



A Comparative Analysis of U.S. Policies for Global Food Security vs. Immigrant Food Security

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Abstract

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States, approximately 2 billion people in the year 2019 were affected by food insecurity worldwide. Though the United States has created policies to aid efforts in decreasing this issue, many individuals struggle to maintain access to nutritious, fulfilling food outside the U.S., as well as within the nation itself. Legislation such as the Global Food Security Act of 2016 addresses the need to increase food security, however, it is unclear how the United States plans to address this problem internally. Due to the internal implications of food insecurity, many populations face this problem at a heightened level, especially those who migrate to the United States. Though the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 expanded welfare to individuals of immigrant status, many are not able to obtain efficient assistance in securing food. In fact, most individuals must wait 5 years to earn “qualified immigrant status,” before meeting eligibility requirements for programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Though policies claim to willingly promote a nation dedicated to providing global food security, it is essential to question why the United States has not created laws to target populations who experience food insecurity at a higher rate (such as immigrants) and how they can adjust policy to accommodate this in the future.
Keywords: food security, immigration, policy analysis



Understanding the Global Food Security Act of 2016 and Current Social Welfare

The root of this issue stems from the ideology that there are two groups in the United States: those who are “deserving” of access to welfare and those who are “undeserving” of such assistance. Often those who have migrated to the United States fall under the latter category and therefore, options to obtain welfare are near impossible to locate. Though the **Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996** was passed to create “welfare reform,” including procedures that would benefit immigrants, individuals usually endure a 5-year waiting period upon receiving a lawful permanent resident status (LPR) to access welfare such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Even then, those who enter this country through other circumstances seeking asylum, temporary protection, or even child protection under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, are not granted equal access to welfare programs to aid them in stabilizing their lives in a new country.

In the United States there are approximately 14.3 million food-insecure households recorded by the United States Department of Agriculture (2018). Though this social issue impacts many across the United States, social constructs such as race, ethnicity, and gender all factor in to determine many minority populations are at a higher risk of experiencing food-insecurity and a lack of access to welfare accommodating their needs. Individuals like immigrants and refugees are one of the specific groups that are known to experience food insecurity a higher risk. According to the Food and Research Action Center, “immigrants without documentation have a food insecurity rate twice that of the overall U.S. population” (2016). Though this is supported by data, it is often difficult to collect accurate statistics regarding who does or does not have access welfare due to fear of deportation or detention due to their citizenship status.

The **Global Food Security Act of 2016** has many redeeming qualities that extend U.S. aid to countries struggling with food security, however this perpetuates the ideology that food insecurity is an external problem outside the U.S. Representative Christopher Smith (R-NJ) and Betty McCollum (D-MN) sponsored the Global Food Security Act that was passed into law in 2016 by President Barack Obama. While it is admirable that the U.S. aid other countries in the effort to eradicate hunger and provide nutritious, healthy lifestyles to all world-wide, the law should call into question how this problem will be resolved within the nation itself. Though programs such as SNAP and TANF exist, populations such as immigrants are unable to reap the benefits of this well-intended legislation.

Strengths of Global Food Security Act

The goals of this legislation focus on how the U.S. can aid other countries in achieving a wide variety of objectives fulfilling the basic needs of those world-wide.

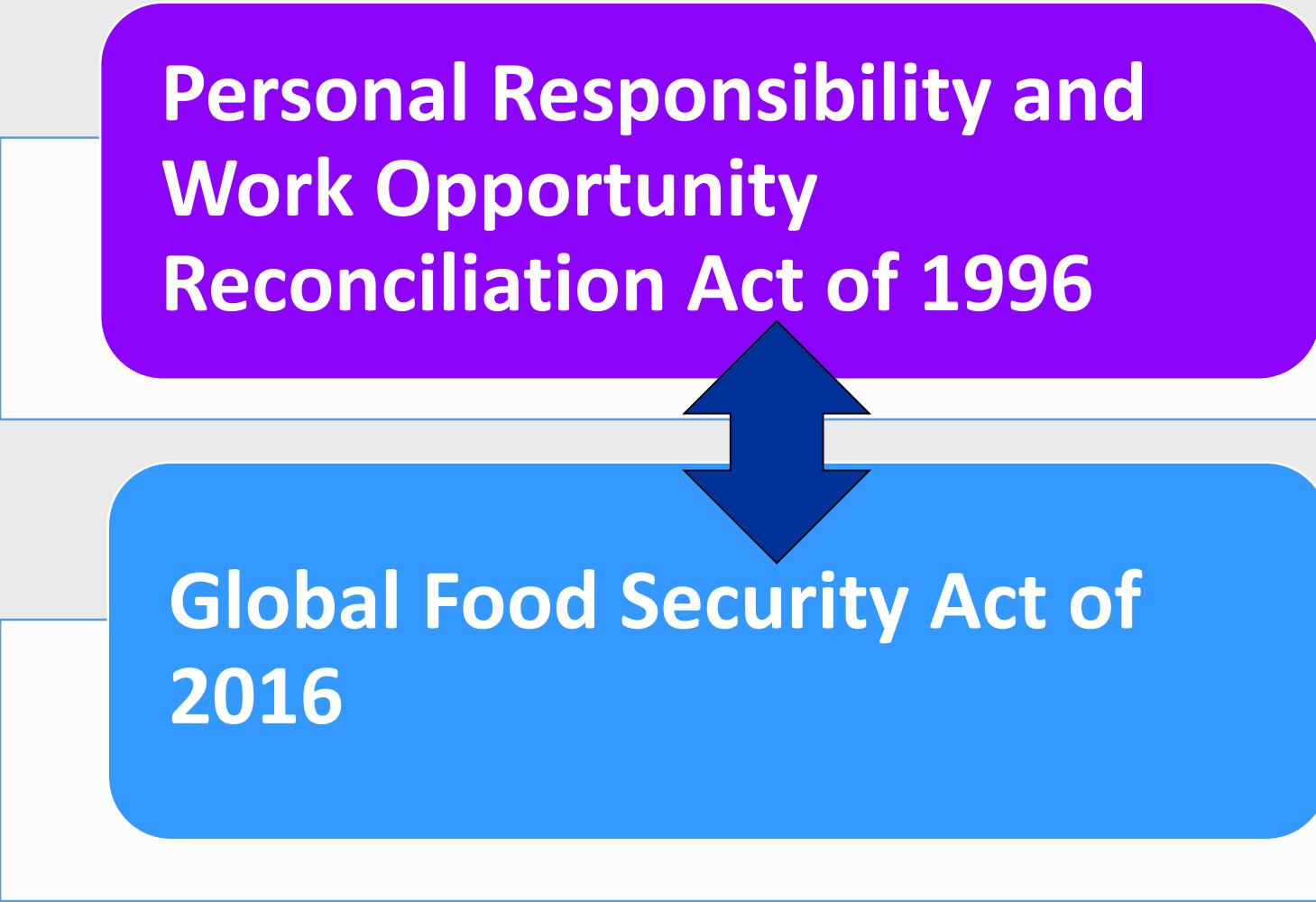
- This assistance would benefit many food-insecure countries in the goals it plans to achieve. These objectives include:
1. Aim to reduce global poverty and hunger, especially within target countries as indicated.
 2. Achieve food security as well as improved nutrition.
 3. Promote and support inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth. This would specifically benefit the livelihood of smallholder farmers.
 4. Improve nutritional outcomes, especially for populations of women and children.
 5. Build resilience among vulnerable populations.

Weaknesses of Global Food Security Act

While the legislation is providing extensive assistance to individuals experiencing food-insecurity outside the U.S., this does not resolve gaps in welfare programs, especially those who migrate to the U.S. and are unable to access welfare.

- As a result, this act does not:
1. Indicate target populations to focus on how individuals experience food insecurity at diverse rates of relevance.
 2. Reform welfare to accommodate food insecurity within the United States, yet it expands procedures to provide assistance outside the country.
 3. Support the statistics proving the U.S. has one of the highest rates of food insecurity amongst developed nations.
 4. Question institutionalized racism, sexism, and ethnic bias since minority populations experience food insecurity at a higher rate.

Relevant Legislation



Impact of Food Insecurity



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