forces farmers to change the timing of cultivation which may not always translate to better yields.

Natural disasters and global warming are closely interrelated. Global warming contributes to climate change which in turn is a risk factor for natural disasters.⁴² Climate change exacerbates the risk of natural disasters such as floods, droughts, and hurricanes. Such disasters have a severe impact on agricultural activities. Droughts, for example, affect soil fertility and moisture. As a result, crops cannot access adequate nutrients and water necessary for germination and sustainability. Indeed, natural disasters contribute to total global food insecurity. Findings from research studies show that natural disasters are a threat to the human food chain. For instance, studies reveal that natural disasters “have cost billions of dollars in lost agricultural production.”⁴³ They destroy the ecosystem that supports. Indeed, natural disasters disrupt socio-economic activities. People, for instance, are forced to evacuate as a precautionary measure. It is also worth highlighting that natural disasters often destroy property and critical infrastructure.

The right to food is enshrined in international laws and treaties. International law acknowledges adequate food and nutrition as vital for human well-being. Article 11 of the International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) stipulates that everyone has the “right to an adequate standard of living.”⁴⁴ The ICESCR is an international treaty adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1966 but came into effect in 1976.⁴⁵ Article 11 of

⁴² Bowden, Mitchell. “Understanding food insecurity in Australia.” Southbank, VIC, Australia: Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2020.

⁴³ Conforti, P., S. Ahmed, and G. Markova. "Impact of disasters and crises on agriculture and food security, 2017." (2018).

⁴⁴ Odello, Marco, and Francesco Seatzu. *The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: The Law, Process and Practice*. Routledge, 2020.

⁴⁵ Odello, Marco, and Francesco Seatzu. *The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: The Law, Process and Practice*.

the ICESCR requires UN member states to strive toward ensuring that every citizen and resident within their respective jurisdictions have an adequate standard of living. An adequate standard of living refers to regular food and other basic human necessities such as clothing and shelter. International laws and treaties require governments to adopt policies that foster socio-economic growth and expansion for the well-being of populations. Governments are also required to take measures to ensure that members of the public have equal distribution and access to food. The right to food is also envisaged in the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition 1974. According to the Declaration, governments are encouraged to “work together” toward enhancing food production and distribution of food resources.⁴⁶ It is evident that international laws advocate the eradication of food insecurity and hunger. They implore authorities worldwide to focus on ensuring that the basic needs of their citizens and residents are addressed. International laws also encourage countries to contribute towards humanitarian aid relief.

The United Nations Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs) also touch on the issue of food insecurity. UN SDG 2 specifically addresses global food insecurity and hunger. Sustainable Development Goal 2 “Zero Hunger” shows the UN’s commitment to eradicating food insecurity worldwide. It requires UN member states to work together towards “a world free of hunger by 2030.”⁴⁷ More precisely, SDG 2 envisages a world whereby every person has access to an adequate food supply. It also encompasses interventions aimed at eradicating ‘all forms of malnutrition.’⁴⁸ The United Nations policies encourage governments to make efforts toward the promotion of sustainable agriculture to enhancing global food security. In other words, the UN

⁴⁶ Adams, Francis, and Francis Adams. “The Right to Food.” Springer International Publishing, 2021.

⁴⁷ United Nations. “Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger.” United Nations, no date.
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/>

⁴⁸ United Nations. “Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger.”

acknowledges that improving agricultural productivity and equitable distribution of resources will lead to positive outcomes.⁴⁹ Indeed, UN member states are required to collaborate and join efforts in developing interventions that will foster sustainable agricultural production. This observance further implies the implementation of policies and frameworks that support and promote resilient cultivation practices. Such approaches play a primary role in ensuring environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability is critical since it maintains ecosystems and preserves biodiversity.

Food Insecurity is a risk factor for malnourishment and health complications, for these reasons, national and international agencies such as the United Nations sensitize the need for enhancing global food security. They encourage governments to practice sustainable agricultural development in practices and environmental sustainability. Effective public policies that enhance social equality and fair distribution of resources can play a pivotal role in eradicating this. Alleviating poverty levels is critical as it will help reduce the number of individuals facing severe food insecurity. Economic empowerment initiatives will also translate to improved agricultural production. Hence, economic development and sustainable agricultural practices may be the key to end this global concern.

⁴⁹ Gil, Juliana Dias Bernardes, Pytrik Reidsma, Ken Giller, Lindsay Todman, Andrew Whitmore, and Martin van Ittersum. "Sustainable development goal 2: Improved targets and indicators for agriculture and food security."

Chapter 2

French Section

Prévalence de l'insécurité alimentaire en France

Des études montrent que les ménages confrontés à l'insécurité alimentaire dans les zones urbaines de France ont souvent un risque plus élevé de sans-abris et d'exclusion sociale. Dans son étude, Leroy a examiné les expériences de familles hébergées temporairement dans des hôtels par le service des urgences (115) en raison d'un manque de logements abordables¹. Elle a constaté que ces familles étaient souvent confrontées à de multiples obstacles pour accéder à la nourriture, notamment des contraintes financières, des installations de cuisine limitées et le manque de transport vers les magasins d'alimentation.

Il est important de souligner que l'insécurité alimentaire est un problème complexe qui peut être causé par de nombreux facteurs interdépendants tels que la pauvreté, le manque de travail et d'éducation, de la discrimination tales que le racisme et la guerre². En conséquence, les solutions doivent être globales et adaptées à chaque situation spécifique.

Dans les zones urbaines, en revanche, il peut être nécessaire de mettre en place des programmes de soutien aux familles à faible revenu, tels que des programmes de bons alimentaires et des banques alimentaires pour aider les familles à subvenir à leurs besoins

¹ Leroy, Hélène. "Le travail social entre impuissance et confrontation à l'action humanitaire: le cas des familles hébergées à l'hôtel par le 115 en situation d'insécurité alimentaire." *Revue française des affaires sociales* 2 (2020): 157-173.

² Leroy, Hélène. "Le travail social entre impuissance et confrontation à l'action humanitaire: le cas des familles hébergées à l'hôtel par le 115 en situation d'insécurité alimentaire." *Revue française des affaires sociales* 2 (2020): 157-173.

alimentaires³. Il peut également être important de promouvoir une alimentation saine et équilibrée et d'encourager les gens à cultiver leur propre nourriture dans les jardins communautaires et les espaces publics⁴. Les gouvernements doivent mettre en place des politiques et des programmes efficaces pour lutter contre l'insécurité alimentaire, pendant que les organisations non gouvernementales et les entreprises peuvent fournir une assistance financière, technique et logistique pour mettre en œuvre ces programmes. L'insécurité alimentaire est un problème complexe qui touche les zones urbaines et rurales. Des solutions adaptées à chaque situation spécifique et une collaboration efficace entre les différents acteurs sont essentielles pour relever ce défi mondial.

Analyse de l'impact des facteurs démographiques

L'étude conduite par Leroy en 2020 a révélé que les aliments de meilleure qualité sont souvent plus coûteux, ce qui peut augmenter le risque d'insécurité alimentaire chez les ménages à faible revenu en France⁵. L'étude a également mis en évidence les implications négatives du passage à un régime alimentaire occidental, riche en produits d'origine animale et en aliments transformés, sur la santé humaine et planétaire à long terme⁶. Par ailleurs, la production de

³ Leroy, Hélène. "Le travail social entre impuissance et confrontation à l'action humanitaire: le cas des familles hébergées à l'hôtel par le 115 en situation d'insécurité alimentaire." *Revue française des affaires sociales* 2 (2020): 157-173.

⁴ Vall, Eric, Nadine Andrieu, Famoï Beavogui, and Diakalia Sogodogo. "Les cultures de soudure comme stratégie de lutte contre l'insécurité alimentaire saisonnière en Afrique de l'Ouest: le cas du fonio (*Digitaria exilis* Stapf)." *Cahiers agricultures* 20, no. 4 (2011): 294-300.

⁵ Nagata, Jason M., Kartika Palar, Holly C. Gooding, Andrea K. Garber, Henry J. Whittle, Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo et Sheri D. Weiser. "L'insécurité alimentaire est associée à une moins bonne santé mentale et à de moins bons résultats en matière de sommeil chez les jeunes adultes." *Journal de la santé des adolescents* 65, no. 6 (2019) : 805-811.

⁶ Nagata, Jason M., Kartika Palar, Holly C. Gooding, Andrea K. Garber, Henry J. Whittle, Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo et Sheri D. Weiser. "L'insécurité alimentaire est associée à une moins bonne santé mentale et à de moins bons résultats en matière de sommeil chez les jeunes adultes." *Journal de la santé des adolescents* 65, no. 6 (2019) : 805-811.

produits animaux exige une utilisation accrue des terres et des ressources naturelles, ainsi qu'une demande croissante en eau, ce qui a des répercussions négatives sur l'environnement.

Les systèmes alimentaires durables sont essentiels pour assurer un avenir durable. Ces systèmes prennent en compte les facteurs environnementaux, sociaux et économiques et garantissent que la production et la consommation alimentaires se font d'une manière qui n'épuise pas les ressources naturelles ou ne nuit pas à l'environnement⁷. Ils peuvent encourager l'aménagement urbain durable et l'agriculture urbaine, ce qui aide à réduire l'empreinte carbone de la production alimentaire et à augmenter l'accès à des options alimentaires saines dans les zones urbaines. Les gouvernements peuvent également fournir des incitations financières aux agriculteurs qui adoptent des pratiques agricoles durables, telles que l'utilisation d'engrais naturels et la réduction de l'utilisation de pesticides.

Elles peuvent informer le public sur l'importance des systèmes alimentaires durables et encourager les gens à apporter des changements dans leur vie quotidienne pour les soutenir. Les entreprises peuvent également mettre en place des chaînes d'approvisionnement responsables qui garantissent le traitement équitable des travailleurs et réduisent les impacts environnementaux négatifs. Les entreprises peuvent contribuer en offrant des produits et services plus durables et en investissant dans des pratiques durables. En travaillant ensemble, ces parties prenantes peuvent créer un avenir plus durable pour tous.

Les citoyens peuvent également jouer un rôle important en choisissant des aliments de qualité, locaux et de saison, en réduisant leur consommation de viande et en évitant les aliments transformés et les emballages jetables. Ils peuvent également soutenir les initiatives d'agriculture

⁷ Darmon, Nicole N., Aurelie Bocquier, Florent Vieux, and France Caillavet. 2020. "L'Insécurité Alimentaire Pour Raisons Financières En France." *L'Insécurité Alimentaire Pour Raisons Financières En France* Nicole N. Darmon, Aurelie Bocquier, Fl. May 31.

urbaine en cultivant des légumes dans leurs jardins ou sur les toits, en participant à des jardins collectifs ou en soutenant les projets d'agriculture urbaine dans leur quartier.

Tendances et changements des taux d'insécurité alimentaire au fil du temps en France

Une approche holistique de la sécurité alimentaire doit être adoptée en France. Cela implique de considérer les facteurs économiques, sociaux, environnementaux et culturels qui influent sur l'accessibilité et la disponibilité des aliments sains⁸. Les politiques publiques doivent prendre en compte la durabilité et la résilience des systèmes alimentaires locaux, en soutenant les agriculteurs locaux et les petits producteurs. Des programmes de formation à l'alimentation et à la nutrition doivent être mis en place pour encourager les choix alimentaires sains et pour éduquer les gens sur l'importance de manger des aliments nutritifs. De plus, les entreprises agroalimentaires doivent être encouragées à adopter des pratiques durables et éthiques pour garantir la disponibilité d'aliments sains et abordables pour tous. Les grandes surfaces et les supermarchés doivent également jouer un rôle important dans la lutte contre l'insécurité alimentaire en proposant des aliments frais et sains à des prix abordables, en particulier dans les quartiers défavorisés.

Le rôle de la recherche et de l'innovation dans la sécurité alimentaire ne doit pas être sous-estimé. Les avancées technologiques et scientifiques peuvent aider à développer des systèmes alimentaires durables et à faible émission de carbone⁹. Des initiatives telles que l'agriculture de précision et les cultures sous serre peuvent aider à augmenter la production

⁸ Kookana, Rai S., Pay Drechsel, Priyanka Jamwal et Joanne Vanderzalm. "Urbanisation et économies émergentes : Enjeux et solutions potentielles pour l'eau et la sécurité alimentaire." *Science de l'environnement total* 732 (2020): 139057.

⁹ Arzel, Lauryane. 2022. "Guerre En Ukraine : Les Producteurs De Colza Et De Tournesol Face à L'explosion De La Demande D'huile." *France 3 Nouvelle-Aquitaine*. May 5.

alimentaire tout en réduisant les émissions de gaz à effet de serre et en utilisant moins d'eau¹⁰.

Néanmoins, certaines personnes continuent de faire face à des barrières pour accéder à une alimentation saine et adéquate en France.

Les zones rurales et les quartiers défavorisés des villes peuvent être confrontés à des problèmes d'approvisionnement en nourriture et de distribution, en particulier pour les fruits et légumes frais¹¹. Les personnes sans-abri, les migrants et les demandeurs d'asile peuvent également rencontrer des difficultés pour accéder à des ressources alimentaires suffisantes. Il est important de souligner que l'insécurité alimentaire ne se limite pas à une question de quantité de nourriture disponible. Les aliments de mauvaise qualité, l'absence de choix ou de variété alimentaire, ainsi que les habitudes alimentaires peu saines peuvent également contribuer à l'insécurité alimentaire en France. Par conséquent, des efforts doivent être déployés pour sensibiliser les gens aux choix alimentaires sains et pour améliorer l'accès aux aliments frais et nutritifs.

Enfin, il convient de noter que l'insécurité alimentaire a des implications importantes pour la santé et le bien-être des individus, ainsi que pour la société dans son ensemble¹². Les coûts économiques et sociaux associés à l'insécurité alimentaire sont considérables et peuvent inclure des coûts de santé plus élevés, une baisse de la productivité et une augmentation des

¹⁰ Arzel, Lauryane. 2022. "Guerre En Ukraine : Les Producteurs De Colza Et De Tournesol Face à L'explosion De La Demande D'huile." *France 3 Nouvelle-Aquitaine*. May 5.

¹¹ Pourmotabbed, Ali, Sajjad Moradi, Atefeh Babaei, Abed Ghavami, Hamed Mohammadi, Cyrus Jalili, Michael E. Symonds et Maryam Miraghajani. "Insécurité alimentaire et santé mentale : une revue systématique et une méta-analyse." *Santé publique nutrition* 23, no. 10 (2020): 1778-1790.

¹² "Insee Première · Juin 2022 · n° 1907 *La Crise Sanitaire a Accentué La Précarité Des Bénéficiaires De L'aide Alimentaire*." 2023. *La Crise Sanitaire a Accentué La Précarité Des Bénéficiaires De L'aide Alimentaire* - Insee Première - 1907. Accessed April 10

niveaux de pauvreté et d'exclusion sociale¹³. Par conséquent, il est essentiel de continuer à mettre en œuvre des politiques et des programmes pour lutter contre l'insécurité alimentaire en France.

Effets de l'insécurité alimentaire sur la santé et le bien-être

Drewnowski et Burton-Freeman (2020) proposent l'utilisation d'un score alimentaire riche en nutriments qui prend en compte la présence de flavonoïdes dans les fruits et légumes, qui pourrait être utilisé pour informer la conception des politiques et des programmes¹⁴. Plusieurs études ont proposé l'utilisation d'un score alimentaire riche en nutriments qui tient compte de la présence de flavonoïdes dans les fruits et légumes, qui pourrait être utilisé pour éclairer la conception des politiques et des programmes.

Les résultats de plusieurs études ont montré que les personnes ayant un score alimentaire élevé ont un risque réduit de maladie chronique, ainsi qu'une meilleure santé globale. Les études soulignent également l'importance de mettre en place des politiques et des programmes pour encourager une alimentation saine et riche en nutriments. Cela peut inclure des campagnes de sensibilisation pour encourager les régimes à base de plantes, ainsi que des programmes pour améliorer l'accès à des aliments sains et nutritifs.

Les liens entre l'insécurité alimentaire et les maladies chroniques

Une voie potentielle pour aborder le lien entre l'insécurité alimentaire et les maladies chroniques en France est par le biais de programmes d'éducation nutritionnelle. Leroy (2020) soutient que les travailleurs sociaux peuvent jouer un rôle vital dans l'éducation des personnes et des familles connaissant l'insécurité alimentaire sur les habitudes alimentaires saines et l'accès à

¹³ "Insee Première · Juin 2022 · n° 1907 LA Crise Sanitaire a Accentué La Précarité Des Bénéficiaires De L'aide Alimentaire." 2023. *La Crise Sanitaire a Accentué La Précarité Des Bénéficiaires De L'aide Alimentaire - Insee Première - 1907.*

¹⁴ Drewnowski, Adam, and Britt Burton-Freeman. "A new category-specific nutrient rich food (NRF9f. 3) score adds flavonoids to assess nutrient density of fruit." *Food & function* 11, no. 1 (2020): 123-130.

des aliments nutritifs et abordables¹⁵. Une autre approche consiste à se concentrer sur l'amélioration de l'accès aux options alimentaires saines dans les communautés à faible revenu. Selon Hassani (2021), les femmes en Algérie qui ont reçu de l'aide d'une organisation caritative ont pu améliorer leur sécurité alimentaire et leur diversité alimentaire grâce à des programmes axés sur l'augmentation de l'accès à des aliments sains¹⁶.

De même, Birlouez (2009) souligne l'importance de créer des politiques et des programmes qui soutiennent des systèmes alimentaires durables à petite échelle, qui peuvent fournir des options alimentaires abordables et saines pour les personnes et les communautés confrontées à l'insécurité alimentaire¹⁷.

Effets psychologiques et sociaux de l'insécurité alimentaire

L'insécurité alimentaire en France a également des conséquences sociales¹⁸. Les familles qui connaissent l'insécurité alimentaire peuvent ressentir une sensation de honte ou de stigmatisation liée à leur incapacité à fournir de la nourriture pour eux-mêmes et leurs enfants. Cela peut entraîner un isolement social.

En réponse aux effets sociaux de l'insécurité alimentaire, diverses organisations et programmes ont vu le jour en France pour aborder le problème¹⁹. Par exemple, certaines

¹⁵ Leroy, Hélène. "Le travail social entre impuissance et confrontation à l'action humanitaire: le cas des familles hébergées à l'hôtel par le 115 en situation d'insécurité alimentaire." *Revue française des affaires sociales* 2 (2020): 157-173.

¹⁶ Hassani, L. "Femmes chefs de ménages pauvres face au défi de l'alimentation au quotidien Cas des bénéficiaires d'aides d'une association caritative (Constantine, Algérie)." *Nutrition and Food Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2021): 1-12.

¹⁷ Birlouez, Éric. "L'insécurité alimentaire en France." *Pour* 4 (2009): 73-78.

¹⁸ Nada Nagar a, Jason M., Kartika Palar, Holly C. Gooding, Andrea K. Garber, Henry J. Whittle, Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo et Sheri D. Weiser. "L'insécurité alimentaire est associée à une moins bonne santé mentale et à de moins bons résultats en matière de sommeil chez les jeunes adultes." *Journal de la santé des adolescents* 65, no. 6 (2019) : 805-811.

¹⁹ Nagar a, Jason M., Kartika Palar, Holly C. Gooding, Andrea K. Garber, Henry J. Whittle, Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo et Sheri D. Weiser. "L'insécurité alimentaire est associée à une moins bonne santé mentale et à de moins bons résultats en matière de sommeil chez les jeunes adultes." *Journal de la santé des adolescents* 65, no. 6 (2019) : 805-811.

organisations à but non lucratif et initiatives communautaires fournissent une aide alimentaire aux familles confrontées à l'insécurité alimentaire. Cependant, ces organisations peuvent avoir du mal à répondre à la demande pour leurs services, et la disponibilité de l'aide alimentaire peut varier selon la région ou la communauté.

Politiques et programmes visant à répondre à l'insécurité alimentaire

Les repas servis dans les écoles doivent respecter des normes nutritionnelles spécifiques pour garantir une alimentation saine et équilibrée aux enfants²⁰. Ces programmes ont un impact positif non seulement sur les enfants individuels, mais également sur la communauté dans son ensemble en France. En outre, des initiatives de dons alimentaires ont été développées pour récupérer les invendus alimentaires des supermarchés et des restaurants et les redistribuer aux associations caritatives.

Pour relever ces défis, certains chercheurs ont proposé des solutions innovantes pour améliorer la mise en œuvre et l'impact des programmes de repas scolaires en France²¹. Par exemple, l'incorporation de dépistages de santé mentale dans les programmes de repas scolaires pourrait aider à identifier les enfants qui pourraient être confrontés à l'insécurité alimentaire ou à d'autres problèmes de santé. Cela pourrait entraîner des interventions plus précoces et de meilleurs résultats pour les enfants et leurs familles. L'incorporation d'options à base de plantes dans les repas scolaires pourrait également aider à réduire l'impact environnemental des repas

²⁰ Buscail, Camille, Judith Gendreau, Paul Daval, Pierre Lombrail, Serge Hercberg, Paule Latino-Martel et Chantal Julia. "Impact des chèques fruits et légumes sur la précarité alimentaire des familles défavorisées de la banlieue parisienne." *BMC nutrition* 5 (2019) : 1-11.

²¹ Darmon, Nicole N., Aurélie Bocquier, Florent Vieux, and France Caillavet. "L'insécurité alimentaire pour raisons financières en France." *Les travaux 2009-2010 de l'ONPES* (2010).

tout en améliorant leur qualité nutritionnelle²². La promotion de l'agriculture urbaine et des systèmes alimentaires locaux pourrait également être une stratégie efficace pour fournir des aliments nutritifs d'origine locale dans les repas scolaires.

Les programmes de repas scolaires peuvent jouer un rôle important dans la promotion de l'éducation à la nutrition chez les enfants²³. Les enfants peuvent apprendre des habitudes alimentaires saines en observant des choix alimentaires équilibrés dans leur environnement scolaire. De plus, les programmes de repas scolaires peuvent aider à réduire les inégalités en matière d'accès à une alimentation saine, car tous les enfants ont accès à un repas nutritif et équilibré pendant la journée scolaire.

Initiatives communautaires d'ONG pour lutter contre l'insécurité alimentaire en France

Les efforts communautaires ont également été efficaces pour lutter contre l'insécurité alimentaire en France²⁴. Les interventions communautaires sont importantes pour prévenir l'insécurité alimentaire. Par exemple, les jardins communautaires et les projets d'agriculture urbaine ont fourni des produits frais aux communautés à faible revenu, tandis que les coopératives alimentaires et les clubs d'achat ont offert un accès abordable à des options alimentaires saines²⁵. Ces initiatives permettent aux communautés locales de prendre en charge leur sécurité alimentaire et de renforcer leur résilience contre l'insécurité alimentaire.

²² Klatzmann, Joseph. 2016. "Joseph Klatzmann." *Économie Rurale. Persée - Portail des revues scientifiques en SHS*. March 17.

²³ Darmon, Nicole N., Aurélie Bocquier, Florent Vieux, and France Caillavet. "L'insécurité alimentaire pour raisons financières en France." *Les travaux 2009-2010 de l'ONPES* (2010).

²⁴ Darmon, Nicole N., Aurélie Bocquier, Florent Vieux, and France Caillavet. "L'insécurité alimentaire pour raisons financières en France." *Les travaux 2009-2010 de l'ONPES* (2010).

²⁵ Escalon, Hélène, Claire Bossard, and François Beck. 2023. "Baromètre Santé Nutrition 2008." *Accueil*. Accessed April 10. <https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/determinants-de-sante/nutrition-et-activite-physique/documents/enquetes-etudes/barometre-sante-nutrition-2008>.

En outre, les organisations à but non lucratif et les initiatives communautaires travaillent ensemble pour lutter contre l'insécurité alimentaire en France²⁶. Les organisations à but non lucratif collaborent souvent avec des groupes communautaires locaux pour fournir une aide alimentaire et d'autres services de soutien aux populations vulnérables. Par exemple, certaines banques alimentaires collaborent avec des organisations communautaires pour distribuer des paquets alimentaires aux personnes âgées, tandis que les cuisines communautaires collaborent avec des organisations à but non lucratif pour fournir des repas aux populations sans-abri.

English Section

Food Insecurity in France

Food insecurity is a significant issue in France, affecting millions, including low-income families, refugees, and older people. Despite being a leading agricultural power in the European Union and producing a fifth of the continent's output, eight million people in France are affected by food insecurity.²⁷ This essay aims to compare food insecurity in France during World War II and today, identify the populations most affected by this issue, and examine the social determinants, causes, drivers, and factors leading to food insecurity in France.

Food Insecurity in France During WW2 Compared to Today

The situation of food insecurity in France today is very different from the situation during World War II (WW2) when the country faced severe food shortages and rationing due to German occupation, scarcity of resources, black market activities, and social inequalities. This section will compare and contrast the situation of food insecurity in France during WW2 and

²⁶ Raymond, Bernard. 2021. "Insécurité Alimentaire : L'autre Faim Du Monde Avec Antoine Bernard De Raymond Et Hélène Botreau." *France Culture*. July 20

²⁷ Gatien Elie, "Hunger in France's Land of Plenty," *Le Monde diplomatique*, October 1, 2021, <https://mondediplo.com/2021/10/13food-box>.

today, highlighting the similarities and differences in terms of causes, extent, severity, and consequences.

Causes

One of the main causes of food insecurity in France during WW2 was the German occupation that started in 1940 and lasted until 1944. The Germans imposed strict controls over the production, distribution, and consumption of food in France, requisitioning large quantities of agricultural products and livestock for use or export to Germany. They also imposed a system of rationing based on coupons, cards, and tickets that allocated different amounts of food to different categories of people according to their age, occupation, health status, and loyalty to the regime. The rationing system was designed to ensure a minimum subsistence level for the population, but it was often insufficient, unequal, and corrupted by fraud and speculation.²⁸

Another cause of food insecurity in France during WW2 was the scarcity of resources due to the disruption of trade, transport, and communication networks caused by the war. The availability and affordability of food were affected by the shortage of inputs such as fertilizers, seeds, machinery, fuel, and labor; the destruction or damage of crops, fields, farms, warehouses, roads, railways, ports, and bridges by bombings or sabotage; the blockade or confiscation of imports or exports by the Allies or the Axis powers; and the inflation or devaluation of the currency that affected the purchasing power of consumers and producers. The scarcity of resources also led to a decline in the quality and diversity of food available on the market or through rationing.²⁹

²⁸ K. Moure, "Food Rationing and the Black Market in France (1940-1944)," *French History* 24, no. 2 (April 28, 2010): 262–82, <https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/crq025>.

²⁹ K. Moure, "Food Rationing and the Black Market in France (1940-1944)," *French History* 24, no. 2 (April 28, 2010): 262–82, <https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/crq025>.

In contrast, one of the main causes of food insecurity in France today is not the lack of food availability or affordability but rather the lack of food access or utilization for certain population segments. Food insecurity in France today is mainly driven by socioeconomic factors such as low income, high food prices, poor access to food outlets, lack of social support, discrimination, and cultural factors that affect people's ability or willingness to acquire adequate and healthy food that meets their dietary needs and preferences.³⁰ These factors are often exacerbated by other structural or contextual factors such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, migration, urbanization, globalization, and climate change that affect the stability and resilience of food systems and livelihoods.

Extent

The extent of food insecurity in France during WW2 was widespread and severe, affecting almost all population segments regardless of their location, class, or status. The average daily calorie, protein, fat, and carbohydrate intake per person in France dropped during the war, with significant regional variations depending on the degree of occupation or liberation. The extent of food insecurity in France today is much lower and less severe, affecting only a minority of the population mainly concentrated in urban areas and among low-income households. According to a study published in BMC Public Health in 2013, the prevalence of food insecurity in the Paris metropolitan area (PMA) in 2010 was 6.30% (95% CI = [4.99-7.97]) for households, with up to 13.59% in the most underprivileged neighborhoods. About 2.50% of households experienced severe FI and 2.85% of households living with an income above 1666 € experienced

³⁰ Aurélie Bocquier et al., “Socio-Economic Characteristics, Living Conditions and Diet Quality Are Associated with Food Insecurity in France,” *Public Health Nutrition* 18, no. 16 (January 7, 2015): 2952–61, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1368980014002912>.

food insecurity, whereas the percentage raises to 23.38% among those living below the poverty threshold (<791 €).³¹

Consequences

The consequences of food insecurity in France during WW2 were not only negative but also positive for some aspects of society and culture. Food insecurity during WW2 also stimulated some positive changes in society and culture, such as the development of public policies and social movements to ensure food security and sovereignty for the population; the innovation and adaptation of agricultural practices and food production to cope with scarcity and diversity; the emergence and diffusion of new food habits and tastes that reflected regional and national identities; and the creation and expression of new forms of art and literature that reflected the experience and memory of hunger and war.^{32 33}

The consequences of food insecurity in France today are also mixed, but mostly negative for some aspects of society and culture. According to the Word Bank, food insecurity today undermines the social and economic development of the country, as it reduces the productivity, education, and income potential of individuals and households; increases the health care costs and social welfare expenditures of the government; and exacerbates the social inequalities and injustices among different groups of people. Food insecurity today also challenges the cultural values and norms of the country, as it erodes the dignity, autonomy, choice, voice, and recognition of food insecure individuals and households; disrupts the social cohesion, solidarity,

³¹ Judith Martin-Fernandez et al., “Prevalence and Socioeconomic and Geographical Inequalities of Household Food Insecurity in the Paris Region, France, 2010,” *BMC Public Health* 13, no. 1 (May 20, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-486>.

³² K. Moure, “Food Rationing and the Black Market in France (1940-1944),” *French History* 24, no. 2 (April 28, 2010): 262–82, <https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/crq025>.

³³ Emily Monaco, “The Triumphant Return of France’s ‘Forgotten Vegetables,’” *Atlas Obscura*, April 27, 2020, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/food-during-french-occupation>.

and trust among different actors in the food system; and threatens the gastronomic heritage, diversity, and quality of the country.³⁴

The Most Affected Population by Food Insecurity in France Today

This section identifies and describes the population groups that are most affected by food insecurity in France today, such as low-income households, single-parent families, refugees, migrants, and other vulnerable groups. It will also explain the reasons and mechanisms that make these groups more susceptible to food insecurity and discuss the health and social implications of food insecurity for these groups.

Low-Income Households

One of the main groups that are affected by food insecurity in France today are low-income households, defined as those with a monthly income below 60% of the median income (€1066 per person or €2238 per household in 2018).³⁵ Low-income households had a prevalence of food insecurity of 35.6% in 2010, compared to 12.2% for the general population. Low-income households also had a higher prevalence of very low food security (9.9% vs 3.1%) and lower dietary diversity scores (5.3 vs 6.1) than the general population.³⁶

The main reason why low-income households are more vulnerable to food insecurity is their limited economic access to adequate and healthy food. Low-income households spend a higher proportion of their income on food (23% vs 14%) and face higher food prices than higher-income households due to their location, transportation, and shopping habits (Darmon et al.,

³⁴ World Bank Group, “Food Security Update | World Bank Response to Rising Food Insecurity,” World Bank Group, March 28, 2023, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-update>.

³⁵ Elisabeth Garratt, “Food Insecurity in Europe: Who Is at Risk, and How Successful Are Social Benefits in Protecting against Food Insecurity?” *Journal of Social Policy* 49, no. 4 (October 9, 2019): 785–809, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0047279419000746>.

³⁶ Pierre-Emmanuel Arduin and Doudja Saïdi-Kabeche, “Dignity in Food Aid Logistics Is Also a Knowledge Management and Digital Matter: Three Inspiring Initiatives in France,” *Sustainability* 14, no. 3 (January 19, 2022): 1130, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031130>.

2014). Low-income households also have less access to social support and public assistance that can help them cope with food insecurity, such as family, friends, charities, or social services.³⁷

The main consequence of food insecurity for low-income households is poor nutritional intake and health outcomes. Low-income households tend to consume less fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and meat; and more energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods than higher-income households.³⁸ This leads to an increased risk of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer among low-income households.³⁹ Food insecurity also affects the mental health and well-being of low-income households, causing stress, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.^{40 41}

Single-Parent Families

Another group that is affected by food insecurity in France today are single-parent families, defined as those with one parent living with one or more children under 25 years old.⁴² According to Darmon et al. (2014), single-parent families had a prevalence of food insecurity of 24.6% in 2010, compared to 12.2% for the general population. Single-parent families also had a higher prevalence of very low food security (7.1% vs 3.1%) and lower dietary diversity scores (5.7 vs 6.1) than the general population.

The main reason why single-parent families are more vulnerable to food insecurity is their limited economic and social access to adequate and healthy food. Single-parent families

³⁷ Judith Martin-Fernandez et al.

³⁸ Aurélie Bocquier et al., “Socio-Economic Characteristics, Living Conditions and Diet Quality Are Associated with Food Insecurity in France,” *Public Health Nutrition* 18, no. 16 (January 7, 2015): 2952–61, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1368980014002912>.

³⁹ S. Laurence et al.

⁴⁰ Judith Martin-Fernandez et al.

⁴¹ Laura Pryor et al., “Food Insecurity and Mental Health Problems among a Community Sample of Young Adults,” *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 51, no. 8 (June 13, 2016): 1073–81, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-016-1249-9>.

⁴² Elisabeth Garratt, “Food Insecurity in Europe: Who Is at Risk, and How Successful Are Social Benefits in Protecting against Food Insecurity?” *Journal of Social Policy* 49, no. 4 (October 9, 2019): 785–809, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0047279419000746>.

have lower incomes, higher poverty rates, and higher unemployment rates than other types of families in France. Single-parent families also face higher costs of living, such as housing, childcare, education, and health care, that reduce their disposable income for food.⁴³ Single-parent families also have less access to social support and public assistance that can help them cope with food insecurity, such as family, friends, charities, or social services.⁴⁴

The main consequence of food insecurity for single-parent families is poor nutritional intake and health outcomes for both parents and children. Single-parent families tend to consume less fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and meat; and more energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods than other types of families in France. This leads to an increased risk of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer among single-parent families.⁴⁵ Food insecurity also affects the mental health and well-being of single-parent families, causing stress, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.⁴⁶

Refugees and Migrants

Another group that is affected by food insecurity in France today are refugees and migrants, defined as those who have left their country of origin or habitual residence due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or other reasons, and have sought protection or settled in France. The main reason why refugees and migrants are more vulnerable

⁴³ Elisabeth Garratt, “Food Insecurity in Europe: Who Is at Risk, and How Successful Are Social Benefits in Protecting against Food Insecurity?” *Journal of Social Policy* 49, no. 4 (October 9, 2019): 785–809, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0047279419000746>.

⁴⁴ Judith Martin-Fernandez et al., “Prevalence and Socioeconomic and Geographical Inequalities of Household Food Insecurity in the Paris Region, France, 2010,” *BMC Public Health* 13, no. 1 (May 20, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-486>.

⁴⁵ S. Laurence et al., “Food Insecurity and Health Status in Deprived Populations, 2014: A Multicentre Survey in Seven of the Social and Medical Healthcare Centres (CASOs) Run by Doctors of the World, France,” *Public Health* 143 (February 2017): 97–102, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2016.11.004>.

⁴⁶ Judith Martin-Fernandez et al., “Prevalence and Socioeconomic and Geographical Inequalities of Household Food Insecurity in the Paris Region, France, 2010,” *BMC Public Health* 13, no. 1 (May 20, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-486>.

to food insecurity is their limited economic and social access to adequate and healthy food. Refugees and migrants have lower incomes, higher poverty rates, and higher unemployment rates than the native-born population in France. Refugees and migrants also face various barriers and challenges to access food outlets, such as language, culture, discrimination, legal status, documentation, transportation, and security. Comparable to the vulnerable groups, refugees and migrants face limited access to social support and public assistance, which can assist them in dealing with food insecurity, including aid from family members, acquaintances, non-profit organizations, or government-run social programs.⁴⁷

Additionally, the struggles of low-income households and single-parent families, refugees and migrants are similarly affected by food insecurity, with one of the principal outcomes being suboptimal nutritional intake and unfavorable health outcomes for both adults and children. Relative to the native-born population in France, refugees and migrants tend to consume fewer fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and meat while consuming energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods. This dietary pattern leads to a heightened risk of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer among refugees and migrants.⁴⁸ The deleterious effects of food insecurity extend beyond physical health, as it also impairs the mental health and overall well-being of this population, resulting in increased stress, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Judith Martin-Fernandez et al., “Prevalence and Socioeconomic and Geographical Inequalities of Household Food Insecurity in the Paris Region, France, 2010,” *BMC Public Health* 13, no. 1 (May 20, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-486>.

⁴⁸ S. Laurence et al., “Food Insecurity and Health Status in Deprived Populations, 2014: A Multicentre Survey in Seven of the Social and Medical Healthcare Centres (CASOs) Run by Doctors of the World, France,” *Public Health* 143 (February 2017): 97–102, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2016.11.004>.

⁴⁹ Judith Martin-Fernandez et al., “Prevalence and Socioeconomic and Geographical Inequalities of Household Food Insecurity in the Paris Region, France, 2010,” *BMC Public Health* 13, no. 1 (May 20, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-486>.

Other Vulnerable Groups

Besides low-income households, single-parent families, and refugees and migrants, there are other groups that are affected by food insecurity in France today, such as elderly people, homeless people, students, and people with disabilities or chronic diseases. These groups have specific needs and challenges that make them more susceptible to food insecurity, such as low income, high expenses, poor health, isolation, immobility, or accessibility. Similar to the other marginalized populations previously mentioned, these populations also experience a reduced ability to access social support and public aid that could alleviate food insecurity, including familial assistance, charitable organizations, or government-run social services. Furthermore, they also face the deleterious consequences of inadequate nutrition and food insecurity on their physical health, including poor health outcomes, as well as on their mental health and general well-being.⁵⁰

The Social Determinants of Food Insecurity in France

Food insecurity is not only determined by the availability and affordability of food, but also by the access and utilization of food by individuals and households. These dimensions of food insecurity are influenced by various factors that operate at different levels of society, such as individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and policy levels. These factors are known as the social determinants of health (SDH), defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national

⁵⁰ World Bank Group, "Food Security Update | World Bank Response to Rising Food Insecurity," World Bank Group, March 28, 2023, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-update>.

and local levels."⁵¹ This section will define the concept of SDH and how it applies to food insecurity and analyze the main SDH of food insecurity in France at different levels.

The Concept of SDH and its Application to Food Insecurity

The concept of SDH emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a response to the growing recognition that health was not only determined by biological and medical factors, but also by social and environmental factors that interacted with each other and with individual characteristics. The concept was further developed and popularized by the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH), which was established in 2005 to provide evidence-based recommendations on how to reduce health inequities within and between countries. The CSDH published its final report in 2008, which identified three main principles for action: (1) improve the conditions of daily life; (2) tackle the inequitable distribution of power, money and resources; and (3) measure and understand the problem and assess the impact of action.⁵²

The concept of SDH can be applied to food insecurity as a specific dimension of health that is influenced by various social and environmental factors that affect people's access to adequate and healthy food. Food insecurity can be understood as a result of an inadequacy between necessary and available resources within two dimensions: at the access level, for financial, temporal, informational, and freedom of action; and at the food use level, for temporal factors, material, knowledge, and skills.⁵³ These dimensions are shaped by various SDH that operate at different levels of society, such as individual, interpersonal, community,

⁵¹ World Health Organization: WHO, "Social Determinants of Health," *World Health Organization: WHO*, May 30, 2019, https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab_1.

⁵² World Health Organization: WHO, "Commission on Social Determinants of Health," World Health Organization, accessed April 2, 2023, <https://www.who.int/initiatives/action-on-the-social-determinants-of-health-for-advancing-equity/world-report-on-social-determinants-of-health-equity/commission-on-social-determinants-of-health>.

⁵³ Stephanie Ashby et al., "Measurement of the Dimensions of Food Insecurity in Developed Countries: A Systematic Literature Review," *Public Health Nutrition* 19, no. 16 (May 24, 2016): 2887–96, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1368980016001166>.

organizational, and policy levels. These SDH can either facilitate or hinder people's access to adequate and healthy food, depending on their distribution and interaction.

The Main SDH of Food Insecurity in France at Different Levels

Food insecurity is a multifaceted issue that arises from a complex interplay of various social determinants. In France, the primary social determinants of food insecurity are the living conditions affecting individuals' access to adequate and healthy food. The global, national, and local distribution of resources, power, and money influences these conditions. A comprehensive understanding of the SDH of food insecurity in France can be achieved using the socio-ecological model, which helps to identify and analyze the main factors affecting food insecurity at various levels of society.^{54 55}

Individual characteristics and behaviors such as income, age, gender, education, health status, and dietary preferences can significantly affect food access.⁵⁶ For instance, low-income households often face financial constraints and higher food prices, making them more vulnerable to food insecurity.

At the interpersonal level, social relationships, and interactions, including social support, social networks, social capital, and social participation, can influence food security.⁵⁷ Single-parent families, for example, are more susceptible to food insecurity because of their lower social support and higher cost of living.

⁵⁴ Wen Peng, Sandro Dernini, and Elliot M. Berry, "Coping With Food Insecurity Using the Sociotype Ecological Framework," *Frontiers in Nutrition* 5 (November 15, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2018.00107>.

⁵⁵ Darmon, Nicole, and France Caillavet. "Food insecurity: determinants and impacts." *Sustainable Nutrition in a Changing World* (2017): 125-140.

⁵⁶ Wen Peng, Sandro Dernini, and Elliot M. Berry, "Coping With Food Insecurity Using the Sociotype Ecological Framework," *Frontiers in Nutrition* 5 (November 15, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2018.00107>.

⁵⁷ Wen Peng, Sandro Dernini, and Elliot M. Berry, "Coping With Food Insecurity Using the Sociotype Ecological Framework," *Frontiers in Nutrition* 5 (November 15, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2018.00107>.

At the community level, factors like food availability, affordability, accessibility, acceptability, and quality impact access to food.⁵⁸ Refugees and migrants are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity due to language barriers, discrimination, legal status, transportation difficulties, and cultural factors that affect their access to food outlets.

At the organizational level, the policies and practices of organizations such as schools, workplaces, healthcare facilities, and food aid agencies can affect access to food.⁵⁹ Students, for instance, face food insecurity challenges due to low income, high expenses, irregular schedules, and lack of cooking facilities or skills.

Lastly, at the policy level, laws and regulations at local, national, and international levels play a significant role in determining food security. Climate change policies, trade policies, social policies, and health policies all have implications for food production, distribution, and access.⁶⁰ For example, trade policies can cause food prices to fluctuate, while health policies can impact the nutrition and well-being of people.

Therefore, to address food insecurity in France, it is important to take a multi-level approach that considers the various social determinants of food insecurity and implements policies and interventions at each level to improve access to adequate and healthy food. This approach could include increasing social support networks, improving food availability and

⁵⁸ Wen Peng, Sandro Dernini, and Elliot M. Berry, “Coping With Food Insecurity Using the Sociotype Ecological Framework,” *Frontiers in Nutrition* 5 (November 15, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2018.00107>.

⁵⁹ Wen Peng, Sandro Dernini, and Elliot M. Berry, “Coping With Food Insecurity Using the Sociotype Ecological Framework,” *Frontiers in Nutrition* 5 (November 15, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2018.00107>.

⁶⁰ Wen Peng, Sandro Dernini, and Elliot M. Berry, “Coping With Food Insecurity Using the Sociotype Ecological Framework,” *Frontiers in Nutrition* 5 (November 15, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2018.00107>.

affordability, promoting nutrition education, and implementing supportive policies and regulations.^{61 62}

The Causes, Drivers, and Factors Leading to Food Insecurity in France

Food insecurity is not a homogeneous or static condition, but rather a dynamic and heterogeneous one that varies across time, space, and population groups. Food insecurity is influenced by various causes, drivers, and factors that operate at different levels of society, such as individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and policy levels. This section will identify and describe the main causes, drivers, and factors leading to food insecurity in France.

The main causes of food insecurity in France are poverty and inequality. Poverty and inequality limit people's economic access to adequate and healthy food by reducing their purchasing power and increasing their vulnerability to price fluctuations.⁶³ In addition, the main drivers of food insecurity in France are climate change and conflicts. Climate change and conflicts are among the main drivers of global food crises, as they disrupt food production, distribution, and consumption; increase food prices and volatility; reduce income and livelihood opportunities; and exacerbate poverty and inequality.⁶⁴ In France, climate change and conflicts have direct and indirect impacts on food insecurity. For example, climate change affects the yield

⁶¹ Pierre-Emmanuel Arduin and Doudja Saïdi-Kabeche, "Dignity in Food Aid Logistics Is Also a Knowledge Management and Digital Matter: Three Inspiring Initiatives in France," *Sustainability* 14, no. 3 (January 19, 2022): 1130, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031130>.

⁶² France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, "Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture - France's Strategy (22 Oct. 19)," France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2019, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/development-assistance/news/2019/article/food-security-nutrition-and-sustainable-agriculture-france-s-strategy-22-oct-19>.

⁶³ Judith Martin-Fernandez et al., "Prevalence and Socioeconomic and Geographical Inequalities of Household Food Insecurity in the Paris Region, France, 2010," *BMC Public Health* 13, no. 1 (May 20, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-486>.

⁶⁴ Josef Schmidhuber and Francesco N. Tubiello, "Global Food Security under Climate Change," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 104, no. 50 (December 11, 2007): 19703–8, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0701976104>.

and quality of crops and livestock; increases the risk of pests, diseases, and natural disasters; reduces water availability and quality; and alters consumer preferences and behaviors. Conflicts affect the political and social stability of the country; increase the risk of violence, displacement, and migration; reduce trade and cooperation opportunities; and undermine public policies and services.

The main factors leading to food insecurity in France are inadequate resources at different levels. Inadequate resources can operate at different levels, such as individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and policy levels. Food insecurity can be understood as a result of an inadequacy between necessary and available resources within two dimensions: at the access level, for financial, temporal, informational, and freedom of action; and at the food use level, for temporal factors, material, knowledge, and skills. For example, at the individual level, inadequate resources can include low income, lack of time, poor information, limited choice, or insufficient skills for accessing or using adequate and healthy food; at the interpersonal level, inadequate resources can include a lack of social support, assistance, or participation for accessing or using adequate and healthy food; at the community level, inadequate resources can include lack of food availability, affordability, accessibility, or acceptability for accessing or using adequate and healthy food; at the organizational level, inadequate resources can include lack of rules, practices, or services for accessing or using adequate and healthy food; and at the policy level, inadequate resources can include lack of laws, regulations, or programs for accessing or using adequate and healthy food.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Judith Martin-Fernandez et al., “Prevalence and Socioeconomic and Geographical Inequalities of Household Food Insecurity in the Paris Region, France, 2010,” *BMC Public Health* 13, no. 1 (May 20, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-486>.

Food insecurity continues to be a persistent problem in France that affects a significant portion of its population, including low-income families, refugees, and older individuals. A comparison of food insecurity during World War II and the present day highlights a significant difference: while during WWII, food challenges were widespread and affected the entire population, today, food insecurity mainly affects specific pockets or groups within society. Consequently, this less visible issue may not receive the same attention from society and the state. However, it is important to acknowledge that food insecurity is not solely determined by food availability and affordability but also by access and utilization by households and individuals. These dimensions are influenced by various social determinants operating at different societal levels.

Chapter 3

Today's world faces many complex issues, including unresolved conflicts, changing climate, increasing global warming, drought, and famine, increasing population, and rising food crises, among other issues. Of these, one of the most sensitive is the increasing food insecurity, which has become a growing worldwide problem since 2014¹. In recent statistics by the FAO, WFP, IFAD, UNICEF, and the WHO in the SOFI report concerning the state-of-food-security-nutrition, the organizations indicated that about 690 million persons (8.9% of the world's population) were persistently malnourished in 2019: 12 million more than in 2018 and 60 million more than in 2014⁶⁶.

Like many other parts of the world, France has also been affected by the rising issue of food insecurity. According to a recent Senate report, eight million individuals in France, or one in five people, are said to experience food insecurity.⁶⁷ According to the survey, 27% of French households rarely have access to fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, or fish, 19% often skip meals to pay for their children's school lunches, and about 5.5 million individuals currently depend on food assistance, a number that more than doubled between 2009 and 2017². Further, the report indicates that limited resources necessitate difficult trade-offs, resulting in nutritional inadequacies, increased obesity, chronic diseases, and future concerns². According to *Country Nutrition Profiles*,⁶⁸ obesity affects 24.6% of adult men and 22.9% of adult women (aged 18 and older). Compared to the Europe regional average of 25.3% for women and 24.9% for men,

⁶⁶ Strategy Report France's International Strategy For Food Security, Nutrition And Sustainable Agriculture, 2019. https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/frances_international_strategy_for_food_security_nutrition_and_sustainable_agriculture_cle4f3e1a.pdf

⁶⁷ Gatién Elie, "Hunger in France's Land of Plenty," *Le Monde diplomatique*, October 1, 2021, <https://mondediplo.com/2021/10/13food-box>.

⁶⁸ Country Nutrition Profiles, 2023. [Globalnutritionreport.org. https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/europe/western-europe/france/](https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/europe/western-europe/france/)

France has a lower obesity prevalence³. During the same period, diabetes is predicted to affect 4.6% of adult women and 8.1% of adult males³. These conditions are diet related, and the rise in statistics in these conditions is an indicator of scarcity of high-quality food. This in other words means that generally scarcity of high-quality food in France compared to the overall European nations is quite lower.

Considering the effects of food crises and the need for actions meant to bring about holistic methods to prevent, predict, and improve targeting to address the core causes of food crises effectively, France has made fresh pledges in response to these events. Some are included in the Orientation and Programming Law on Development and International Solidarity Policy (LOP-DSI) of 7 July 2014; others are covered by the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, or they are the outcome of the Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development's 2018 meeting (CICID)⁶⁹. There are also varying non-governmental actors who have been involved in helping address the issue of rising hunger in France.

The Main French Governmental Policies And Initiatives To Address Food Insecurity

i. Formulation of Food Programs that Address Food Insecurity

One initiative that the French government has adopted to reduce hunger, especially among marginalized and poor communities, is the establishment of food programs that seek to offer assistance to these communities. These projects are small parts of the Social Safety nets and food safety nets, which are funded with scheduled food aid, use a wide range of resilience support measures, such as seed distribution, instruction in agriculture or nutrition, land

⁶⁹ étrangères, Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires, 2023. "Food Crises and Resilience." France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. Accessed March 20, 2023. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/development-assistance/food-security-nutrition-and-sustainable-agriculture/food-crises-and-resilience/#:~:text=Programmed%20food%20assistance%20is%20mainly.>

restoration activities, and support for school cafeterias⁴. Worth noting is that Social Safety nets in France encompass programmes such as cash transfers – including child grants, school meals, skills development and more – help connect families with health care, nutritious food and quality education to give all children, no matter what circumstances they are born into, a fair chance in life. In fragile areas vulnerable to climate threats, these operating approaches aid in the long-term prevention of food insecurity. Moreover, nutrition components are included in 50% of funded programs⁴. Worth noting is that some of the introduced programs are short terms while others are long term, and they target different groups as already highlighted in previous sentences.

The Programme Food Assistance Program⁷⁰, which the government developed to help the marginalized and poor people on the verge of malnutrition and undernutrition become more resilient, especially as it concerns chronic food insecurity. Specifically, the French government has been allocating funds to this program to promote food autonomy among people vulnerable to malnutrition and undernutrition. Notably, according to *France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs*⁴, the French government allocated €39 million to programmed food assistance in 2019 and €50.6 million in 2020 and seeks to continue increasing the funding for this particular program to promote food security in the country. This initiative generally aligns with the FAO and WFP strategies which encourage governments to capacitate individuals to purchase food and basic commodities from the local market⁴. It is worth noting that this initiative has not only benefited France alone, but France has also used it to help other nations facing food insecurity crises.

⁷⁰ étrangères, Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires, 2023. "Food Crises and Resilience." France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. Accessed March 20, 2023. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/development-assistance/food-security-nutrition-and-sustainable-agriculture/food-crises-and-resilience/#:~:text=Programmed%20food%20assistance%20is%20mainly>.

Actions Supporting Sustainable Agriculture

The other approach that the France government is taking to address the issue of rising food insecurity in the country is the development of policies and initiatives meant to promote sustainable agricultural practices. According to the USDA,⁷¹ France has undertaken several activities to promote sustainable agriculture. Amongst the most significant steps and actions that the government has undertaken in the 21st century include the establishment of an advisory committee representing civil society and local authorities, involved in the development of SNDD, the National Committee on Sustainable Development, and the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development in 2003, the addition of the Charter for the Environment to France's Constitution in 2004, the establishment of the Ministry of Sustainable Development Website in 2007, the adoption of the SNDD 2010-2013 and the Grenelle 1 and Grenelle 2 laws, and organization of environmental conferences such as that of 2012 meant to promote biodiversity.

USDA⁵ indicates that these actions have been vital to the promotion of sustainable agriculture, particularly because they have been advocating and recommending strategies that the French people and the France government can adopt to ensure sustainable and competitive advantage. This has led to increased food production and reduced food wastage, which is key to reducing hunger. In addition, USDA⁵ contends that these actions by the government have been vital to promoting organic agriculture, which beyond addressing food insecurity in the country, it has also been key to ensuring agriculture that preserves ecosystems, leverages against input price volatility, minimizes the potential issues of human health, and promotes farm profitability. A

⁷¹ “THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS of COMMODITY and TRADE ISSUES MADE by USDA STAFF and NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS of OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY - Date: GAIN Report Number.” n.d. https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/report/downloadreportbyfilename?filename=France%20-%20Actions%20Towards%20a%20More%20Sustainable%20Agriculture_Paris_France_10-23-2012.pdf.

good example of an initiative that has been developed as a result of the mentioned actions by the government has been the development of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of 2010-2013, which outlined several approaches concerning agriculture, including executing organic agriculture on 20% by 2020, have about 50% of farms being engaged in environmental certification and reduce the use of pesticides used within the country⁵. These actions, in general, have played a role in increasing the available food in the country and also played a role in reducing food scarcity, therein showing their essentiality in addressing hunger across France⁵.

The government has also formulated policies meant to promote urban agriculture across France. According to Elie in the article *Hunger in France's Land of Plenty*², in and around Paris, there are currently up to 300 farms with a strong consumer base, which despite no assertion that they can lead to overall food sufficiency, they play a part in reducing food scarcity within the urban areas by availing some of the commonly demanded foods within these areas. In the same article, the author claims that political leaders have facilitated the introduction of urban farms because they make it easier to access land. Therefore, it can be concluded that though the introduction of urban agriculture across France contributes in a way smaller quantity than demanded in the urban areas, it plays a vital role in availing food and reducing the level of hunger in France. If this initiative can be introduced across many other urban areas across France, Elie, in the article *Hunger in France's Land of Plenty*², contends that the initiative can help reduce hunger amongst the urban populations, who are most commonly on the verge of hunger and malnutrition than the people living in the rural areas.

Undertaking Actions Meant to Reduce Food Wastage

Other than the undertaking of actions to promote food production and increase food availability for the French people, the government of France has been undertaking actions meant

to reduce food wastage within the country, which is a key step to reducing hunger in the country. Despite France being one of the biggest food producers in Europe, the country still experiences food shortages, which partly contributed to a huge wastage of food across the country. This means that if the country is to reduce the hunger currently experienced in the country, like many other parts of the world, there has been a need for France to undertake actions meant to reduce food wastage.

Amongst the actions that the government has previously undertaken intending to reduce hunger through the reduction of food wastage has been the development of policies meant to ban food wastage by supermarkets. According to *India Today* in the article “France Bans Wasting Food, Asks to Donate to Charities: Countries Most Affected by Hunger,”⁷² France became the first nation to develop a policy forbidding supermarket from throwing away or destroying perfectly fine food that has not been bought to reduce food waste. The policy demands that instead of throwing away the food which has not been bought, supermarkets within the country ought to give this food to the available food banks or to charity, where they are saved for the future, or they are donated to those people who are at the highest risk of malnutrition and undernutrition⁷². *India Today*, in this article, claims that this initiative has proved effective because, other than reducing food wastage, it has helped provide food for the less privileged communities and enabled the country to save food for the future. According to *PBS NewsHour*⁷³, about 80 warehouses nationwide receive food from more than 2,700 supermarkets every morning, saving 46,000 tons of food per year that would otherwise be thrown out. The article

⁷² *India Today*, 2016. “France Bans Wasting Food, Asks to Donate to Charities: Countries Most Affected by Hunger.” Accessed March 20, 2023. <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/countries-most-affected-by-hunger-307894-2016-02-09>.

⁷³ *PBS NewsHour*, 2019. “Is France’s Groundbreaking Food-Waste Law Working?” August 31, 2019. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/is-frances-groundbreaking-food-waste-law-working#:~:text=Every%20morning%2C%20more%20than%20%2C700>.

further indicates that donations to food banks have increased by more than 20 percent⁷³. It is anticipated that the saved food will help address any food crises that may occur in the future, therein proving the essentiality of this initiative⁶. The French Federation of Food Banks concurs that the law is effective and serves as a vital link in the grocery-to-charity food chain⁷³. This is because the initiative has vitally been helping meet the food needs of about 3.5 million individuals, serving a million meals a year to 1.85 million people⁷⁴.

The article “From a Culture of Food Waste to a Culture of Food Security: A from a Culture of Food Waste to a Culture of Food Security”⁷⁵ indicates that the France government has also been funding awareness programs meant to sensitize society to food wastage and the importance of adopting sustainable feeding actions. The article specifically claims that the France government has been funding and supporting grassroots campaigns to increase awareness of food waste preceding the French law, supported by the policy known as "dire halt au gchis alimentaire" (interpreted as "to say stop to food waste"). According to the article, this initiative has vitally helped lessen food wastage and avail food during food crises, ensuring that even those who might not have food in the future have food available for them⁸.

Therefore, from a general perspective, it is evident that numerous initiatives and policies are being established/ have been established by the France government to reduce food insecurity and hunger across the country. However, these initiatives are still inadequate because it is

⁷⁴ The Global FoodBanking Network, “Global FoodBanking Network: History of Food Banking,” web.archive.org, October 15, 2011, https://web.archive.org/web/20111015031147/http://www.foodbanking.org/site/PageServer?pagename=foodbanking_history

⁷⁵ “Lindsay Bunting Eubanks, “From a Culture of Food Waste to a Culture of Food Security: A from a Culture of Food Waste to a Culture of Food Security: A,” January 2019, <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1735&context=wmelpr>.

evident from the statistics that there are still quite a considerable number of individuals who suffer from hunger in France.

The Main Non-Governmental Actors And Initiatives Working Towards Addressing Food Insecurity In France

Other than government-based initiatives and policies, various non-governmental actors have been playing a part in addressing the issue of hunger in France. Worth noting is that there is quite a considerable number of non-governmental humanitarian and inter-governmental organizations who work in France to address hunger in the country, including but not limited to; the Committee on World Food Security and United Nations agencies, including Food and Agriculture Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Program⁷⁶. Notably, according to the article “Strategy Report France’s International Strategy For Food Security, Nutrition And Sustainable Agriculture 2019,”⁹ France works unanimously with the Committee on World Food Security to enable all stakeholders to collaborate and assure food security and nutrition. Specifically, the article indicates that the Committee on World Food Security, through the development of voluntary recommendations and guidelines concerning food insecurity and undernutrition, influences France’s food security because the nation uses these recommendations and guidelines to promote its food output and increase its food security⁹. Considering that the Committee on World Food Security bases its recommendations and policies on research, it vitally guides France on how it should act and address issues concerning food

⁷⁶ “Ministre d l’ Europe et des Affaires Etrangères, “STRATEGY REPORT FRANCE’S INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY for FOOD SECURITY, NUTRITION and SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE 2019,” https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/frances_international_strategy_for_food_security_nutrition_and_sustainable_agriculture_cle4f3e1a.pdf.

insecurity/undernutrition within the country. This organization has therefore been vital in helping guide France on ways to address food insecurity, indirectly playing a part in addressing hunger issues in France. For instance, the Committee on World Food Security's guidelines were vital in grounding some of the France's international strategy for food security, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture developed in 2019⁷⁷. Additionally, the Red Cross is involved in reducing food insecurity in France through The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived program (FEAD). This fund according to their mission helps EU countries to provide food and other materials to those who do not have conditions to purchase.⁷⁸ The Red Cross specifically collects unsold supermarket products and distributes them to vulnerable people via local branches⁷⁹. Where retailers prefer to throw away food or where donations are insufficient, the Red Cross promotes food donations and advocates for legislative changes. Food aid, which includes rice, pulses, olive oil, tinned fish, fried tomatoes, and baby food, is the most important type of assistance provided by FEAD.

On the other hand, the United Nations organizations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Program (WFP) have also been playing individual but almost similar roles in promoting food security in France⁹. Each of these three organizations addresses this issue per their unique mandate, whether in an immediate crisis or from a longer-term development perspective, at the project or policy

⁷⁷ "Ministre d l' Europe et des Affaires Etrangeres," "STRATEGY REPORT FRANCE'S INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY for FOOD SECURITY, NUTRITION and SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE 2019," https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/frances_international_strategy_for_food_security_nutrition_and_sustainable_agriculture_cle4f3e1a.pdf.

⁷⁸ European Commission, "Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)," [ec.europa.eu](https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089), n.d., <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089>.

⁷⁹ "Seventh FEAD Network Meeting: Preventing Food Waste through FEAD Actions." n.d. Red Cross EU Office. Accessed April 3, 2023. <https://redcross.eu/latest-news/seventh-fead-network-meeting-preventing-food-waste-through-fead-actions>.

level, with international or local partners. In general, these non-governmental agencies play a vital role in the production of agricultural and food security standards, create and promote agricultural and food security knowledge, support policy concerning agricultural and food security development, and develop or ground the development of critical initiatives to support agricultural development, particularly through support for farmers' organizations and the development of farming sectors⁹. These organizations have vitally worked with farmers to empower them to ensure that they become sustainable in their agricultural practices, maximizing production and profitability through adopting modern agricultural practices and increasing their production capacity through grants and funding. These actions have been vital in helping promote food security in France because they help empower farmers towards sustainable agricultural practices and ensure that the country increases food production through the empowerment and capacity building of farmers.

Therefore, from this section, it is evident that quite several non-governmental actors play a part in promoting the food security of France. These organizations, either individually or in collaboration with the government, have been undertaking actions that guide France in promoting food production or generally enable the country to promote its food production capacity, all of which are vital to reducing food insecurity and hunger across the country. This means that non-governmental organizations have a major role in promoting France's food security.

Conclusion

In summary, food insecurity is a global health problem that violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, affecting developing and developed countries such as France. This thesis examined the impacts of food insecurity and food distribution worldwide, specifically in France. Through the literature review, it became clear that food insecurity is a denominator of poverty in France, affecting a significant portion of the population, including low-income inhabitants and refugees. The Covid-19 pandemic has also exacerbated the problem, increasing the number of people who are hungry in the country. Despite the United Nations' declaration that everyone has the right to eat and have food, food insecurity remains a severe problem in France and other countries. The policies and solutions created by the French government and some non-governmental organizations to alleviate this issue have been analyzed, but more work needs to be done. The French government, the European Union, and the United Nations must take significant steps to ensure food security for all individuals, especially the most vulnerable. Addressing the root causes of food insecurity, including poverty, discrimination, and inequality, is essential.

One of the limitations that I have encountered while writing this thesis was the fact that the official French government website did not contain substantial information regarding the demographics of the French population, in which, it made it harder to determine the main population that deals with this particular issue. Hence, the small regulation and policies created by the government and NGOs shows how France is not prepared economically to diminish this problem.

To address food insecurity in France, a multi-level approach is essential to consider these social determinants and implement policies and interventions at each level to

improve access to adequate and healthy food. Such an approach could encompass a range of measures, including expanding social support networks, improving food availability and affordability, promoting nutrition education, and implementing supportive policies and regulations. By targeting the underlying causes of food insecurity in France, it is possible to ensure that everyone has access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and preferences, enabling them to lead an active and healthy life.

This thesis has contributed to understanding the perspectives of food insecurity in France and serves as a call to action to address this global health problem. It is, therefore, crucial to recognize that food insecurity is not just an issue of insufficient food distribution but also a systemic problem that requires a holistic approach. Policies should focus on increasing access to healthy and nutritious food, promoting sustainable agriculture practices, and addressing income inequality and poverty. Education on nutrition and healthy eating habits can also significantly reduce food insecurity in the long term. It is essential to prioritize the rights and well-being of individuals and communities, regardless of socioeconomic status or background. By working together, governments, NGOs, and individuals can take concrete steps toward achieving food security and fulfilling the human right to adequate food.

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