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The interconnected challenges for food security from a food regimes perspective: Energy, climate and malconsumption

Colin Sage

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Abstract

Recent experience of food price volatility in global markets encourages closer examination of the dynamics underlying the global food system and reveals a range of contingent factors. Meanwhile a common thread of many recent expert reports has emphasised the need to intensify agricultural production to double food output by 2050. Drawing upon a food regimes approach, the paper argues that the global food system is vulnerable to three inter-connected challenges that make a largely productivist strategy inappropriate. Analysis suggests that there is a strong likelihood of rising energy costs given the anticipated decline in conventional oil supplies which will have repercussions for land-use and food security. Climate change scenarios anticipate rates of warming and drying in large areas of the tropics that will also have huge implications for food security in those areas. Yet the mode of operation of the global food system is to deliver poor

quality nutrition with significant dietary health consequences, a phenomenon labelled malconsumption. The paper argues that these issues are closely inter-related and until we address the fact that the global food system remains dominated by powerful economic interests, an effective solution will remain elusive.



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Keywords

Vulnerability; Food regimes; Energy security; Climate change; Malconsumption

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