Urban food security and the urban food policy gap

Jane Battersby, African Centre for Cities

Introduction

Section 27 of the Constitution of South Africa states that, "Everyone has the right to… sufficient food," and that "the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of each of these rights." The Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS) of 2002 was developed in order to help realize this right.

Food security was identified as a "key shaping force" for South Africa in the Diagnostic Overview of the National Planning Commission (NPC 2011, 6). In his speech on the Presidency Budget Vote Debate in May 2012, Trevor Manuel identified the following priority areas for the National Planning Commission for the next two years,

"Food security, water security and rural development; Adaptation strategies and environmental resilience; More effective models of black economic empowerment; Exercise, diets, nutrition and other preventative health areas; Social cohesion and language; Disability policy; and Partnerships for innovation."

The right to food and the challenge of food insecurity are being increasingly articulated in public statements of the ANC, DA, COSATU and other political players. However, while the right to food and food insecurity are gaining increased public political presence, this paper argues that the existing policy responses have significant gaps. The 'face of food insecurity' is increasingly urban and the food security and yet current food security policies lack an explicitly urban focus, leaving cities with no mandate to address food insecurity and the wider urban food system. The outcome of this is urban policies and by-laws that ultimately hinder access to food for low-income residents of cities.

This paper begins by presenting data from the African Food Security Urban Network's (AFSUN) Cape Town baseline survey to support the assertion that food insecurity is an increasingly urban phenomenon with specifically urban characteristics. It then interrogates the framing of food security within the Integrated Food Security Strategy and highlights the limitations of this framing with reference to urban food security and a wider politics of the food system. The paper then discusses how the framing of food insecurity in the IFSS, the location of the IFSS in the Department of Agriculture and

wider assumptions on the location of poverty and food insecurity in South Africa have all led to the absence of an explicit urban food security focus. This policy gap is argued to be a fundamental barrier to the right to food in cities. The paper concludes by calling for a reframing of food security at a national scale to include an explicitly urban focus and for an urban mandate for food security and food systems to be created.

Food security as an urban challenge

Food insecurity is a significant challenge in urban areas of sub-Saharan Africa. The world's population is now predominantly urban, and sub-Saharan African is the most rapidly urbanizing region (UN-Habitat 2009, p. 25). The proportion of the world's poor living in urban areas is increasing, not simply because the poor urbanize faster that the non-poor (Ravallion 2002, p. 442), but also because the conditions in many urban areas drive many existing and new urban residents into poverty (Mehta 2000). These demographic and economic shifts raise a number of pressing development issues, of which food insecurity is one.

Research by Ahmed et al (2007) found that in 12 out of 18 sampled low-income developing countries, the incidence of food insecurity in urban areas was the same or higher than rural areas, despite the higher incomes of urban households. This is the result of the higher cost of living in urban areas and the greater dependence of urban populations on the market for food. However, despite evidence that food insecurity is prevalent in urban areas, development agencies and governments continue to perceive it as a rural problem. Like elsewhere in the region, food insecurity in South Africa is considered primarily a rural issue. This paper contends that this framing is due to both ideological and methodological approaches.

A number of large-scale surveys have attempted to capture food insecurity data within South Africa. The 1995 Income and Expenditure Survey found an urban food poverty rate of 27%, compared to the rural rate of 54% (Rose and Charlton 2002). The National Food Consumption Survey of 1999, which only captured data on children from age 1-9, found levels of urban food insecurity of 42.0%, compared to 62.0% in rural areas. By contrast, the South African Social Attitudes Survey of 2008 found just 20.5% of urban households and 33.1% of rural households to be food insecure (Labadarios *et al.* 2011, 893).

These large-scale surveys would seem to support the notion that food insecurity is primarily a rural problem, but they perhaps mask the prevalence of urban food insecurity. The 2009 joint report by Oxfam GB, Concern Worldwide and CARE international argues that the 'common use of percentage rates over absolute numbers [of malnutrition] is greatly distorting when used for urban slums, as this masks the higher numbers… affected in such densely populated settings (Oxfam GB et al 2009, p. 14). The use of percentage rates comparing rural and urban leads to misleading data on the relative prevalence of food insecurity. If the proportion of the households that are food insecure that live in urban areas were compared to the proportion of food insecure households that live in rural areas a quite different representation of where the food insecure are may be generated simply due to the population numbers in urban areas. This percentage vs absolute numbers blurring is evident within the IFSS itself which states, "Gauteng and the Western Cape are wealthier provinces with the least number of poor households at less than 12% each." (DoA 2002, 22). These provinces may have the lowest proportions of categorised as poor, but the population sizes of these provinces means that they do not necessarily have the "least number of poor households". Using Table 4 provided in the IFSS on household expenditure as an indicator of poverty, 6.1% of Gauteng's 1 964 168 households spent R600 or less per month compared to 21.7% of the Northern Cape's 186 984 households. Although the Gauteng proportion is far lower, this equates to 119 814 households, compared to 40 575 households in the Northern Cape. The use of proportions generates a particular understanding about the location of poverty and food insecurity in South Africa. In addition to their potential distortion of the extent of urban food insecurity, large-scale surveys tend not to provide the range of food-related variables or the spatial differentiation to understand the urban determinants of food insecurity.

For these reasons, finer-grained case studies are useful. In a 2000 household survey of food security in the rural Eastern Cape (Mount Frere), rural Western Cape (Ceres) and Cape Town (Khayelitsha and Nyanga), the rural Eastern Cape households were found to be marginally more food insecure than the Cape Town households (83% and 81% respectively). Those in the rural Western Cape were found to be the least food insecure (69%) (de Swart 2003 in Hendriks 2005, p. 114). These data begin to illustrate the extent of food insecurity in low income urban areas and the need to disaggregate beyond the simple rural:urban binary.

In 2008, the African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN) conducted a 6500 household baseline survey in low income areas of eleven Southern African cities in nine countries to address the core question of how the urban poor accessed food. Three of the sample cities were in South Africa, namely Cape Town, Johannesburg and Msunduzi. Across the 11 city sample, 77% of households were found to be moderately or severely food insecure using the HFIAS tool (hereafter "food insecure") (Frayne et al 2010, p. 43).

The survey collected individual and household data on income, expenditure, employment, livelihood strategies, health, lived poverty, food sources, food choices, migration and other variables in order to understand the dynamics, drivers and impacts of food insecurity in urban areas. This paper draws on the findings of the Cape Town survey which sampled 1060 households in three areas of the city: Ocean View, Ward 34 (Brown's Farm, Philippi) and Ward 95 (Enkanini and Kuyasa, Khayelitsha).

Three key measures were used to assess food security: the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS), Dietary Diversity (HDDS) and Months of Inadequate Household Food Provisioning (MIHFP). The HFIAS was devised by the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Programme (FANTA) of USAID as a universally applicable food insecurity measurement tool (Coates *et al.* 2007). The HDDS and MIHFP measures were similarly devised by FANTA as 'two strategic objective level indicators of household food access' (Swindale and Bilinsky 2006, p. 1).

Within the Cape Town survey 80% of households sampled were either severely food insecure or moderately food insecure according to the HFIAS measurement. The gradations of levels of food insecurity within the HFIAS measurement allow for some discussion on the nature of urban and rural food insecurity. Ballantine et al's 2008 study of the Klippplaat in the Eastern Cape used the same food insecurity measures as the AFSUN survey. As Figure 1 illustrates, there were important differences between the rural site and the Cape Town sites. While the extent of food insecurity in the rural area was greater, it appeared that the severity of food insecurity in urban areas was greater. While 69% of sampled households in Klipplaat were severely food insecure, 80% of the Ward 95 sample and 71% of the Ward 34 sample were.

While these differences are not statistically significant it does suggest that urban food security is a considerable challenge and that food insecure urban households may be more vulnerable to deeper food insecurity than their rural counterparts. This may be due

to the dependence of the urban poor on the cash economy and the market for food. Although the extent of urban food security is similar to that of rural areas, the drivers and consequences of this insecurity are different to rural areas and therefore require different conceptual framings and policy responses. This difference is evidenced in the dietary diversity of the urban poor and the temporal dimensions of their food insecurity.

The mean household dietary diversity of the sampled households was 6.75 out of 12, which at first glance does not appear to be too limited. However, Figure 2 indicates that the main food groups consumed are largely non-nutritive. While 93.2 percent of all households had consumed cereals within the previous 24 hours, the next most commonly consumed foods were 'other foods' (usually tea or coffee), 'sugar or honey' and 'foods made with oil, fat or butter'. The mean dietary diversity score masks therefore the very limited nutrition of many households. These findings reflect those of Labadarios *et al.* (2011b), who found that dietary diversity in South Africa was lowest in tribal areas and informal urban areas, and of Oldewage-Theron and Kruger (2011), working in a low income peri-urban area. This low dietary diversity is a function of income poverty, the urban food system and urban design.

The differences between rural and urban diets have been extensively researched by Popkin and colleagues (see e.g Popkin and Bisgrove 1988; Drewnowski and Popkin 1997; and Popkin 2003). They note that although there is a general trend in the developing world towards diets higher in fats and caloric sweeteners (sugar, honey, corn syrup, etc.), this trend is more marked in urban areas. This general trend correlates strongly with GNP, but in urban areas the correlation is far weaker. So, for example, caloric sweeteners in their less urban cases ranged from 5 per cent of total energy intake in low GNP areas to 15 per cent in high GNP locations. In their more urban cases, the total energy intake derived from caloric sweeteners was above 15 per cent even in the lowest GNP cases, but this proportion hardly increased with increased income (Popkin 2003, p. 584). In the South African context the impact of the poor urban diet is evident in national obesity statistics. In South Africa 29% of rural women and 7% of rural men were categorised as obese in the NIDS Survey of 2008, in urban areas 36% of women and 13% of men fell into this category (Crush et al 2011, 19).

Drewnowski and Popkin (1997, p. 37) point to one factor in this trend being the mismatch between the "time intensity" of traditional foods and the shift towards foods that take less time and less skill to prepare. Caballero (2005) suggests that the change may

be a combination of the availability of cheap, energy-dense foods in urban areas (from street traders) and the higher participation of women in the urban workforce which limits food preparation time. The AFSUN data suggests that the dietary choices of the urban poor are also shaped by issues of financial and spatial access. While all 12 food categories were readily available in the city, households were not consuming them. While some of this may be culturally determined, to a large degree it is the result of financial and physical access problems. Within the Cape Town survey 71 per cent of households indicated that they had gone without types of food because of food prices. In addition, dietary choice is to some extent limited by the sources of food that households are able to access. Urban household's food choices are shaped by factors such as commuting distances and times, ease of carrying purchased food, and home storage and cooking facilities. Food choice is shaped by urban geography. This geography of food will be discussed further (see Battersby 2012 for an extended discussion of this point).

As in rural areas there was a strong seasonality to when households went without food, but unlike rural households this was unrelated to fluctuations in food availability. There were two distinct hungry periods during the year: January and the winter months (see Fig. 3). The hungry seasons are periods of increased household expenditure and reduced household income, as seasonal employment dips over these time periods. The poorest tercile of the sampled households spent an average of 53 per cent of their income on food. With such a high proportion of income going to food any factor that affects either income or expenditure has a major impact of household food security. The causes of food insecurity in urban areas are therefore different to those in rural areas and require different policy solutions. Urban food insecurity is caused not by availability problems, but by access to food markets, employment patterns and the spatial configuration of the city. It therefore needs to be viewed through different theoretical lenses and the solutions need to reflect the urban difference.
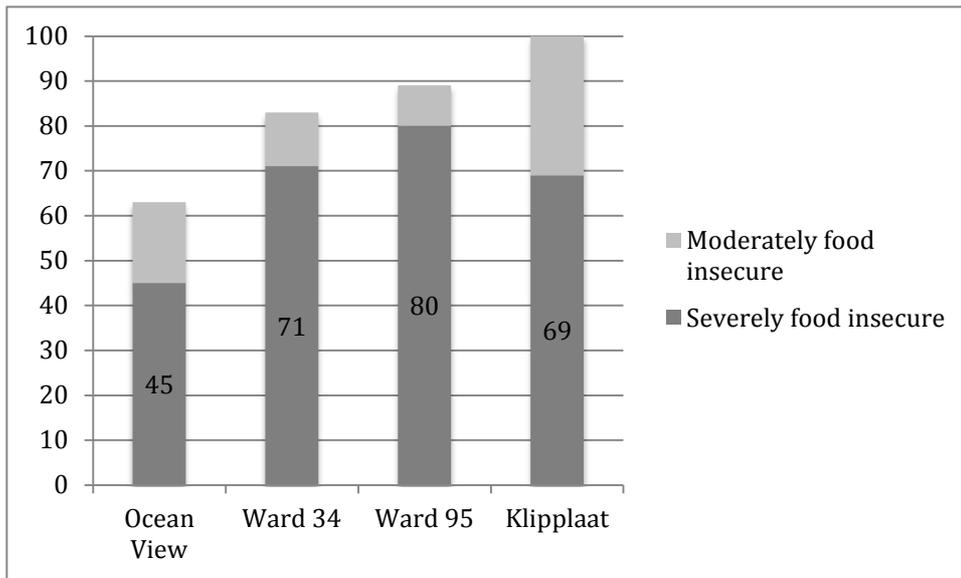
Figure 1: Levels of food insecurity in the Cape Town sites and Klipplaat, Eastern Cape (Source: AFSUN survey and Ballantine *et al.* (2008, 6))
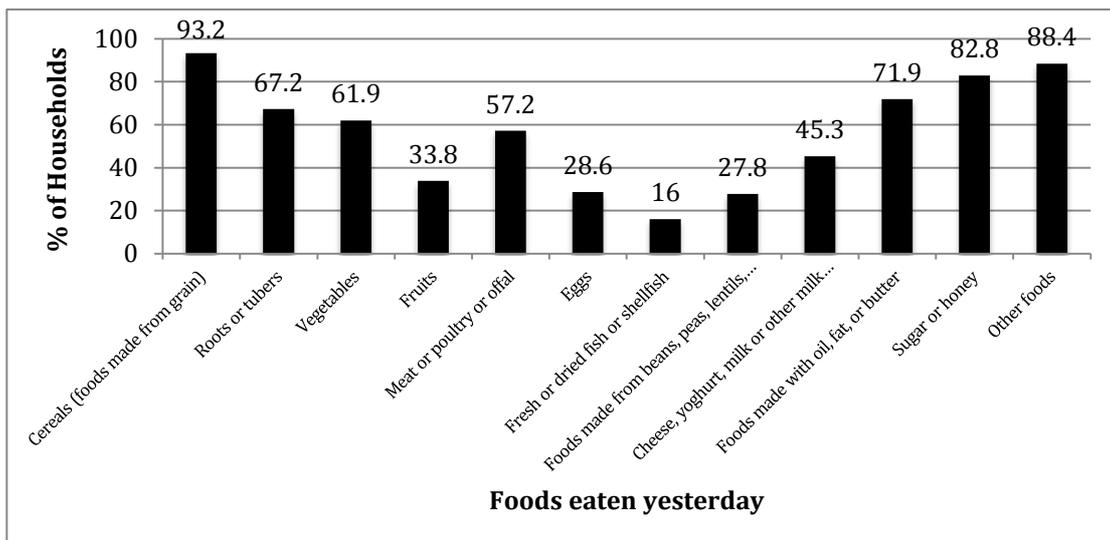

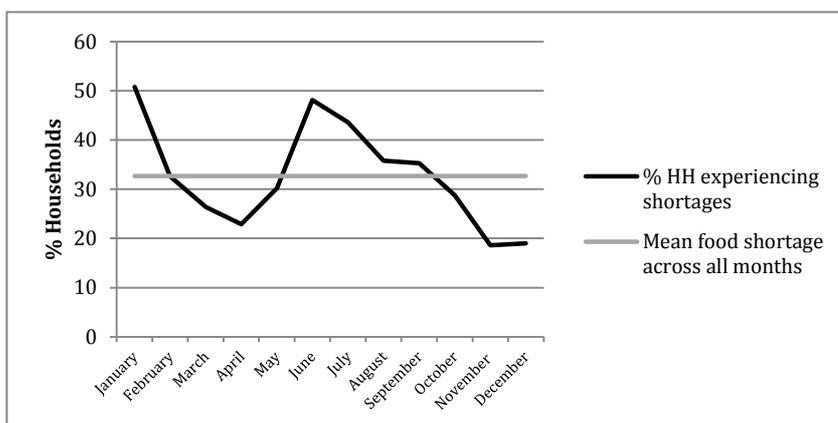Figure 2: Food types consumed by households in previous 24 hours

Figure 3: Months of adequate household food provisioning

The Urban Food Policy Gap

Despite the clear presence of extensive food insecurity in urban areas and this food insecurity having different characteristics and drivers than rural food insecurity, there is no explicit urban focus in South African food security policy, nor is there a mandate for cities to act on food issues.

Daniel Maxwell has argued that food security has been neglected by city governments for three reasons. Firstly, urban policy makers and practitioners do not address food insecurity because limited budget and capacity mean that 'more urgently visible problems' (Maxwell 1999, p. 1940), such as housing and sanitation take priority. Although historically the growth and form of cities was determined by their food system (Steele 2008), this is no longer the case. With the exception of urban food production, food is rarely on the urban planning agenda. Secondly, he argues that urban food insecurity is rendered invisible by how it manifests. Food insecurity in rural areas is often linked to times of famine, in which enter communities experience food insecurity at the same time. Food insecurity in urban areas is not triggered by absolute food shortages, but by failures of households to be able to access food. Food insecurity is therefore experienced at the household scale and households employ a range of localised coping strategies. These idiosyncratic responses render the struggle invisible. Finally, he argues that the long established perceptions of food security and poverty being rural problems make policy makers less likely to see urban food insecurity. I would add a fourth reason to these in the South African context. The lack of an urban mandate makes it difficult to cities to respond even if they had the desire to act.

This lack of an urban mandate and an urban response to food insecurity can be seen to be the outcome of how food security is framed within government. Within the Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS) five key food security challenges are identified, "The first is to ensure that enough food is available to all, now and in the future; the second is to match incomes of people to prices in order to ensure access to sufficient food for every citizen; the third is to empower citizens to make optimal choices for nutritious and safe food; the fourth is [to] ensure that there is [sic] adequate safety nets and emergency management systems to provide people that are unable to meet their food needs from their own efforts and mitigate the extreme impact of natural or other disasters on people; finally, to possess adequate and relevant information to ensure

analysis, communication, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the impact of food security programmes on the target population" (DoA 2002, pp. 5-6).

This wide range of identified challenges reflects the current conceptual framing of food household food security as being shaped by issues of availability, accessibility and utilization capacity. However, this framing has been critiqued as being largely apolitical, failing to recognise the political processes and systemic issues that contribute to food insecurity. The responses to food insecurity tend to focus on technical solutions, such as increased crop production, price monitoring, food subsidies and others, but not on the broader causes of food insecurity and how these are profoundly political.

In the global North there has been a call for the food problem to be understood as a food justice problem rather than a food security problem – this is echoed in recent discussions of food sovereignty. Food justice, according to Wekerle (2004, p. 379), 'highlights the focus on systemic change and the necessity for engaging in political and policy processes as well as consciously addressing issues of movement mobilization and strategies. Theoretically, the food justice frame opens up linkages to a wider range of conceptual frameworks drawn from the literature on democracy, citizenship, social movements, and social and environmental justice.'

The limitations of the existing framing of the food problem in the IFSS are evident in the strategic objectives identified in the document: "Increase household food production and trading; improve income generation and job creation opportunities; improve nutrition and food safety; increase safety nets and food emergency management systems; improve analysis and information management system; provide capacity building; hold stakeholder dialogue" (DoA 2002, p. 6).

These objectives focus on interventions at the household scale and do not engage with the market as an agent in food insecurity, nor any other extra-household drivers of food access. Access is not simply determined by sufficient income to purchase available food, but by the wider asset base of households and by a set of spatial determinants.

Figure 4 indicates the sources of food used by sampled households in the AFSUN Cape Town survey. Virtually every household sampled in the survey (99.3%) had purchased food at a supermarket at some point in the previous year. However, just 26.8 per cent went to supermarkets once a week or more. Households were far more likely to purchase daily or weekly supplies of food from small shops/restaurants/take aways (mainly

spazas) or from informal markets/street foods (61.5% and 55.1% respectively). Just 5% of households sourced any food from own production.

Given that supermarkets are generally lower priced and often have more reliable quality, it at first appears illogical that low-income households would continue to frequent informal sector traders. However, these informal traders are often better attuned to the economic realities of their market – "bulk breaking" products and selling them in more affordable package sizes, offering credit, having extended opening hours to meet the needs of the long distance commuter, and being geographically accessible. In addition, the wider economic geography of the city shapes food sources. Due to the legacy of segregation and fragmentation in the city, many of the urban poor travel long distances to get to work (Turok 2001, p. 2350). This reduces time to shop and prepare food. Many households therefore depend on street food and restaurants for meals clustered near transport hubs. The geography of the city increases household food costs and usually reduces nutritional quality of food intake. The urban form therefore plays a crucial role in household food security. Household food security cannot therefore be addressed by household scale initiatives as advocated in the IFSS alone. There is a need for urban scale policies and strategies to be considered which take greater consideration of the issues of food justice.

Figure 4: Sources of food

The urban food security gap is caused both by the ideological framing of the location and causes of food insecurity within the IFSS. This gap is reinforced by the Strategy's political home. The lead department selected to drive the Strategy reveals an underlying productionist and therefore rural bias within the conceptualization of food insecurity. Despite the key challenges identified in the IFSS, the document locates the heart of the problem as rural food security and the solution to be increased production, 'One of the primary objectives… is to overcome rural food insecurity by increasing the participation of rural food insecure households in productive agriculture sector activities' (Department

of Agriculture 2002, 28). This understanding of the nature and location of food insecurity is reflected in the articulation of the food security priority area of the NPC as "food security, water security and rural development." (Manuel 2012). Likewise , the ANC's 2009 Election Manifesto listed food security as one of its five priority areas, but also coupled food insecurity with rural development (ANC 2009).

This framing of food insecurity as rural is the result of the way that food security data has been collated and presented, as discussed above, but also the ideological framing of poverty and the urban in the South African context. Internationally there is an anti-urban bias in the development field and local politics. The urban bias theory developed by Lipton (1977), Bates (1981) and others essentially argued that urban classes in developing countries were able to use their economic, political and social power to disproportionately benefit from public policies. The rural poor were therefore systematically disadvantaged. This argument powerfully shaped development practice and its merits and impacts are still debated today (see Jones and Corbridge 2010). One significant outcome of the theory is that urban poverty largely fell off the development agenda, the locus of poverty (and therefore food security) was within rural areas and therefore development focus was also in rural areas. While the urbanization of poverty is an increasingly recognized phenomenon, there is still considerable drag in shifting policy direction caused by the legacy of urban bias theory. In their 2001 *State of the World's Cities* report, UN-Habitat state that: 'Several international development agencies in Africa still have no department specifically in charge of urban development. In several agencies, the ruralist lobby is so strong that urban poverty is hardly recognized as such and "urban development" has to walk in disguise behind the imperatives of health, education, gender, family, micro-enterprise promotion, environment' (UN-Habitat 2001, p. 12). This point is elaborated on by Parnell and Simon (2010, p. 54), 'That the urbanization trend is so widely ignored is either a result of negligence on behalf of governments and major players such as the African Development Bank, donors and the UN, or it reflects vested interests (such as those of traditional authorities) that need to be exposed in the wider interests of development'.

In the case of South Africa, the ongoing pro-rural focus is rooted in a particular tradition under which the urban was the seat of privilege and power. While this in part simply reflects the international development agenda, it is driven too by the country's specific historical legacy in which both apartheid and pre-apartheid policies systematically removed black populations to rural areas. Rural areas were therefore sites of great

poverty and economic exclusion. The urban development agenda has therefore been viewed as endorsing the status quo and doing little to address apartheid inequalities (Turok and Parnell 2009).

However, Parnell has argued that the urban poor have been consistently under-counted because of how urban is defined in South Africa. Urban is categorised by political jurisdiction, an historical quirk that has led to many poor areas being defined as rural, when under any standard definition, they would be rural. 'The problem', Parnell notes, 'with these overly "rural" figures is that they feed the myth that the South African poor are predominantly a peasantry whose sole need is land reform' (Parnell 2005, 24). This is to a large degree, the reason for the on-going rural and productionist approach in food security policy and research in South Africa.

This notion of food insecurity as being predominantly rural to be addressed through household production as a subsistence and poverty alleviation strategy has led to a particular institutional configuration of departments tasked with addressing food insecurity. Although the Departments of Public Works, Health, Social Development and others are called upon to support the IFSS, the lead department is the Department of Agriculture. Drimie and Ruysenaar (2010, p. 325) argue that the placement of the IFSS within the Department of Agriculture reflects the continued equation of food security with national scale food security and agricultural production, despite the nuances within the IFSS itself. In this, the issue of food access in both rural and urban areas is subsumed. Although the policy documents themselves allude to problems of food security in urban areas, their institutional placing limits action on urban food insecurity. Since the Department of Agriculture has no city government level equivalent, cities have no mandate to address food insecurity and therefore have limited policy responses to the challenge.

City-scale food security responses

The outworking of this limited conceptual framing of the drivers of food insecurity and the lack of an city mandate to address food insecurity has led to limited and piecemeal responses, informed by the framing of the IFSS but not supported by it.

The City of Cape Town's primary response to food insecurity was to develop an Urban Agriculture Policy and a dedicated Urban Agriculture Unit within the Economic Development Facilitation Unit (City of Cape Town 2007). This unit was established in part to hold together the many urban agriculture projects established by a number of unconnected departments in the City. Other cities in South Africa have also support urban agriculture as a means to address food insecurity (Rogerson 2011). These initiatives are housed in many different departments of cities as there is no clear institutional home for food security in city-scale government under the IFSS.

In a recent blog post, David Satterthwaite posed the following question, 'Why do almost all discussions of food and nutrition in urban areas of Africa and Asia … stress only urban and peri-urban agriculture as the solution, when in every successful city, the possibility of low income groups getting access to agricultural land and water is very limited?' (Satterthwaite 2011). This paper argues that this reliance on the idea of urban agriculture as the only solution to urban food insecurity has its roots in the dominant conceptual framing of food insecurity and in the South African context is informed by the articulation of the food security challenge from the IFSS and other national government discussions on food security. There have been some other urban food security initiatives, such as food voucher distribution in line with the safety nets focus of the IFSS, but these are not extensive.

Food insecurity in urban areas is predominantly a problem of access and that access is determined by both household scale limitations on access (such as income variability, limited storage, refrigeration, cooking technology) and spatial limitations (such as location and structure of market, access to adequate public transportation). Urban food insecurity is the result of the interplay between individual household capacity and socio-spatial processes and cannot be addressed simply through individual household poverty alleviation strategies.

If food insecurity is the manifestation of structural problems of the food system and the urban system as the AFSUN data presented suggest, then the departments whose work impacts food security is far more extensive than currently imagined. These departments include spatial planning, transport, economic development, public health and many more. Pothukuchi states that "If planners are not conscious [of food issues], then their impact is negative, not just neutral" (Pothukuchi 2000 in Roberts 2001). This applies not just to planners, but to city government more broadly.

This section builds on Pothukuchi's point to argue that the absence of an explicitly urban lens to existing South African food security policy has led to a number of unintentional negative food security impacts for urban residents. The paper focuses on three brief examples from Cape Town, but examples could be drawn from many other cities in the country.

Supermarketization

Writing from a North American context, Pothukuchi and Kaufman state, "Air, water, food and shelter are among the essentials of life. Planners have been involved in efforts to improve the quality of air and water through pollution control programs and more comprehensively in shelter planning. But the fourth essential, food, has been virtually ignored by planning" (Pothkuchi and Kaufman 2000). There appears to be an assumption within the urban field that the market will meet the food needs of urban residents. However, as the private sector, there is no profit motivation for the supermarket sector to attempt to address urban food insecurity.

Supermarkets are a recent arrival in low-income areas of South African cities, having begun to locate in townships in the early 2000s (Weatherspoon & Reardon, 2003:338) as a result of the higher disposable income of many township residents and the improved infrastructure in these areas (Tustin & Strydom, 2006). As noted earlier, although 99.3% of sampled households had sourced food from a supermarket in the last twelve months, just 26.8% went to supermarkets once a week or more frequently. This is in part the result of the type and quantity of products sold in these stores, as discussed earlier, but it is also determined by the spatial location of these stores (Zager 2011). As Clarkson et al. (1996) point out, supermarket chains use multiple models to determine location. These are all, unsurprisingly, based on profit maximisation and not on community need. Supermarkets are therefore often not spatially accessible for the urban poor.

Recent work conducted by Peyton (2012) mapping supermarkets in Cape Town found a profoundly unequal distribution of supermarkets with the highest quintile income subplaces having over seven times as many supermarkets per 1000 households as the lowest quintile income subplaces (see Figures 5 & 6). This work mapped all of the stores and subsidiaries of Spar, Shoprite/Checkers, Woolworths and Pick n Pay and overlaid the data on Census 2001 income data at the sub-place scale. In addition, the maps included major roads.
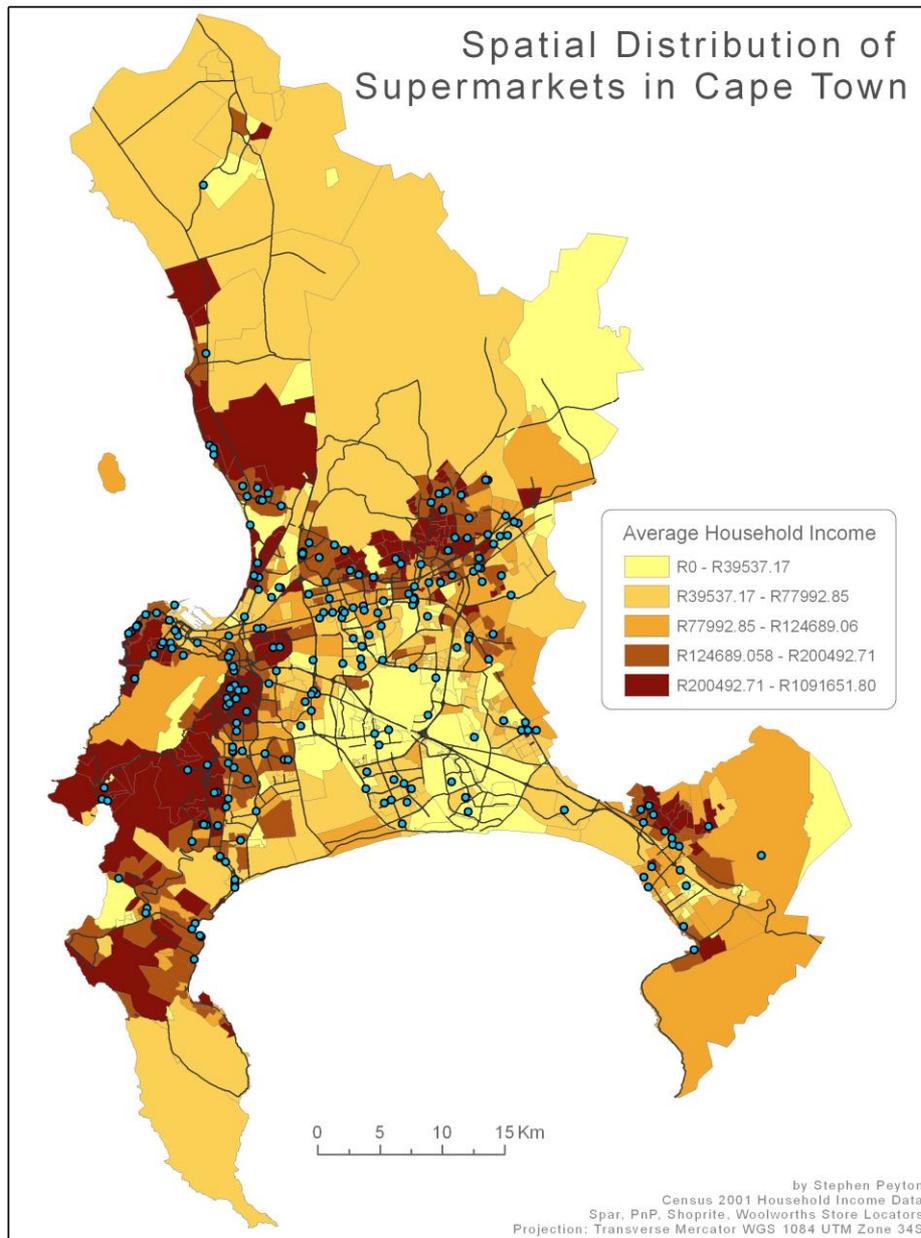
Figure 5: Supermarket distribution in Cape Town (Source: Peyton 2012)
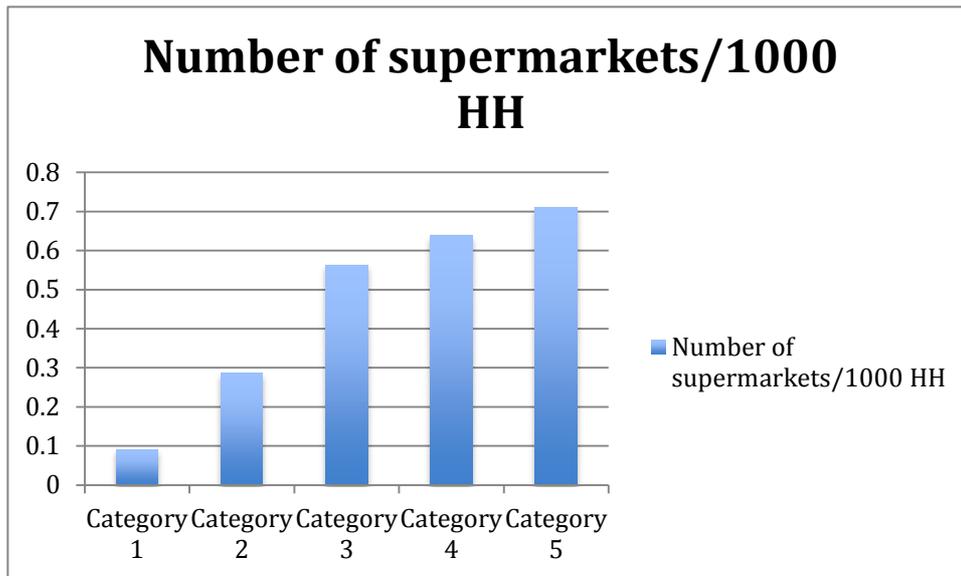
Number of supermarkets/1000 HH

Figure 6: Number of supermarkets per 1000 households according to 2001 income quintiles (Source: Peyton 2012)

When the USave supermarkets were mapped, it was found even this chain that explicitly targets "the lower income groups" (Shoprite holdings undated) does not penetrate the lowest income areas of the city. There were twice as many USaves per 1000 households in the second lowest income subplace quintile as the lowest income subplace quintile (See Figures 7 & 8). The meeting of the food security needs of the urban poor cannot be left to the market. The market is profit motivated and therefore has no mandate to address food security or the right to food. There is therefore a need for a City planning response to food access.
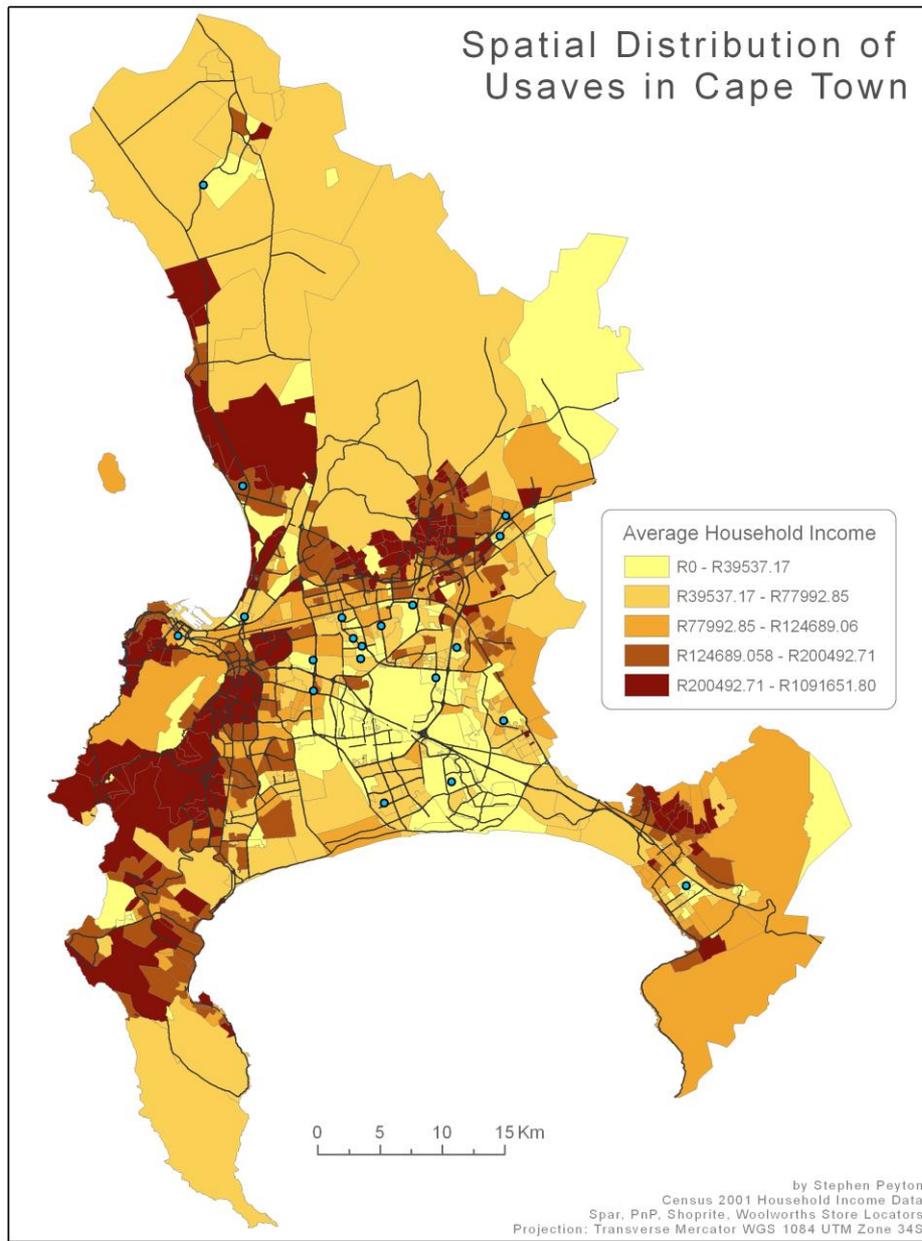
Figure 7: Distribution of USave stores, Cape Town (Source: Peyton 2012)
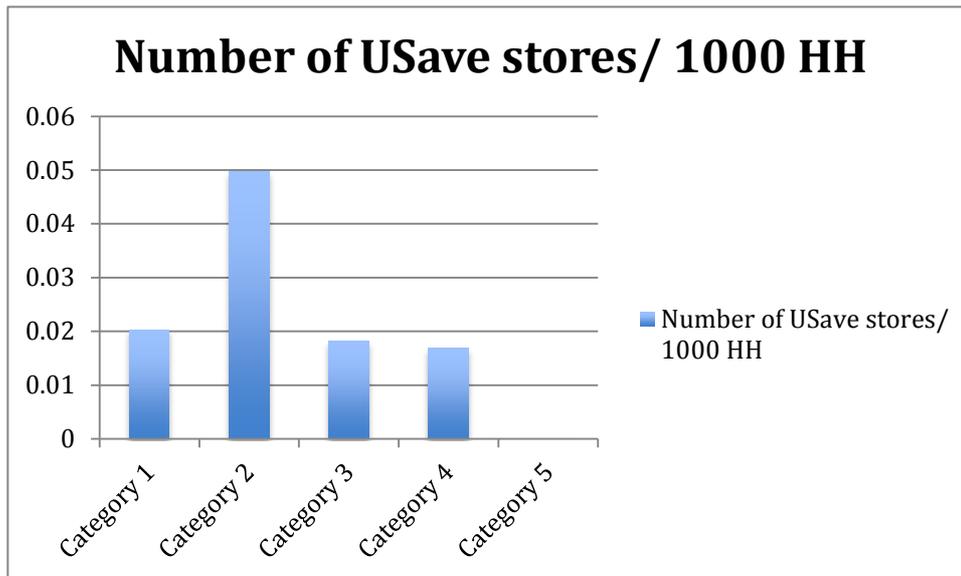
Number of USave stores/ 1000 HH

Figure 2: Number of USave Stores per 1000 households according to 2001 income quintiles (Source: Peyton 2012)

There is a further question about the desireability of the supermarket sector in low income areas and its potential to displace informal food retailers, who – as the next sub-section indicates – are a vital source of food for low income residents (Bissiker 2006).

The lack of an urban food policy means that the location of new food retail stores is not considered by the City from a food security perspective. There is no clear strategy for the strategic location of food retail as there is in a city like Belo Horizonte in Brazil. Although the City's Planning and Building Development Management records building plans approved for development of new shopping malls, it does not keep record of supermarket numbers in these developments or other kinds of food retail. Food retail geography is not considered within City planning.

The absence of a food security mandate for the city means that there is no food focus in spatial planning and economic development, which may lead to policies and by-laws that ultimately undermine urban food security.

Informal food retail

The AFSUN data (see Figure 4) and work of AFSUN affiliated students have found that the informal food retail sector (spazas, fruit and vegetable traders, street food vendors) is a vital source of food for low-income households. The informal food retail sector is particularly important as a safety net for households who are able to purchase food on credit from this sector through the dense social network that operate in low income urban areas (Ligthelm 2005, Cooke 2012). This sector provides food in more unit sizes

that are accessible to the urban poor, in ways that the supermarket sector cannot. Where supermarkets have moved into low-income areas, they do not meet all the nutritional needs of residents, often selling only very limited ranges of fresh produce at high prices. Informal sector fruit and vegetable traders locate near to these shops and offer fresh produce in greater variety (in terms of range and quality) and at lower prices than the supermarkets (Cooke 2012). In addition, the operating hours of this sector are more convenient for workers with long commutes. Finally, this produce reaches the traders in Cape Town via shorter supply chains than the supermarket sector and so the produce is often fresher than that of the formal sector. Informal fruit and vegetable traders provide a glimpse at an alternative, localised food system.

However, despite importance of the informal food retail sector to the food security needs of the urban poor, the IFSS does not once mention this sector. Although both the ANC and DA have articulated concerns around food pricing, their proposals for food price monitoring focus exclusively on the formal food retail sector. The informal food retail sector is articulated within City policies and by-laws as part of a wider informal retail sector which focuses on the economic development potential of the sector. The City of Cape Town introduced an Informal Trading Policy and Management Framework in 2003, in which the stated vision was to create 'a well-managed informal trading sector that is fully integrated into the economic, spatial and social development objectives of the City.' In its mission statement it said: 'Through a developmental approach, the City seeks to facilitate the access to job and entrepreneurial opportunities in the informal trading sector and the nurturing of a positive relationship with the formal business sector by providing a stable regulatory and flexible management environment that is predictable, empowering and sustainable' (City of Cape Town, 2003:6).

The City's 2009 Economic Development Strategy's main justification for supporting informal traders focuses on the need for sustainable livelihoods. The role that the goods sold by these traders play in ensuring the food security of the urban poor is not considered. The City needs to recognise the informal sector for the services (including food security) it provides to the poor and not just as a source of employment. The absence of this has unintentionally negative impacts on food security. Firstly, if the City had a food mandate and the vital role of this sector for food security were understood, then it is likely that this department would be better resourced and would be able to act more proactively to enhance the sector, rather than the registration and compliance enforcement role it currently is capacitated to do. Secondly, the absence of a food lens

has led to some arguing that the City has been too harsh in closing down non-compliant food traders according to restrictive by-laws. Fresh produce traders were recently removed from Mitchells Plain (Schroeder 2012). It is argued that if the City had a food mandate and better understood the role that the informal food retail sector plays in the urban food system, more inclusive approaches would be taken to managing this sector.

Philippi Horticultural Area

The Philippi Horticultural Area (PHA) is a large commercial agriculture area which is under threat from urban encroachment. This area has historically provided a significant proportion of Cape Town's fresh produce and remains a vital source of fresh produce for lower income areas of the City, underserved by the supermarket sector. However, the area is under threat from multiple applications from developers to rezone the area from Rural to Urban and therefore available for housing, industrial and business development. Although there are departments within the City that would like to protect the PHA from development, the lack of a food mandate makes it impossible to make a food-based argument to protect it. The lack of resources available has made it difficult to generate accurate data on the current productive capacity of the land. The lack of an understanding of the urban food system has rendered the PHA's role in providing fresh produce to the most food insecure areas of the city invisible. The lack of a recognition of food insecurity in urban areas has made a food production argument less powerful than an argument for middle-income housing or commercial development. Without an urban food mandate, the City can have only a weak response to encroachment of development onto productive urban and peri-urban land.

There are many other examples of how the absence of a food mandate and food lens may mean that City departments have unintended negative impacts on food security, such as the transport department's plans for new public transport routes and public transport interchanges, the public health legislation on food sale, the zoning of mixed-use spaces, the design of new residential areas and even the architectural design of new homes.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the absence of a food security mandate for city government has led to the neglect of urban food security and even the worsening of urban food insecurity. This absence can be understood as the outworking of the framing of food

security in the IFSS and the resultant institutional location of the policy. The progressive realization of the right to food cannot be met by household food production and social safety nets alone. It requires a greater appreciation of the drivers of food insecurity at the food system and how these connect to wider processes of social, spatial, political and economic exclusion.

The paper therefore calls for the development of an explicitly urban food policy, which goes beyond urban agriculture, and responsibility for the realisation of the right to food to be partially devolved to the City scale.

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