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The Russian Variant of Food Security

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Russia's political leaders have a different understanding of food security than traditional usage. The traditional usage of the term *food security* refers to access, availability, and nutritional aspects of food. According to the conventional application of food security, the vast majority of the Russian population is not food insecure by traditional measures. The Russian variant of food security connects food trade to national security. The Russian political leadership argues that Russia is food insecure based on food imports. Survey data are used to assess support for the government's food security policy, and to analyze the impact of the self-imposed food embargo on Russian consumers.

INTRODUCTION

Concern about food security arose in the 1940s in the aftermath of World War II, but usage of the term became popularized in the 1980s when policymakers expressed apprehension over hunger and malnutrition in developing nations (Gibson 2012, 209–27; Maxwell and Slater 2003). Since then, studies of food security have become something of a cottage industry, as the Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations and the Economist Intelligence Unit publish annual reports on the condition of global food security (FAO 2015, EIU 2015). Even the United States Department of Agriculture has gotten into the act and published its own survey on a periodic basis (USDA 2004, 2009). The centrality of food security to global geopolitics is evidenced by the Rome Summit on World Food Security in June 2008 and a second conference in 2009; by the creation of a United Nations task force on food security in 2009, and a G-8 commitment in that same year for \$20 billion for agricultural development. In 2013 the *Journal of Rural Studies* devoted a special issue to food security. Innumerable policy and academic conferences have been held on food security, including recent annual conferences

at Cornell University in 2014 and 2015. Food security is, in the words of one team of authors, one of the “master frames” of twenty-first century public policy (Mooney and Hunt 2009).

Studies of food insecurity traditionally focus on availability of food (supply), access to food (price), and utilization of food (nutrition). Scholars who study food insecurity are interested in its causes, conditions, and experiences. Today we understand that food insecurity is neither a homogeneous nor a static condition: food insecurity occurs along a continuum ranging from adequate caloric intake to starvation (Hendriks 2015, 614–15).¹ Analysts presume that the existence of food insecurity in a country is real. Further, they assume that the state, either alone or in tandem with international agencies, takes action to address a food insecurity problem. States that suffer from food insecurity normally adopt a range of actions.² One common governmental response is to request or permit food aid, although that strategy is fraught with problems (Streeten 1987, 39–44). Other states try to increase domestic production through innovation and new techniques, by growing different crops or improving production methods through modernization of equipment and machinery. Still others expand food trade or their distribution systems. But what if food insecurity is a political *strategy* rather than a condition that warrants remediation? What if concerns over food insecurity are used for political ends rather than a reflection of genuine deprivation? In short, what if “food insecurity” is not real, at least

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for the vast majority of the population? This article hypothesizes that contemporary Russia is such a case.

Our analysis creates reasons to rethink the relationship between the state and food security, about state motivations, and about state actions. Our hope is to increase awareness that “food insecurity” may be manufactured for political reasons. Food security/insecurity may be a *political* variable and not just a reflection of food availability and access. States may use fears about food insecurity to bolster national security or nationalism. Russia is a case study that shows how an authoritarian regime can manipulate concerns over food insecurity in order to further state interests and/or galvanize support for the government. The Russian case alerts us to the possibility that the banner of food security is not consumer-oriented but rather is intended to further political interests, and in that way challenges the traditional understanding of food security/insecurity.

RUSSIA AND THE DEFINITION OF FOOD SECURITY

Governments commonly pursue food security to ensure sufficient food for all citizens to lead a healthy life (World Bank 2007). According to this definition, global food security is improving as the number of undernourished has declined from 942 million in 2005–2007 to 794 million during 2014–2016 (FAO 2015). Almost two-thirds of the world’s hungry live in Africa or South Asia and are small farmers or rural landless laborers (Paarlberg 2012, 75). Going forward, there is no consensus about the ability to improve global food security. A pessimistic view is that several challenges obstruct a reduction in the number of people who are food insecure in the world: the depletion of water tables, a global stagnation in grain yields, and climate change that leads to more frequent drought (Brown 2012, 10–11). Echoing those challenges is the argument that overpopulation is a core cause of food insecurity in the developing world; the global population is expected to increase by another 2.3 billion people by mid-century, and this growth will come from developing nations (Attenborough 2012, 61–72). Still others maintain that food security will remain elusive because the dominant food regime today used in developed nations, which is based upon a capital-intensive industrial model for agriculture, is inherently harmful to the poor and small farmers in developing countries (Schanbacher 2010, 1–24).³

An alternative paradigm to food security is food sovereignty.⁴ The food sovereignty paradigm seeks to replace industrial agriculture with an alternative model. The concept was the founding principle for the international protest movement (*La Via Campesina*) against the rapaciousness of global agrarian capitalism. It united peasants, small and medium-sized producers, landless people, rural women and youth, and agricultural workers, drawing

members from 56 nations in the world when it was established in 1993. Food sovereignty endorses sustainable agriculture based on local resources that is “in harmony with local culture and traditions” (Schanbacher 2010, 53–54). Advocates of food sovereignty argue for abandoning the dominant global food regime of industrial agriculture by reverting to food that is locally produced, organic, and based on sustainable ecological practices. The idealistic and impractical basis of food sovereignty as a transformative movement has been exposed by Henry Bernstein, perhaps the preeminent scholar on agrarian political economy in the world, who critiques the notion that a global agricultural system based on food sovereignty can feed the world (Bernstein 2013).⁵

Contemporary Russian food policy is driven by food security, anchored by the adoption of a food security doctrine in 2010. The existence of a food security doctrine in and of itself is not that important as other nations—China, for example—have similar doctrines. The United States has a food security program but no doctrine. What is important is the content of Russia’s doctrine. The Russian variant of food security differs in three ways.

First, Russian leaders’ use of the term *food security* diverges from common international usage. Russian leaders use the terms food security (*prodovol’stvennaia bezopasnost’*) and self-sufficiency (*samoobespechenie*) synonymously, but actual food policy is closer to self-sufficiency. The divergent application of the term food security is further seen by the introduction of import substitution (*importozameshchenie*), which has been a centerpiece of Russian food policy since autumn 2014. Thus, the Russian use of the term food security causes conceptual confusion. Russian leaders speak of food security policy, but in fact they are talking about food self-sufficiency. We use the term food security throughout this article because that is the term used by Russian policymakers, but for clarity we note that its usage differs from conventional usage.

A second difference is that the Russian model of food security places emphasis on national vulnerability from foreign sources (Vassilieva and Smith 2008).⁶ Today, Russian leaders use food security to refer to independence from food imports, and in this way the Russian meaning has a national security component. For Russia’s political leaders, food security is achieved by minimizing foreign imports more so than ensuring access to sufficient food. In 2008 and continuing thereafter, leadership concerns about food insecurity were based on high expenditures for food imports (Wegren 2013, 23–24). In recent years expenditures on food imports exceed revenue from food exports: by \$25.8 billion in 2008, \$20.8 billion in 2009, \$27 billion in 2010, \$30.5 billion in 2011, \$23.6 billion in 2012, \$26.9 billion in 2013, and \$20.8 billion in 2014 (Ministry of Agriculture 2015a). Russia had a positive trade balance in these years, so the deficit in agricultural trade stood out.

A third difference is that a food sovereignty movement in Russia is weak compared to the European Union (EU), for example, where a program dedicated to organic farming has been introduced and is funded.⁷ There is no federal program to promote food sovereignty, which is another way of saying that Russian agriculture remains wedded to the second food regime and its industrialized production processes. Some might be motivated to argue that household farming (*lichnoe podsobnoe khoziaistvo*) is an example of food sovereignty, but this mode of food production is appropriate to the term only in limited ways.

Despite the attempt to romanticize food sovereignty in Russia, significant structural obstacles exist. While household production does tie the producer to the land and is small-scale, and food is locally produced, most household production in Russia tends to be non-commercial.⁸ Commercialized household production is important because the premise of a food sovereignty regime is that it will replace industrialized agriculture as a means to feed a nation. Without food sales, all households, both and urban and rural, would have to engage in food production, a notion that is both impractical and unreasonable. Further, household production is isolated from markets by insufficient rural infrastructure such as roads. More than one-third of all villages do not have hard-paved roads to connect them to the outside world, which means that for weeks at a time they are essentially cut off. Most household production is thus shut off from markets and represents subsistence farming for the household. Labor on household production is usually not mechanized and remains primitive. A stroll through virtually any rural village will show people working their plots, hoe in hand.

These structural obstacles impact household food production. Although there are significant regional differences, household food production is in decline. An independent expert on the milk branch in Russia considers the household sector to be *neperspektivnye* (Strasti 2015, 11). At the macro-level, the ruble value of household production fell from 57 percent of national food supply in 1997 to 40 percent in 2014. During 2000–2014, the volume of household production leveled off or declined for sunflower, potatoes, fruits and berries, beef and poultry, milk, and eggs (Rosstat 2015e, 396). Fewer households are keeping livestock. The quality of some commodities, such as household milk and homemade processed sausage, has been questioned. Households are the lowest recipient of government financial assistance. Further, in recent years the government has taken or considered steps to limit household production. One step was to regulate the maximum size of a household plot, limiting it to the point that animal husbandry is unviable. Further, in 2015 the Duma began a discussion to limit the number of animals that could be raised by households, reflecting the diminishing status of household production among legislators.

Household production meets households' internal consumption needs, but is not able to feed the country, and that condition is implicit in the definition of food sovereignty. The household sector, sheltered from the effects of the World Trade Organization and world price fluctuations, is useful primarily for providing food security to households. Thus, household production is relevant to food sovereignty only in superficial ways. Household production is of limited variety and is not a pathway to lowering imports across a wide spectrum. Most importantly, the role that the Russian leadership has in mind for the household sector is similar to what it was in the Soviet period: a sector that can contribute production for a limited number of commodities and therefore is a supplementary producer, not a sector that can feed the nation. Food security is more important than food sovereignty.

In the remainder of the paper, we first examine food security using the traditional approach: access to and availability of food.⁹ We then analyze Russia's food security as a component of national security and food as an instrument of foreign policy.

FOOD INSECURITY IN THE EARLY POST-SOVIET PERIOD

The early post-Soviet period of the 1990s was not kind to the Russian consumer. Not only did the GDP contract about 50 percent, but gross food production declined significantly, measured either in ruble value or in physical volume. In the early 1990s *access* to food was problematic for poorer segments of the population, but generally food *availability* improved compared to the late Soviet period. That said, falling farm production, declining real standards of living, and high food inflation resulted in a decrease in per capita food consumption levels across the board, although consumption remained above the international threshold that defined hunger.¹⁰ Compared with food consumption levels during the Soviet period, Russians consumed fewer calories per day. The per capita daily caloric intake declined from a norm of 3,550 in the mid-1980s to 2,200 calories a day in 1996 (Goskomstat 2000b, 144). The decline in caloric intake is contested by some authors, who argue that consumption remained stable at about 2,900 calories a day (Lunze et al. 2015). This argument is problematic because it is not backed by other studies (Sedik et al. 2003) or government data. Moreover, it would mean that compared to consumption levels after 2000, the caloric intake has declined, which is highly unlikely because real incomes and reported consumption levels rose. The change in average consumption levels during the 1990s is indicated in Table 1.

By the end of the 1990s the structure of the Russian diet had changed and consumers were eating less protein than they had in 1980. Russians on average ate less meat and

TABLE 1
Average Annual per Capita Food Consumption in Russia, 1985–1999 (in kilograms unless otherwise indicated)

	<i>Meat</i>	<i>Fish</i>	<i>Eggs (number)</i>	<i>Sugar and confectionaries</i>	<i>Potatoes</i>	<i>Vegetables</i>	<i>Fruit</i>	<i>Milk</i>
1985	67	23	299	45	109	98	46	344
1992	58	12	243	26	107	78	29	281
1995	53	9	191	27	112	83	30	249
1996	48	9	173	26	108	78	31	235
1997	55	13	178	26	109	84	33	234
1998	57	15	205	28	117	87	29	240
1999	47	13	199	28	94	81	22	194
1999 as % of 1985	–30%	–48%	–33%	–38%	–14%	–17%	–52%	–44%

Notes. Numbers have been rounded. Data are for both urban and rural households.

Sources: Goskomstat 1995, 469–86; Goskomstat 2000, 144; and authors' calculations.

dairy and more starches and carbohydrates such as bread and potatoes, a reversal from the late Soviet period (Wegren 2005a, 12–13). Especially problematic was the emergence of mass poverty in Russia. No consensus emerged on exactly how many people were affected, but somewhere in the range of 29 percent to 35 percent of the Russian population is believed to have lived in poverty during the 1990s, with millions more just above the poverty line.¹¹ Poverty affected many groups: the very young, pensioners, the unemployed, single mothers, small town residents, rural dwellers, and even the urban working class who suffered from chronic wage arrears during the 1990s (Silverman and Yanowitch 2000, 37–55). These segments of the population ate much less than national averages, even as those averages themselves were declining during the decade.¹² Hunger and malnutrition became the new normal in post-Soviet Russia for millions of people, and access became the biggest problem as food budgets consumed nearly the entire monthly income for the poor. Thus, Russia's food security problem in the 1990s was about access to food for the poor, who constituted a significant portion of the population (Liefert 2004).¹³

Rural dwellers in particular but also urbanites responded to the food access problem by increasing their household production from their subsidiary plots (O'Brien, Patsiorkovsky, and Dershem 2000, 131–60; Nefedova 2003, 184–204; Wegren 2005b, 105–51; Pallot and Nefedova 2007). During the 1990s, home-grown food became a major survival strategy (Kalugina 2000).¹⁴ The liberalization of land policy witnessed the doubling of the amount of land used by rural households for subsidiary agriculture during 1990–1995. Output from household plots provided sustenance and facilitated higher caloric intake in rural households. The aggregate number of cows and pigs possessed by rural households also grew, leading to an increase in household meat and milk production compared to 1990 (Goskomstat 1999, 31, 34). Further, after decades of slow decline, the area of land used by urbanites for dacha plots increased as well (Goskomstat 1999, 16). By

1997, household production accounted for 57 percent of the ruble value of food production in Russia.

In response to falling domestic production, the government liberalized the foreign trade system. The volume of imported food steadily grew; increased importation of food meant that availability was not a major problem, and in large cities even improved compared to the Soviet period. According to one study, the volume of food imports into Russia grew by 83 percent during 1992–1997, two-thirds of which came from countries that were not former Soviet republics (Manellia and Goncharova 1998, 35). By the mid-1990s imported food accounted for one-half of the calories that Russians consumed daily (Pilev 1998, 24).

From about mid-decade onward, Russian academics pointed to a confluence of troubling trends: falling domestic food production, lower caloric consumption, higher household expenditures on food, the emergence of mass poverty and hunger for millions, more food imports, and a structural change in the Russian diet that meant malnutrition and too few proteins. These negative trends were compounded by the disastrous 1998 harvest, the lowest since the early 1950s. In the wake of that harvest disaster, domestic food trade became restrictive: about one-fifth of Russia's regions prohibited their food production from being sold in other regions. Moscow was one of the first regions to prohibit its food being sold beyond its borders (Kulik 1998, 1). The United States and the European Union offered food aid in order to stave off mass hunger throughout Russia, and this aid continued into 2000.

The deterioration in access and availability of food led to concerns over food insecurity being expressed publicly in the second half of the 1990s (Altukhov and Vermeil' 1997; Popov 1997; Gordeev 1998). During 1998–1999 Russian consumers became acquainted with the term food insecurity in its traditional meaning. By the end of the 1990s, more than 40 million Russians were living in poverty, and these people were the most food insecure. This is the situation that Vladimir Putin inherited.

TRADITIONAL FOOD SECURITY UNDER PUTIN

When Vladimir Putin became president in 2000, he faced two related food problems. One was a food security problem in the traditional sense, as access to and availability of food had become problematic owing to mass poverty and regional shortages due to the 1998 harvest disaster. The second problem was that domestic food production was drastically lower than in 1990. Putin was determined to increase domestic food production and reduce reliance on imports. He made rebuilding the agricultural sector a priority. During the next eight years policies were introduced that stabilized the agricultural sector and facilitated growth in food production. In Putin's first term the government created a functioning credit and subsidy system and an agricultural bank to administer them. A broad range of subsidies that encompassed inputs, food production, transportation, and later agricultural insurance was introduced. Starting in Putin's second term the government adopted financial assistance programs. The first assistance program was introduced for 2006–2007 and a second for 2008–2012. The current state program runs 2013–2020 and will invest more than R2 trillion from the federal government alone. Government assistance programs directed and continue to direct an unprecedented amount of rubles to support food production and rural infrastructure. Despite Russia's current economic downturn both Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and President Putin have pledged to fulfill spending commitments made to the agricultural sector, and in his December 2015 press conference Putin even held out the possibility

that additional financial resources would be allocated to agriculture.

Aided by increased government support, the condition of agricultural producers improved compared to the 1990s: the percentage of profitable farms increased and the nominal value of food production more than doubled. Fueled by rising real incomes, consumer demand for food rose. Food demand increased as the Russian economy emerged from its slump, driven by higher oil prices after 2003. During Putin's first eight years the economy averaged nearly 7 percent annual growth in GDP and real personal incomes nearly tripled. Poverty declined significantly, from over 42 million in 2000 to 18.7 million persons in 2007 (Rosstat 2012, 13). Growing personal incomes and lower food inflation improved access to food and increased average consumption levels. Whereas during the 1990s food consumption levels declined for nearly everyone, after 2000 they began to rise. The growth in average food consumption for selected products during 2000–2014 is shown in Table 2. Meat, milk, and fish consumption increased substantially, while the consumption of starch declined.

Another way of viewing the improvement in Russian consumption is daily caloric intake. From a post-Soviet low of 2,200 calories per day in 1996, average intake exceeded 2,500 calories in 2006 and grew slowly to over 2,600 calories in 2014 (the average includes both urban and rural households; caloric intake in rural households is somewhat higher). Daily caloric intake levels are shown in Table 3.

Demand for food and personal incomes rose faster than domestic food production, and so food imports played an

TABLE 2
Average Annual per Capita Food Consumption in Russia, 2000–2014 (in kilograms unless otherwise indicated)

	<i>Meat</i>	<i>Fish</i>	<i>Eggs (number)</i>	<i>Sugar and confectionaries</i>	<i>Potatoes</i>	<i>Vegetables</i>	<i>Fruit</i>	<i>Milk</i>
2000	50	14	202	30	93	82	27	199
2001	53	14	202	27	93	83	33	214
2002	58	15	209	26	90	83	35	227
2003	61	14	208	26	86	84	36	225
2004	61	15	202	26	86	86	39	227
2005	64	17	209	34	78	90	51*	244
2006	67	17	206	32	73	88	53	244
2007	71	18	204	32	72	89	58	246
2008	75	20	203	32	67	89	62	246
2009	73	20	211	31	67	95	64	256
2010	79	21	221	33	66	97	70	263
2011	81	21	217	32	64	98	71	263
2012	83	22	220	32	64	100	74	267
2013	85	22	217	32	61	97	77	270
2014	85	22	216	31	59	98	76	266
2014 as % of 2000	+70%	+57%	+7%	+3%	-37%	+20%	—	+34%

Notes. The percentages have been rounded. Data are for both urban and rural households.

*Starting in 2005 fruit juice was included in the calculation of fruit consumption. For this reason, the percentage change from 2000 to 2014 was not calculated.

Source: Rosstat 2015b, 5.

TABLE 3
Average Daily per Capita Caloric Intake, 2006–2014

	<i>All households</i>	<i>Urban households</i>	<i>Rural households</i>
2006	2,553.7	2,468.5	2,785.2
2007	2,564.0	2,482.1	2,785.9
2008	2,550.0	2,468.8	2,769.7
2009	2,551.2	2,471.7	2,766.5
2010	2,652.4	2,586.6	2,831.3
2011	2,623.6	2,563.0	2,794.1
2012	2,633.3	2,577.4	2,791.8
2013	2,626.4	2,576.8	2,766.1

important role in the rise of per capita consumption. Russia's import growth was in volume as well as value (Liefert, Liefert, and Shane 2009). By 2008, Russia had become the second largest food importer in the world among emerging market economies, trailing only China. Russia was an especially large importer of poultry meat.

Consumer demand drove meat imports higher in spite of government protectionist measures. According to official sources, imports of fresh and frozen beef, pork, and poultry rose from 2.3 million tons in 2001 to a high of 2.9 million tons in 2008, thereafter declining to 2.5 million tons in 2013 and 2.1 million tons in 2014 (Rosstat 2014; Rosstat 2015a).¹⁵ The percentage of fresh and frozen beef, pork, and poultry imports to total supply declined from 30 percent in 2001 to 15 percent in 2013 and to 11 percent in 2014 (Rosstat 2015a). Poultry production in particular increased substantially and allowed imports to be reduced. Thus, after 2000 food security improved for the vast majority of Russian consumers as both domestic production and imports increased.

That said, not all segments of the population benefited equally from economic growth. Even though the percentage of the population with incomes below the poverty line declined from 28 percent in 2001 to 11 percent in 2014, persons who live in poverty have very different consumption patterns.¹⁶

Consumption data are not available for the entire period from 2000, but we are able to illustrate the consumption gap between persons in poverty or not in poverty during 2010–2014 in Table 4.

The table shows a dramatic difference in consumption by persons in poverty. In 2014, individuals in poverty had a daily caloric intake (2,061 calories) that was barely above the global threshold for hunger (2,000 calories); it was 20 percent less than the national average and one-third less than for persons above the poverty line. Per capita consumption by persons in poverty is considerably less for meat, fish, sugar, potatoes, vegetables, fruit, milk, and eggs.

The takeaway from this discussion is that after 2000, average food consumption levels rose and remained well above the internationally recognized subsistence level. This fact, combined with growing real incomes and a declining poverty rate, meant that the access problem of the 1990s was largely attenuated, although actual consumption depended upon household income. After 2000, access to food improved for the vast majority of Russian consumers, and food imports improved availability of meat products.

The upshot is that Russia is *not* food insecure according to traditional measures. For the vast majority of the Russian population food security is not a problem. In 2015, for example, the Global Food Security Index assigns Russia nearly a perfect score (99.7/100) for having a very small proportion of its population under the global poverty line.¹⁷ Overall, in 2015 Russia ranked 43d out of 109 nations for food security, trailing countries in the EU and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as well as a handful of Arab and Latin American nations (Economist 2015, 10).¹⁸ Within Russia, concerns about food insecurity, while never entirely extinguished, became less common in public discourse after 2000, but reemerged in 2008–2009.

TABLE 4
Per Capita Annual Food Consumption by Persons in Poverty, 2010–2014 (in kilograms unless otherwise indicated)

	<i>Meat</i>	<i>Fish</i>	<i>Eggs (number)</i>	<i>Sugar and confectionaries</i>	<i>Potato</i>	<i>Vegetables</i>	<i>Fruit</i>	<i>Milk</i>	<i>Daily calories</i>
2010	53	14	169	25	60	64	36	182	2,096
2011	54	14	165	25	55	64	37	180	2,052
2012	54	14	163	24	56	63	37	177	2,024
2013	57	15	160	25	54	66.5	42	185	2,082
2014	57	15	167	25	53	66	43	184	2,061
Consumption by persons above the poverty line, 2014	90	24	226	33	62	104	83	283	2,761

Notes. The numbers have been rounded. Data are for both urban and rural households.

Source: Rosstat, *Potreblenie produktov*, various years.

THE RUSSIAN VARIANT OF FOOD SECURITY

During 2001–2013 Russia pursued a dual policy toward food imports. On the one hand, a relatively open trade policy allowed a healthy growth in imported food. The dollar value of food imports increased from \$7.4 billion in 2000 to a high of \$43.2 billion in 2013 before declining to \$39.7 billion in 2014 as a result of Russia's food embargo against certain countries (Ministry of Agriculture 2015, 18). High levels of food imports reflect government willingness to allow imports to satisfy the desires of Russia consumers, particularly for meat and meat products.

On the other hand, protectionist measures were used to protect domestic producers, similar to policies adopted by other states. Russia's domestic food producers were protected through import quotas and then tariff-rate quotas (TRQs), which became a primary component of food security policy. TRQs apply lower tariff rates up to an established quota, and apply much higher tariff rates above the threshold. TRQs were applied to imports of beef, pork, and poultry. The government adjusted the in-quota import level to reflect supply and demand (Wegren 2013, 25–27). The out-of-quota tariff could be raised, or the volume of in-quota imports could be lowered, according to political requirements.

Leadership concerns over national food insecurity reemerged publicly in 2008 at a time when Russia was arguably more food secure than ever. In 2008, for example, beef and poultry production jumped nearly 7 percent compared to 2007; the grain harvest reached a post-Soviet high of 108 million tons; the nominal value of agricultural production reached R2.4 trillion, the highest value to date at that time; average per capita consumption also reached a post-Soviet peak to that date; and 82 percent of farm enterprises were profitable, the highest level in the post-Soviet period to that time. Policymakers' concerns over food security may have stemmed from vulnerabilities in the Russian economy during the financial crisis that began in late 2008 and continued through 2009, by the rising bill for food imports, by the gap in growth rates between domestic growth in food production and imports, or simply from leadership insecurity tinged with Russian nationalism. Nonetheless, in 2008 the fact is that Russia was more food secure according to the traditional definition than at any time since 1992.

Despite this reality, the president, prime minister, ministerial leaders, and top academics expressed concern about national food security. A member of the Duma committee on security, Sergei Abel'tsev, said that, "the most important strategic question for us in these conditions [financial crisis] is the attainment of food independence for the Russian Federation" (Abel'tsev 2009, 3). In June 2009 President Dmitry Medvedev went so far as to argue that high levels of dependence on foreign meat and poultry were "dangerous," and he has continued this theme as prime minister under Putin. In January 2010 former Minister of Agriculture

Elena Skrynnik identified Russia's food security as a central problem in national security.

A national food security doctrine began to be drafted in 2008 (Vassilieva and Smith 2008). In May 2009, food security was written into the national security strategy that runs to 2020. The landmark was the formal adoption of the Doctrine on Food Security, which was signed into law by former President Medvedev in January 2010. Article 1 of the food security doctrine states that food security is part of national security. Article 4 states that the doctrine serves as the basis for development of the agro-industrial complex. The doctrine calls for "food independence of the Russian Federation" based upon quantitative and qualitative measures.¹⁹ The original 2010 quantitative measures were revised upward in 2015. Thus, since 2008–2009 food security and the doctrine have become drivers of food policy, emphasizing the twin goals of increasing domestic production and reducing food imports.²⁰

To support those twin goals, during the food security regime (2010–present) annual federal spending in agriculture has increased from R120 billion to R237 billion in 2015 in nominal rubles. Federal subsidies are provided for the purchase of pedigree beef cattle and dairy cows; for the purchase of agricultural machinery; for the purchase of high quality seed; for the transportation of grain along rail lines; for the purchase of mineral fertilizer; for crop insurance; for the cost of obtaining chemicals (pest control); and direct production subsidies for milk. The federal government subsidizes interest rates on both short-term credit (one year) and long-term investment loans (up to eight years), and this is important because, without that subsidization, farm managers consider the cost of credit to be too high, which in turn hinders capital improvements and purchases of new equipment or livestock. The current state program provides the highest level of support to animal husbandry with an eye toward meeting domestic demand and in the near future becoming an exporter, as is the case for wheat. In short, policy statements about attaining food security are not merely political rhetoric. Russian leaders are devoting significant resources toward their goal.

The food security doctrine is important inasmuch as its political message is that Russia should be food sufficient because otherwise it is vulnerable. A second importance is that quantitative production targets drive federal and regional food policy and have become akin to a Soviet-era campaign. A constant theme in leadership discussions is the need to fulfill the goals of the food security doctrine and make the country secure. Upon federal urging, most regions of Russia have adopted their own programs for food security to reduce foreign imports. The upper house of the parliament, the Federation Council, monitors the progress of regions' implementation of their import-substitution programs (Agrofakt 2015c). Progress reports about food self-sufficiency appear in the specialized press and on Russian websites (for example www.agronews.ru). Based on a government order, since August 2014 the Ministry of Agriculture has issued a weekly

report on its website about the situation on the food market and specific commodities in the country. Thus, years before Western sanctions and Russia's retaliatory food embargo, food security was considered part of national security policy.

THE 2014 FOOD EMBARGO

Food security policy took an important turn in 2014. On August 6, 2014, President Vladimir Putin signed a decree that banned importation of food from Western countries that had imposed sanctions on Russia following the downing of a Malaysian jet over Ukrainian territory in July 2014 (Ukaz 2014). A subsequent government resolution specified which food commodities were to be sanctioned (Postanovlenie ot 7 Avgusta 2014). Both the decree and government resolution are to be understood as extensions of food security policy. Russia's embargo included beef, pork, fruit and vegetables, poultry, fish, cheese, milk and dairy products from the European Union, the United States, Australia, Canada, and Norway.²¹ The bulk of the embargo affected EU trading partners; prior to the embargo about 10 percent of EU agricultural exports went to Russia, worth around 11 billion euros (\$14.7 billion) per year according to the European Commission.²² Consumer products most affected by the food embargo are high-end products that cater to the upper-middle class and above, products such as Norwegian smoked salmon, French cheese, or Italian processed meats. In mid-October 2014 the ban was expanded to include various kinds of animal fat and meat byproducts. The embargo, combined with a dramatic decline in the value of the ruble, led to lower levels of imports for fresh and frozen meat, poultry, fish, and dairy. The food import bill declined in 2014 for only the third time since 2000, and fewer imports continued during 2015. The physical volume of food imports declined during the first half of 2015 compared to the first half of 2014. According to data from the Federal Customs Service, the volume of fresh and frozen poultry dropped by 50 percent, the volume of beef fell 31 percent, the volume of fish declined 44 percent, and the volume of canned meats decreased by 52 percent (FTS 2015, 67).

On June 24, 2015, President Putin signed a decree to extend Russia's food embargo to August 2016 (Reuters 2015). In August 2015, Russia added four countries to the embargoed list—Albania, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Montenegro. By restricting food imports, the Russian government argues, the country becomes more food secure. After signing the extension, Putin said the counter-sanctions would be good for domestic food producers, and this sentiment was backed by Minister of Agriculture Aleksandr Tkachev, who stated that the value of imports could drop to \$25 billion by the end of 2015 (Agrofakt 2015b). Tkachev also predicted that increases in domestic production should eliminate the need for food imports

within ten years (Agriculture Minister 2015). Discussions about the revision of the food security doctrine began in July 2015 to respond to “hostile actions by a series of nations in their relations toward Russia” (Minsel'khoz 2015). The changes added fruits and vegetables to the list of banned commodities, raised the percentage of domestic production for other commodities to attain food security, and placed emphasis on import substitution and self-sufficiency (Agrofakt 2015a; Agrofakt 2015f; Minsel'khoz 2015).²³

An immediate effect of the 2014 food embargo was the appearance of black markets for banned food products. To circumvent the embargo, “contraband” food—so termed by the Russian government—was smuggled through Belarus and Kazakhstan into Russia. Belarus, a landlocked country with no domestic fishing industry, became famous for its exports of seafood to Russia. The Russian government responded. At the end of July 2015, Putin signed a presidential decree that permitted the destruction of contraband food by any possible means. A government resolution in early August 2015 required the destruction of contraband food to be witnessed by at least two “disinterested” persons, with verification by camera or filming (Unichtozhat' 2015). The Russian government demonstrated its will by broadcasting on television the destruction of several tons of contraband food, crushed by bulldozers, which actually raised criticism as to why the food was not distributed to the poor (The Bonfire 2015). The governmental agency in charge of seizing illegal shipments and destroying contraband (Rossel'khoznadzor) published weekly data on its website how much food was destroyed (Agrofakt 2015g).²⁴ According to Rossel'khoznadzor, during the first two months following Putin's decree it destroyed more than 700 tons of contraband food (Russia Destroys 2015). In August 2015, Minister Tkachev backed the criminalization of food smuggling, and a subsequent bill was submitted to the State Duma to make it a law. In September 2015, Tkachev called on other members of the Eurasian Economic Union to cooperate in the destruction of contraband food not only at borders but also inside countries (Agrofakt 2015e). Despite these steps, there were reports that banned fish products continued to transit through Belarus (Postavki 2015).

The Russian government has invested considerable political capital maintaining the narrative that Russia is food insecure. The previous section showed that Russia is not food insecure according to the traditional definition. This section demonstrated that the Russian variant of food insecurity pertains to food imports. According to this narrative, if Russia imports a substantial portion of its food, the nation is food insecure. The idea that food security is a component of national security was bolstered by Western sanctions and Russia's retaliatory food embargo. The embargo in turn spawned additional emphasis on self-sufficiency and import substitution. Russian food insecurity, therefore, may be

understood as a political variable that can be manipulated by the leadership as it sees fit. Restrictive food trade policies are offered as the solution to this national security problem. The remainder of this paper examines support for the regime's food security policy and the impact of its food embargo on consumers.

POPULAR SUPPORT FOR FOOD SECURITY

By the traditional definition for food security—access and availability—the vast majority of Russians are not food insecure. Caloric food intake is well above the threshold for hunger, and this is true even for Russia's poor as is shown below. A significant factor that helps the Russian government exploit concerns over food security is its authoritarian nature. The regime is hegemonic and controls the means of mass communication. Lipman argues that after 2011 a crackdown on the media occurred that reversed the relative permissiveness during Medvedev's presidency (Lipman 2016). Common themes on Russian news relate to nationalism and the "besieged Russian state" in a hostile global environment, spearheaded by the United States. There are a handful of independent television, radio, and print outlets, but their impact is marginal and audiences are small, which means that there are very few means to expose the myth of national food insecurity. Further, elite opposition to the Russia-as-food-insecure narrative is unlikely. Food-related interest groups have been coopted and have few motivations to challenge the government's position on food security. Formal groups that represent food interests, commodity-specific unions, food processors, and other actors in Russia's food system benefit from government programs that emphasize import substitution and increasing domestic production.

It is also important to note that on many policy issues the regime is not disconnected from popular support. Although the media are controlled, there is a very high likelihood that Putin's very high approval ratings (over 80 percent for most of 2015) reflect genuine popular support, particularly in rural areas. Colton and Hale argue that "Putin has been able to connect ...with the Russian electorate in ways that leaders frequently do in democracies" (Colton and Hale 2009, 502). In other words, the regime taps into mainstream sentiments.²⁵ Food security is one such issue. The Kremlin's narrative on food security aligns with popular sentiments (we will not discuss the direction of the causal arrow, just point out that the two are not discordant). To investigate support for the government's food security policy, the authors conducted a survey of 1,831 individuals in April 2015; a methodological description is found in the Appendix. The survey captures the government food security policy, the food embargo, and its effects.

One question concerns the extent to which the regime's narrative of food security has penetrated the population.

With control over mass communication and limited means to challenge the government's narrative, the level of information penetration could be high. We asked respondents if they had heard of the Food Security Doctrine.²⁶ About one-third of the sample (626 persons, or 34 percent) had heard of the food security doctrine, which is substantial but not as high as might be expected.²⁷ In a Western democracy, one-third of a sample that has heard of a specific government document would be considered very high. In an authoritarian regime with few alternative voices, one-third may be considered low. Even so, the fact that one-third has heard of the doctrine reflects the frequency with which leaders refer to the doctrine in their interviews and speeches.

We asked whether respondents knew something about the doctrine. Among respondents who had heard of the doctrine, 158 persons (25 percent) said that they knew something about it, and another 308 (49 percent) said that they had heard something about the doctrine. Overall, 466 respondents (25 percent of the total sample) had heard of the doctrine *and* knew something about it, which is high compared to what would be expected in Western nations but perhaps not as high as would be expected in an authoritarian country where media content is largely controlled by the government. It is interesting to note strong support among respondents for the essential elements of the food security doctrine, whether or not they had heard of it. For example, 73 percent of all respondents believe that Russia should not import foreign food. Support for this position is very strong across region, age, gender, income level, and education.²⁸

Although the basic tenets of food security as national security have popular support, there are some voices of discontent. At the beginning of the food embargo, some restaurants in Moscow used the embargo as an advertising gimmick to publicize the fact that they do not sell sanctioned food, as a way to show their patriotism. As time went on, however, the lack of access to high-profit foreign products began to affect the bottom line, particularly among restaurants in large cities that have an upscale clientele who had grown accustomed to expensive foreign dishes. On the other hand, lack of access to foreign food gave restaurants such as Lavka Lavka new impetus. Lavka Lavka had R250 million in sales in 2014, a record high during its six years in existence. Academic criticism is leveled at the fact that a concentration of production in large agroholdings may actually harm national food security if the agrofirma goes bankrupt. Food security policy with its emphasis on self-sufficiency facilitates the criminalization of land turnover and the creation of super-large land holders. Uzun and Shagaida report that the ten largest landholders in Russia control 4.3 million hectares, and argue that world experience with large latifundia is negative (Uzun and Shagaida 2013, 34). Finally, it is argued that a successful import-substitution policy must create a balance of interests whereby there is fair competition on the domestic market, domestic producers have a reasonable chance at

profitability, and quality food products are delivered to the population (Lipnitskii 2015, 53). The Russian food system does not have a balance of interests but rather is a system of preferences and advantages based upon political connections and strategic considerations. Uzun and Shagaida argue that the food security policy discriminates against private farmers and household gardeners, who do not receive state support to the same degree as large corporate farms (Uzun and Shagaida 2013, 31). Moreover, consumers complain that some Russian food products are lower quality than foreign imports. Critics, therefore, rightly question the ability of the Russian state to create conditions that allow food import substitution to be successful.

IMPACT ON CONSUMERS

Russia's food security policy is intended to reduce food imports and bolster domestic production. The food embargo is an extension of food security policy and gives additional impetus to substitute domestic production for imports. What impacts have import restriction policies had on consumers and how are consumers responding?

Consumers were impacted in two ways. The first impact is a significant rise in food inflation, although it is mostly due to the decline of the ruble rather than to food import restrictions. The ruble fell more than 40 percent in 2014, largely as a result of the decline in the price of oil, and continued to fall throughout 2015, at one point reaching nearly \$1=80 rubles. Food inflation was 15 percent during 2014 and about 14 percent during 2015. There is a good deal of variation by food product. At the lower range of inflation, bread and bread products, milk and milk products, and butter rose 14–15 percent, while beef and poultry prices increased 15 percent. At the upper range, oatmeal and sugar increased by more than 40 percent and fish by 30 percent during the January–November 2015 period (Ob indeksse 2015).

There is significant regional variation in food inflation. To calculate food inflation, the government defines the content of a consumer basket of food goods. The most expensive region is the Far East federal district. For 2015 the average cost of a food basket nationwide was R3,590, but was R5,255 in the Far East federal district. Within the Far East, the most expensive basket was in Chukotskii autonomous district (R8,392) and the cheapest basket was in Amurskaia oblast (R4,381). The Volga federal district had the cheapest average cost of a food basket at R3,254. Within the district, Saratov oblast was the cheapest at R2,958 and Samara oblast the most expensive at R3,643. In the city of Moscow the cost of a food basket was R4,264, up 8 percent for the year, and in St. Petersburg a basket cost R4,265, with an increase of 9.6 percent during January–December 2015 (Rosstat 2015d, 154). The poor and the middle class saw their food budgets affected by food inflation. Our April

2015 survey allows an assessment of changes in food availability and access.

The second impact was in selection. The selection of specific brands may have changed due to the food embargo, although food availability did not deteriorate significantly. Soviet-era long lines did not appear. In our survey, 85 percent (1,561 respondents) reported that food products had not “disappeared” from the shelves where they usually food shop.²⁹ With regard to access, it is clear that consumers are making changes in their buying habits. In the survey, 69 percent (1,260 respondents) indicated that they limit how much food they buy because of higher prices. Urban consumers are more likely to curtail how much they spend on food, 33 percent to 22 percent, compared to rural dwellers, even in the city of Moscow where incomes are much higher, according to press reports (Agrofakt 2015d). Purchases of meat, fish, and vegetables are most commonly limited because of price. Curtailment of food purchases is reported across all income categories, but predictably less among the highest earners (>R100,000 month). Thus, in the past two years, food availability has not suffered, but food inflation is having an impact on access. As in the 1990s, diets are changing as Russians buy less high-cost food. Pensioners are more likely to limit food expenditures or eat less. The change in diet may be reflected in future consumption data, but the shift will not be as great as during the 1990s.

As expected, families with the lowest monthly income spend the largest percentage of their budget on food: 42 percent of lowest-income families (<R10,000 a month) spend more than 50 percent of their budget on food, whereas only 15 percent of the high earners do (>R100,000 a month). Overall, just under one-third of the sample (571 respondents) reports that their family spends more than 50 percent of the budget on food. Among middle-income households, those with incomes from R31,000 to R50,000 a month, 23 percent of households spend 50 percent or more of their budget on food. Middle-class families, therefore, have adequate access to food but must spend more of their budget on food. Real incomes fell in 2014 and 2015 as inflation exceeded the growth in income, thereby putting more pressure on the household budget.

With high food inflation, access to food has become more problematic for families in poverty. To assist families below the poverty line, the Ministry of Industry and Trade proposed a system of electronic food cards that would be implemented in two stages. Starting in 2017, individuals would be given a pre-loaded electronic card. Purchases would be restricted to “fresh” food products. The food cards may not be used to purchase imported food products. In the second phase, 2018–2020, a network of special cafes and dining halls would be created where food may be obtained for free or at a discount. The ministry estimates the program will cost R240 billion, funded from federal and regional budgets, and may be used by the 15–16 million

people who have incomes below the subsistence minimum (Minpromtorg 2015).

In the face of higher food prices, respondents indicate two main strategies: to spend less on food, as discussed above, and to grow more of their own food. Access to food is not as problematic as during the 1990s, when inflation was much higher, but even so 45 percent (823 respondents) said that they will grow more of their own food.³⁰ Nearly two-thirds of rural residents said they would grow more, whereas only 37 percent of urban dwellers respond similarly. By a plurality, all age groups indicate a desire to grow more food. Lower-income households are more likely to grow more food and high-income households less likely, perhaps owing to opportunity costs and time constraints on busy professionals.

In the face of rekindled food inflation, respondents feel there should be some government regulation of food prices, but they do not want to return to full price regulation as in the Soviet period. In the survey, 88 percent (1,619) of respondents believe that the government should regulate food prices, but for only a limited number of products—the most basic commodities, such as bread and milk. Just 9 percent feel there should be no price regulation at all. Responses from urban dwellers, whose dependence on purchased food is greater, do not differ greatly from rural ones: 89 percent of urban respondents want limited price protection and 87 percent of rural respondents do.

We are also interested in whether “food nationalism” exists, whereby consumers prefer domestic products over foreign. A question asked, if two products are equal in price and quality but one is Russian and the other foreign, which would you buy, and 94 percent said they would buy the Russian product. Other survey data support the findings from our survey. The Levada Center, the leading polling agency in Russia, found that by a 91 percent to 6 percent margin, Russian consumers prefer domestic food products to imported food, taking quality and price into consideration (Otechestvennye 2015). The publicized activities of Rossel’khoznadzor in checking sanitary standards and seizing food shipments of contraband or other food deemed substandard are cited as major reasons why Russians trust the quality of domestic food products (TASS 2015). Thus, rising nationalist sentiment among the Russian population seems to carry over to everyday shopping as well.

CONCLUSION

The Russian variant of food security is different from that of other countries. Russia emphasizes food security according to national security considerations, a reality that predates the current tension in relations with the West by several years. By the traditional definition—access to and availability of food—Russia is not food insecure even though the political leadership argues that it is. Since 2008–2009, governmental

leaders have artificially manufactured concern about Russian food insecurity. Public expressions of national food insecurity appeared even as food production and consumption were increasing. At the time the food security doctrine began to be drafted, average consumption levels had rebounded from the 1990s to reach their post-Soviet high.

The national security bent of food security policy was strengthened with the introduction of the food embargo in August 2014. A confluence of events (the embargo, and the decline in the ruble and the price of oil) facilitated a spike in food inflation, which in turn led to an erosion in real personal incomes. In response to inflation, consumers are shifting their diets, buying cheaper food products, and growing more of their own food. The embargo has impacted food selection for upscale Western products, but Russian food companies are moving to capture market share by replacing those products. The positives from the embargo are that food availability has not suffered significantly, new trading partnerships have been developed in other parts of the world, and domestic producers have had the opportunity to develop without foreign competition. Domestic producers continue to receive significant state support as food import substitution takes center stage. Russia’s food sector, therefore, has a chance to emerge in a stronger position than before the embargo, which means that food insecurity by the traditional definition will continue to be an insignificant problem.

The implications of the Russian variant of food security are twofold. First, at some point Western sanctions and the Russian food embargo will end. Once the embargo ends, it is likely that Western countries will find more limited access to the Russian food market, a result of a stronger agricultural sector in Russia and the unbreakable link between food security and national security. Once Russia becomes more food self-sufficient, it is unlikely to go back to the perceived vulnerability of high food imports. Access to the Russian food market will be more limited than before the embargo. The EU will experience this consequence more so than the United States, which has fewer trade ties to Russia.

The second consequence is that the combination of agricultural recovery and the program for food security/self-sufficiency/import substitution has made Russian leaders confident. This confidence is expressed by a willingness to use food as an instrument of foreign policy. It is unlikely that Russia would have imposed a food embargo in the 1990s because the economic situation then was more dire. But now the leadership feels that the country can not only endure but perhaps thrive. The use of food as an instrument of foreign policy is also seen in behavior toward border states. Russia began a total food embargo against Ukraine on January 1, 2016, as a result of the failed negotiations over the economic cooperation agreement that Ukraine signed with the EU. The downing of a Russian jet by Turkey in November 2015 led to a month-long halt in

Russian grain sales to Turkey. At the same time, Russia announced a ban on imports of Turkish fruits, vegetables, frozen poultry and subproducts thereof, and all types of salt. This ban will continue indefinitely. Russia also proclaimed that starting December 7, 2015, imports of milk, milk products, and vegetables from Belarus would be limited. Imports of fish products that transit through Latvia from other countries were banned in mid-December 2015. These are but a few examples.

These steps were taken because Russian leaders are confident that domestic production can compensate or other suppliers can be found so that consumers do not suffer. Leadership rhetoric aside, contemporary Russia is not actually food insecure in the traditional sense. Going forward, the central question is whether the disconnect between the actual food situation and leadership rhetoric over food insecurity will narrow.

NOTES

1. The effects of food insecurity are not only related to food but also include psychological and social consequences as well (Hendriks 2015).
2. The efficacy of government action varies in remediating food insecurity. An area of research that needs further work is state strategies for addressing food insecurity by regime type.
3. The first food regime dates from the mid-nineteenth century and is associated with British economic dominance and its pursuit of free trade, extending into the early twentieth century. The second food regime emerged after World War II and centered on the American model of agriculture—a capital-intensive form of production based on commodity specialization and international distribution of surplus. The second food regime is based on corporate-industrialized agricultural production, the so-called “production without people.” Food production is dependent upon the application of chemicals and pesticides, irrigation, and mechanization. Large global agri-firms that control vertical and horizontal chains of production and distribution arose in the second food regime (Friedmann 1982; McMichael 2013). Scholars are now debating whether a third food regime called *food sovereignty* is emerging that reemphasizes rural producers.
4. Other analysts point to alternative policy options that can increase food security such as greater use of modern techniques and biotechnology (e.g., genetically modified food), more crop diversity, regulating land use and purchases to prevent land grabbing, and empowering rural women (Gerdes 2012).
5. See also his discussion about the end of peasantry and peasant community in the modern world, which is also central to food sovereignty (Bernstein 2010, 85–88).
6. The Russian model does not exclude concern about nutrition and adequate food supply, but these are secondary considerations.
7. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) tries to preserve the environment through targeted aid to promote sustainable farm practices and enforcing compliance with environmental laws. In addition, the European Commission adopted an action plan in March 2014 for ensuring a steady supply of organic food and maintaining consumers’ trust in the organic brand (European Commission 2014).
8. There is a stratum of elite households that are commercially oriented, but their number is quite small (Uzun and Saraikin 2012).
9. Owing to space constraints we do not address the new food insecurity of obesity and malnutrition through poor diet among urban consumers.
10. By 1996 the Russian government estimated that food production on large farms had fallen to 52 percent of the 1990 level (Goskomstat 2000a, 34). The size of livestock herds collapsed. The number of beef and dairy cows declined from over 50 million head in 1991 to 31 million head in 1995. The number of pigs fell from 31 million in 1991 to less than 17 million in 1995. Goats and sheep went from 48 million in 1991 to 18 million in 1995 (Goskomstat 1995, 76). The area of land under cultivation on large farm enterprises fell from 115 million hectares in 1991 to 105 million in 1994, and continued to decline for the rest of the decade. The liberalization of retail food prices in 1992 led to runaway consumer inflation: prices for food products increased 2,670 percent in 1992, 940 percent in 1993, 330 percent in 1994, and 220 percent in 1995 (Goskomstat 1998, 35). Although children’s food and certain other items remained price-regulated, retail food prices increased an average of 5 percent a week throughout 1992, and about 3 percent a week during 1993.
11. The calculation of mass poverty was complicated by changing methods of measurement, as well as by the fact that people moved into and out of poverty; very few people stayed in poverty over a long period of time (see Treisman 2012).
12. The rural population in general was an exception, as their household subsidiary production provided an important supplement to the household diet. Rural dwellers in general had higher consumption levels than urban residents.
13. Consumption data from the Russian government show that households in the lowest income decile ate significantly less of everything, but especially protein compared to households in the upper deciles. Upper-income households consumed on average about 165 percent more meat and twice as much milk and eggs in a month as low-income households (Goskomstat 1996, 146). Conversely, households with more members and those with more children consumed significantly less protein than households with fewer members or fewer children: on average about 40 percent less meat, 30 percent less milk, and 50 percent fewer eggs (Goskomstat 1996, 146). Thus, while everyone suffered, the poor suffered the most from food inflation and falling real incomes.
14. To say that household production was a major survival strategy does not deny other motivations, such as leisure, to make some additional money, or as a way to diversify household income (Pallot and Nefedova 2003; Pallot and Nefedova 2007). But the indisputable point remains that when calculating how to survive the severe downturn of the 1990s, households turned to plot production first and foremost.
15. Russia’s introduced a food embargo in August 2014 (“countersanctions,” as the Kremlin calls them). As a consequence, meat imports declined 22 percent for beef, 14 percent for poultry, 16 percent for fish, and 30 percent for cheeses and cottage cheese (*tvorog*) in 2014 (Ministry of Agriculture 2015, 18).
16. Government data indicate a poverty rate of 11 percent for the entire population, but it varies by age group. Children aged less than 16 have the highest rate at nearly 19 percent, whereas working age men and women range between 10 percent and 12 percent. The cohort with the lowest poverty rate are pensioners at 5 percent, and this is due to the fact that pensions have increased at a faster rate than growth in the subsistence minimum (Rosstat 2015c, 11, 13).
17. In addition, the index assesses Russian strengths as safety-net programs, nutritional standards, food safety, agricultural import tariffs, and access to financing for farmers. Weaknesses consist of corruption, public expenditures on agricultural research and development, and political stability.
18. Several post-Soviet states that have joined the EU rank higher than Russia (Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland), but Russia ranks higher than other post-Soviet states not in the EU (Belarus, Ukraine, and former Soviet Central Asia). The index

- also places Russia 33d (last) among high-income nations for food security, but a more reasonable placement would to put Russia among upper-middle-income nations where it would rank 10th (Economist 2015, 12).
19. For example, according to the doctrine Russia should produce 95 percent of the grain it consumes, 85 percent of its meat, and 90 percent of its milk and milk products to achieve food security.
 20. A second tenet of food security policy posited the goal for Russia to become a global food supplier. Prime Minister Medvedev announced the goal to export 40–50 million tons of grain annually by 2020. Since then, top leaders have repeated the goal to develop the export potential of animal husbandry as well (Tkachev 2015).
 21. On August 19, 2014, the Ministry of Agriculture submitted modifications to the list of prohibited products, exempting certain products from the banned list. Among the items were seed for potatoes, peas, hybrid corn, onion, protein and protein mixture concentrates, food additives and lactose-free dairy products, and young salmon or trout less than two years of age (Postanovlenie ot 20 Avgusta 2014). Two days later, the government issued Resolution no. 835 that allows members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) that are not participating in sanctions to export meat to Russia up to the quota level established by Russia (O dopolnitel'nykh merakh 2014).
 22. American food has a much smaller presence on the Russian market. The main Russian purchase was American poultry meat, valued at about \$300 million a year.
 23. According to the suggestions from the Ministry of Agriculture, Russia should produce 90 percent of its vegetables, and 70 percent of its fruits and berries. Quantitative targets for sugar and butter were raised 10 percent to 90 percent, and fish and fish products were raised to 85 percent.
 24. The website is fsvps.ru.
 25. Mickiewicz (2014) shows that young people are skeptical of politics and understand that controlled television is often used for propaganda, which suggests that when alignment occurs (such as in attitudes toward the United States), public opinion is not simply a reflection of what the Kremlin wants people to think.
 26. The number of individuals who have heard of the doctrine is fairly even across regions: 202 individuals in Primorskii, 208 in Altaiskii, and 216 in Krasnodarskii. The number and percentage of persons who have heard of the doctrine show a linear increase as the age scale is ascended to age 69, from a low of 15 percent in the 18–29 age bracket to 52 percent in the 60–69 age category. Similarly, the percentage of respondents who have heard of the doctrine increases with education level. In terms of gender, 31 percent of women and 40 percent of men have heard of the doctrine. Persons in the lowest income category (<R10,000 a month) are less likely to have heard of the doctrine.
 27. We attribute the percentage to the means by which information about the food security doctrine is disseminated. Most information about the doctrine appears in specialized newspapers and academic journals, or in leadership speeches and interviews. Coverage of food security *policy* is widespread on television where most Russians get their news and information. To measure the efficacy of the government's campaign on food security, perhaps the question is better framed about policy than the doctrine, and we plan to make this change in our subsequent survey.
 28. There are some differences: support for refusal to import food is somewhat lower in Primorskii krai, a region in the Far East that is not food sufficient (64 percent); the youngest cohort (18–29) is somewhat less supportive of this idea (63 percent); persons in the highest income category (>100,000 rubles a month) are less supportive (53 percent); and people with complete or incomplete higher education are less supportive (67 percent and 69 percent respectively). Even so, these percentages represent majoritarian support for the government's position toward food security and restrictions on food imports.
 29. Answers were consistent across type of shopping outlet. Among consumers who shop in large stores such as a supermarket or hypermarket, 85 percent said that products had not disappeared from shelves. Among shoppers who buy their food in small food stores, 87 percent said that products had not disappeared from shelves. Among persons who shop at food markets, 86 percent said food had not disappeared. And among shoppers who buy from private sources—friends, acquaintances—86 percent said food products had not disappeared.
 30. Geography matters. More than one-half of respondents in Altaiskii krai indicate that they will grow more food, whereas in agriculturally rich Krasnodar krai only 39 percent said they would grow more food. According to government data, retail food prices are cheaper in Krasnodar, as well as in Russia's south in general.

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APPENDIX

The data used in the article come from a telephone survey of 1,831 respondents. The survey was conducted in April 2015 in three regions of Russia: Altaiskii krai (606 respondents), Primorskii krai (612 respondents), and Krasnodarskii krai (613 respondents). Altaiskii krai is located in the Siberian federal district and has a band of black earth soil in the south; its population is 2.3 million. Primorskii krai is located in the Far Eastern federal district and is an agricultural leader in this federal district; its population is 1.9 million. Krasnodarskii krai is located in the Southern federal district and is one of the strongest agricultural producers in Russia; its population is 5.3 million.

Respondents were selected randomly from the list of numbers serviced by Rossviaz (the state telephone company). In each region, a range of numbers was defined that included mobile and landline numbers. For each region a different range of numbers was selected. No information about the respondent was known except the phone number prior to the phone call. Most respondents answered the survey on their mobile phones (71 percent). The acceptance rate by persons who first answered their phone was about 65 percent. Upon refusal to participate, or if the number was no longer in operation, another number was called until the total sample for that region was fulfilled. The Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Moscow provided funding for the survey.

The age range of respondents is 18–92, with a mean age of 46.7 (49.3 for women and 42.5 for men). Age distribution for respondents is: 17 percent aged 18–29, 21 percent aged 30–39, 17 percent aged 40–49, 19 percent aged 50–59, 17 percent aged 60–69, and 8 percent aged 70 or above. The sample’s age distribution is not significantly different from the age distribution in the country: 16 percent aged 18–29, 15 percent aged 30–39, 13 percent aged 40–49, 15 percent aged 50–59, 9 percent aged 60–69, and 10 percent aged 70+. Thus, our sample size is robust and we feel that the findings are representative.

In terms of gender, 38 percent are men (694) and 62 percent are women (1,137). More than two-thirds of

respondents are urban dwellers (68 percent), which is close to the national average of 72 percent. Approximately 56 percent of respondents are employed, 27 percent are pensioners, and 9 percent unemployed or not employed outside the home. Respondents are well-educated. Only 6 percent of the sample has not completed secondary school, while 15 percent has a general secondary education and 39 percent has a specialized secondary education. Another 35 percent has completed higher education (completed university or

institute). Most of the sample is middle income, with 52 percent of the sample reporting a monthly income range between 11,000 and 30,000 rubles. Only 11 percent is below the subsistence minimum and would be considered poor (<9,662 rubles a month). During the first quarter of 2015 the monthly subsistence minimum in Russia was 9,662 rubles per person—10,404 rubles per month per capita for working individuals and 7,916 rubles per capita for pensioners.