



CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO FOOD SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE: The aim of this scientific research is to examine contemporary issues related to food security, which is becoming one of the fundamental elements of security at the national, regional, and supranational levels.

METHODS: The scientific methods employed in this article include analysis and synthesis, abstraction, inductive method, modeling, and observation.

RESULTS: Current issues in food security have been identified, and methods for addressing them have been proposed to achieve the necessary regulation of the security environment based on contemporary food studies.

CONCLUSIONS: Food security is becoming one of the global issues of contemporary society. It is fundamental to the future formation of social relationships based on the concept of modern society—a society of shared responsibility for shared security. Thus, the application of holistic methods becomes imperative.

Keywords: food security, food self-sufficiency, food studies, national security, shared responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

Food-related problems are increasingly becoming global issues (1). Establishing an up-to-date, value-based, sustainable system for food self-sufficiency in contemporary Bulgaria, Europe, and other major regions around the world is among the priority subjects of state and legal regulation. The necessity of radical transformations in the food self-sufficiency system of the Republic of Bulgaria (RB) stems from the understanding that food self-sufficiency is a basic factor for the sustainable development of Bulgarian society, the state, and the nation. Economic, political, scientific, technological, environmental, and informational factors play increasingly significant roles in interstate relations. Meanwhile, recent years have witnessed a retreat from forming a unified concept of food provision and establishing a reliable system guaranteeing Bulgaria's food self-sufficiency. Developing a targeted state policy in the field of food is becoming increasingly necessary. A trend towards declining food parameters in Bulgaria's

development requires the elaboration of long-term plans and programs not only at municipal and regional levels. Such an approach corresponds to the progressive shift from globalization to regionalization of food issues. This transition is accompanied by, and sometimes linked to, the current food situation. Security within the context of multifaceted and dynamically developing international relations has yet to achieve notable effectiveness regarding food provision.

DISCUSSION

Contemporary challenges facing humanity generate new political and social risks and crises, the nature and content of which must be examined through their interconnection and regulation (2). The administrative reform conducted in the country has not led to tangible positive changes in addressing accumulated food-related issues. Attention to this segment of state policy has significantly weakened. Food security is an important component of national security, occupying a pivotal position within its system. However, a systematic state-management concept in the sphere of food security is still lacking.

Over the last decade, more than 50 different concepts have been proposed and applied within

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Bulgaria's membership in the EU, UN, NATO, jurisprudence, and legal practice. It should be

noted that none of these concepts has found practical application in developing long-term plans and strategies for food industrialization, regarded as a foundational factor for sustainable development. Various fundamental components of the food security system, elements of its functional content, and the structure of its sustainable development still lack clear scientific, doctrinal, and legal status.

Simultaneously, the scientific-conceptual field in this area is constantly enriched with terminological constructs such as food sociology, global food studies, social food studies, political food studies, food danger, food crisis, food risk, food terrorism, food information, food accessibility, and many others, which lack exhaustive knowledge regarding their respective phenomena.

Within legislative practices, discrepancies remain between identifying food-related issues and resolving them at regional and national levels. The absence of adequate coordination and communication between administrative and financial institutions, along with other gaps in understanding and practical development of food security concepts, underlines the relevance and importance of scientific-theoretical and practical-applied research in food studies.

Ultimately, this will facilitate creating a comprehensive legal framework for this complex, dynamic, and contradictory phenomenon, supported by civil society. This state-provided opportunity also allows improvement in lobbying legislation, enhancing quality of life for citizens seeking support from NGOs. (3).

Food security is the legal and organizational responsibility of individuals, society, and the state, based on measures to forecast, prevent, or mitigate negative food-related events. From a legal ontology perspective, food environment security is defined through several semantic variations: an integral component of sustainable food environment formation and activities conducted concurrently with food environment protection. Security of the food system is simultaneously a critical element and a functional target of the state's food-related responsibilities. Ensuring food security is not limited to state functions but also encompasses

non-governmental and social-organizational measures. The place and role of security in food provision are determined by the degree of economic or other threats to the existence and progressive development of individuals, society, and the state. Modern science will increasingly develop based on the positive experiences of human community organization and contemporary lifestyles (4). Principles for forming the legal-normative framework for food security include sustainable food development, risk prevention for food self-sufficiency, compensation for the use of food resources, free access to food environment information, counteracting food-related terrorism, and the involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making on food safety. The most significant defects in Bulgaria's current organizational-legal framework for food security include political populism, inadequate state activities to ensure food security, weakening of management and control functions, absence of a legal theory of food security, fragmented and contradictory legislative frameworks, and lack of enforcement procedures guaranteeing food security.

Priority measures for enhancing legal support for food security include legislative harmonization, scientific methodological development of food security principles, optimization of state and municipal management systems for food resources with ecological considerations, development of education systems in food studies, enhancing public food awareness, state support for civic movements fostering public food culture, and intensification of international cooperation in food security.

Despite widespread legislative use and academic popularity, the food security concept currently lacks a solid philosophical framework and methodological approach. Security doctrine research in this area remains at an initial stage. Social responsibility in management, particularly electronic governance, closely ties to resolving ethical dilemmas (5).

Conceptually, food environment security can be approached from three main perspectives:

- State of security of relevant entities;
- System of measures and norms eliminating specific threats;
- Degree of object protection.

Typically, food security serves as a stabilizer for specific food-related and legal segments, covering human rights protection, safeguarding food resources, and investigating food security issues.

Food security in Bulgaria represents a hierarchical, multifunctional social and legal phenomenon with dynamic characteristics. Globally, it synthesizes the fundamental aspects of food provision and security. Ontologically, "food security" signifies the elimination of threats arising from the natural environment to individuals, society, and the state.

CONCLUSION

Threats and risks to food sustainability can be classified based on their manifestation: international, regional, local, institutional, group, individual, complex, simple, static, dynamic, overt, covert, etc.

Given the global scope of food security, developing contemporary scientific-theoretical paradigms grounded in intellectual food studies is crucial. In this context, the Food Security Institute at Trakia University, the first and only research center in this field in Bulgaria, plays a pivotal role.

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