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## **Geo-Strategic Aspects of Food Trade and Food Security**

**Bettina Rudloff**

*Selected presentation for the International Agricultural Trade Research Consortium's (IATRC's) 2023 Virtual Summer Symposium: Fields of Discord: Understanding the Intersection of Geopolitics and Agriculture, June 26, 2023.*

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*Fields of Discord: Understanding the Intersection of  
Geopolitics and Agriculture, IATRC summer symposium 2023*



**Geo-strategic aspects of food trade and food security**  
in the light of recent tensions on international markets – policy choices in country cases

**26 June 2023**

Bettina Rudloff, SWP, Berlin



**Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik**  
**German Institute for**  
**International and Security Affairs**

# 1. Outline of a commissioned IATRC paper as basis

## Title

**Geo-strategic aspects of food trade and food security  
in the light of recent tensions on international markets – policy choices in country cases (by Nov 2023)**

*Bettina Rudloff/SWP/Berlin; Christine Wieck, Kristina Mensah, Olayinka Kareem/University of Hohenheim; David Orden/Virginia Tech, Jose Montesclaros/ Nanyang Technological University Singapore, Housseem Chebbi/ University of Tunis, Niels Sondergaard/ University Brasilia, Wusheng Yu/ University of Copenhagen*

## Research Questions

**Have the recent events (Covid and the Russian invasion) led or pushed to a general geo-strategic shift in food trade policy of selected countries?**

- **Different drivers and respective time frames for policy decisions**
  - Overall underlying climate change and general economic challenges long-term
  - Sudden events of Covid and the Russian invasion 2020-today

## Cases

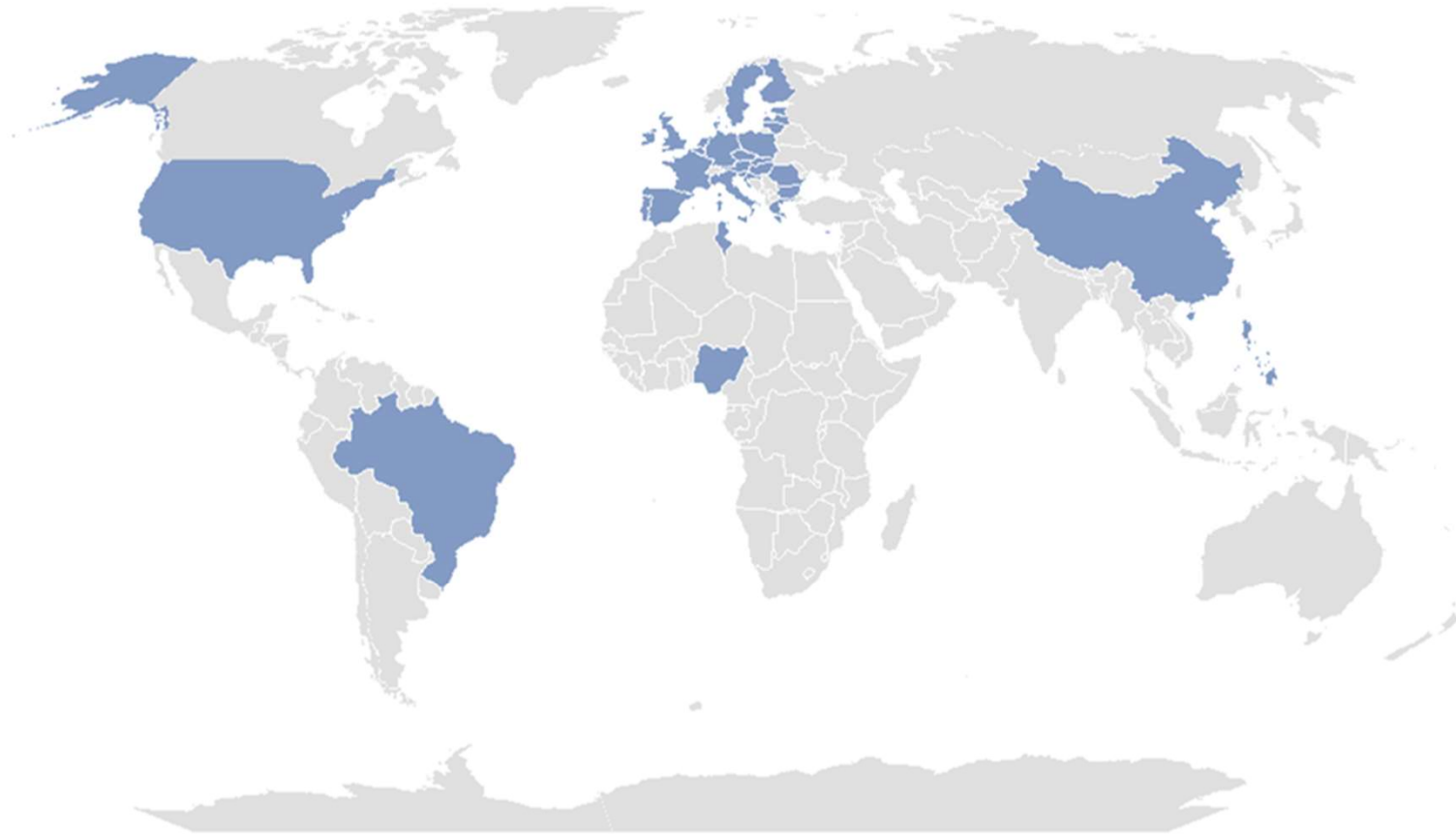
**8 countries** (Brazil, China, EU, UK, Nigeria, Philippines, Tunisia, US)  
- different status in trade, food security, economic development

## Method

- Qualitative policy comparison
- Regulatory/legal analysis of legal documents, media information, grey literature, academic papers, quantifiable country data
- Desk research and different feedback loops through expert interviews from academia and policy sphere

# 1. Outline of a commissioned IATRC paper as basis

8 country cases



# 1. Outline: different layers and time frames of challenges

## Long-term contextual challenges

### (1) Climate change

Production and allocation effects

### (2) Overall economic atmosphere

WTO weakness

US-China trade tensions

Protective policies

### Sudden shocks on markets and food security

#### COVID-19:

- Value chain disruptions
- Income and demand effects

#### Russian invasion:

- Trade disruptions



## 2. Concepts used: “Geo”

Recent comeback of literature applying “geo”-frames

No unique definition: fluid discourse, origin in theories on international relations

### “Geo”-strategy

- Explicit **relational perspective, positioning vis a vis others**
- Systematic approach to achieve “geo”-political or “geo”-economic goals

### Geo-politics

- Original literature focussing on military power as political goal
- Recently as well as other threats, often related to violence like terrorism

### Geo-economics

- Part of geo-politics with less offensive behaviour and means than geo-politics
- Aiming at goals **beyond economic goals by economic instruments**



## 2. Concepts used: “Geo-” in food policy theories and events

### Food security in geo-political contexts: theories

War covered as relevant as exchange in goods to satisfy populations needs including food (Hobbes 1676)

Hunger as relevant parameter in military actions (Clausewitz 1832)

Food sufficiency as strategic national policy aim for independency (Morgenthau 1948)

Food aid as foreign policy tool (Essex 2014)

Food as critical infrastructures (Brinkmann, Bauer 2016)

### Food security in geo-political contexts: policy and events

Mercantilism in Anglo-Dutch war 1650-1647

Forced production and export from Ukraine region and resulting hunger crisis (“Holodomor”)

“Food riots”: “guerres de la farine”, Arab spring

**Corona**

**Russian invasion**

# 3. Preliminary results: strategic aspects of food and trade policy - the EU's case

Strategic aspects addressing global challenges					Food security as overall priority
(1) Climate change	(2) Economic atmosphere				
	Autonomy in production	Trade openness	Trade sovereignty	Crisis Concepts	
<p>“Green deal” followed by newly perceived trade offs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>renewed debate on food-fuel-feed-ecology</li> <li>search for new tools to stay attractive for trade partners despite more sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postponing ecological reforms of CAP to keep up production</li> <li>FDI screening (and exclusion) for critical infrastructures incl. food</li> </ul>	<p>New partners for FTAs</p>	<p>Unilateralism and “standard-setting” ambition like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sustainability via due diligence</li> <li>anti-slavery ban</li> <li>anti-coercion protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New preparedness’ - approaches (European Food Security Crisis preparedness and Response Mechanism, EFSCM)</li> <li>Food as critical infrastructures follows specific requirements for entities</li> </ul>	<p>renewed narrative of domestic food security as aim</p>

### 3. Preliminary results – conclusions and policy recommendations

- **Policy recommendations to be developed by feedback loop with policy actors in autumn 2023**
- **Expected possible results influencing policy recommendations**
  - 1) Generally similar policy trend towards more economic and food protectionist focus
  - 2) Possibly different drivers for general shifts (Russian invasion versus US-China rivalry)
  - 3) Differences in measures and tools

# Thank you!

**Dr Bettina Rudloff**

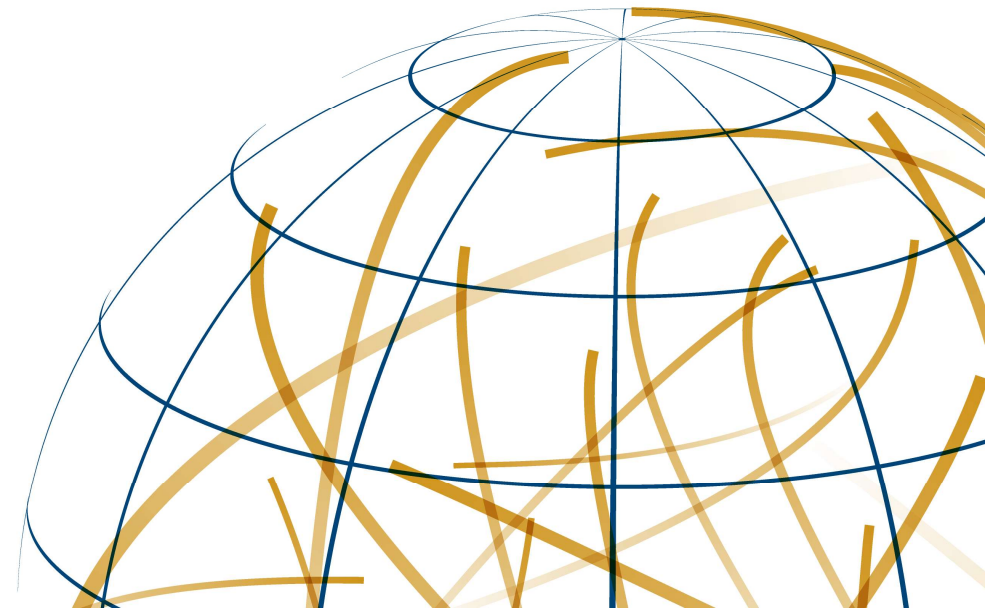
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