

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Food security is very important for the stability of a nation. However, the topic is quite complex, and food security is constantly under threat in multiple different forms. These problems, if left unsolved, can lead to major problems for a nation unprepared to prevent it. The problem to be analyzed in this thesis will be the currently ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia, and how food security has been affected by the events. The conflict poses a threat to the availability and affordability of food throughout the world. Another significant factor affecting food security in Europe is the increasing global demand for food. As emerging economies grow and their populations become more affluent, there is a higher demand for agricultural products, putting pressure on global food supplies. An extension to this is the fact that the global population continues to increase, bringing higher demand for food products. Additionally, geopolitical factors such as trade disputes and export restrictions can further exacerbate the issue by limiting the availability of food imports.¹ Expanding on that, the specific event that will be the main topic of discussion will be the ongoing Russia-Ukrainian War between Russia

¹ Mariola Kwasek. "THREATS to FOOD SECURITY and COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY." *Economics of Agriculture* 59, no. 4 (January 1, 2013). <https://doi.org/10.22004/ag.econ.143167>.

and Ukraine. The conflict is an international problem, mainly due to it being the first modern war with both sides having access to the latest military technologies available, but also with its global economic and political effects that have major effects around the world. One area impacted by the conflict is agriculture and food security, not only for both Russia and Ukraine, but also the European region and the rest of the world.

War and food security generally go hand in hand, as many aspects of a nation's food production capabilities are damaged or hindered by an ongoing conflict. The most common event to occur is the destruction of farmlands, livestock, and critical infrastructure, such as irrigation systems and storage facilities. Farmers are displaced, unable to tend to their crops, or are forced to abandon their fields due to insecurity. This disruption of agricultural activities leads to reduced crop yields, resulting in food shortages.² Civilians working in factories are not exempt from this problem, and food processing factories can be interrupted, halting the distribution of products. Even after the conflict passed or moved to a different area, repairs and recovery has to be done before anything can continue. Some areas may be damaged beyond repair, semi-permanently preventing the continuation of work. There are also tactics used in war to specifically target food supply and production capabilities of a nation. As they contribute to a military's capabilities, they have been known to

² Food and Agriculture Organization, *Ukraine: Note on the Impact of the War on Food Security in Ukraine* (FAO, 2022), <https://www.fao.org/3/cc3311en/cc3311en.pdf>.

be high-value targets. While this may hamper the military, civilians relying on such food producers are also affected by their inability to continue production.³

Both Ukraine and Russia are major producers of agriculture products used both domestically and made to be exported to other nations internationally. Having two of the major sources for agricultural goods be essentially stopped has made a large hole to fill by nations in Europe to reach their required number of products for their food security. In the case of Ukraine, the country boasts vast fertile land, favorable climatic conditions, and a long-standing agricultural tradition. Ukraine's agriculture sector is one of the most important producers for the European Union. One of Ukraine's primary agricultural exports to Europe is grain, particularly wheat and corn, where the country's productions and exports make up 15% of the global corn trade and 10% of the global trade in wheat in 2021.⁴ In addition to grains, Ukraine exports a range of other agricultural products to Europe. These include oilseeds such as sunflower, vegetable oils, poultry, eggs, and honey. To facilitate agricultural trade with Europe, Ukraine has been actively working on aligning its food safety and quality standards with EU regulations. The implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) between Ukraine and

³ Birgit Kemmerling, Conrad Schetter, and Lars Wirkus, "The Logics of War and Food (In)Security," *Global Food Security* 33 (June 2022): 100634, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2022.100634>.

⁴ Janzen, Joe, and Carl Zulauf. "The Russia-Ukraine War and Changes in Ukraine Corn and Wheat Supply: Impacts on Global Agricultural Markets." *Farmdoc Daily*. Ohio State University, February 24, 2023. <https://farmdocdaily.illinois.edu/2023/02/the-russia-ukraine-war-and-changes-in-ukraine-corn-and-wheat-supply-impacts-on-global-agricultural-markets.html>.

the EU has also played a crucial role in promoting trade and reducing trade barriers.⁵ These efforts have contributed to the growth of Ukraine's agricultural exports to Europe, strengthening its position as an important supplier of agricultural products in the region.

Similar to Ukraine, Russia's key agricultural exports to Europe and the rest of the world is wheat. The country is ranked first on the list of wheat producers and exports globally and has been increasing its exports of this commodity to European markets.⁶ Russian wheat is known for competitive prices, mainly due to its fertile and numerous farmlands contributing to the amount they can produce and export, beating many smaller nation's agriculture capability. Apart from wheat, Russia exports other agricultural products to Europe similar to Ukraine, including barley, corn, sunflower oil, poultry, and fish. The overlap in these nations' exported goods allows them to compete with each other and both supplies many similar goods to European nations.⁷ Another note is their ease of export, mainly by ground and sea, which also makes it cheaper and easier to access for smaller European nations. More importantly for Russia, their agriculture products are also one of the nation's major export goods internationally. Mainly exported through the sea, these products

⁵ European Commission. "EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area." Accessed June 8, 2023. <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/content/eu-ukraine-deep-and-comprehensive-free-trade-area>.

⁶ OEC - The Observatory of Economic Complexity. "Wheat in Russia." Accessed June 8, 2023. <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-product/wheat/reporter/rus>.

⁷ Tarja Laaninen, "Russia's War on Ukraine: EU Food Policy Implications," European Parliament, April 2022, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/729368/EPRS_ATA\(2022\)729368_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/729368/EPRS_ATA(2022)729368_EN.pdf).

make up a significant portion of Russia's national income. An important development on the topic of Russia's exports is that due to their involvement in the Russo-Ukrainian War, many western nations such as the United States, Germany, United Kingdom, and more have placed numerous sanctions on Russia and Russian products including their main exports agricultural products and oil.⁸ Additionally, many international nations with ports have decided to reject Russian ships from entering port and unloading goods or products, forcing the ships to find other ports willing to accept them.

Throughout the one-year period of the ongoing war, Ukraine's land is notably worse off compared to Russia. As the war is mainly considered to be a Russian invasion, almost all conflict has occurred within Ukraine's territory which has greatly damaged the environment in areas of heavy fighting.⁹ There are many interesting observations made on the tactics used by both sides of the war by external observers and many have drawn similarity with World War 1-era tactics including mass usage of heavy artillery such as cannons and rocket barrages as well as extensive use of trenches and constant trench fighting between Russia and Ukraine. These tactics have caused major damage to the environment in Ukraine, which also includes the farmlands used to produce agriculture products in areas such as Bakhmut. As the war is still ongoing, it is estimated that it will take a long

⁸ European Council. "EU Sanctions against Russia Explained." Council of the European Union, April 14, 2023. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/sanctions-against-russia-explained/>.

⁹ Ukraine Invest. "Ukraine Agricultural Sector Has Lost \$4.3 Billion from War Damage." Accessed June 8, 2023. <https://ukraineinvest.gov.ua/news/ukraine-agricultural-sector-has-lost-4-3-billion-from-war-damage>.

time to recover said farmlands from battle damage and if it is even still of use due to heavy bombardment.¹⁰ On the other hand, there has been no major Ukrainian offensives within Russia's territory, meaning there has been no damage to Russia's production capabilities. Nations such as the United States, Canada, and members of the EU such as Germany have responded by creating many problems for Russia economically via trade embargos and sanctions to penalize Russia for their involvement in the war. In response, Russia reduced exports to western nations and instead strengthened exports with some other nations such as China, India, and Africa to avoid losing too much on export profits.

In both Ukraine and Russia's cases, these have had major impact on European food security as imports from Ukraine has reduced due to the nation's priority being defending itself and imports from Russia have all but stopped in response to the sanctions. This caused a major dilemma as once stable sources of food products have stopped providing the same amount as they were previously. In response, most of Europe had to source their goods from other nations, usually at a higher price compared to regional imports, which results in a notable hike in prices for products that is felt by the people in Europe. Less than able citizens will find it harder to get food due to the increase in prices. While the effects are not extreme,

¹⁰ Nickel, Rod. "Soils of War: The Toxic Legacy for Ukraine's Breadbasket." *Reuters*, March 1, 2023, sec. Europe. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/soils-war-toxic-legacy-ukraines-breadbasket-2023-03-01/>.

they can still be perceived by the average individual, and is more likely to last quite some time even after the war, as Ukraine has to recover from its problems.

1.2. Research Question

This research covers the study on the effects of the Russo-Ukrainian War on Europe's food security condition. This includes identifying the impact of the war to Russia and Ukraine's agriculture production and the effects it has the European region. The Russo-Ukrainian War began in February 2022 and is an ongoing situation that is dynamic in nature. The scope of analysis began around the time the war began between the two nations, as it is the largest recent upset on the production and export of agricultural goods in the region. The subjects of observation on food security are only limited to nations within Europe, with Russia and Ukraine as the main country of interest in this particular issue. This research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What impacts does the Russo-Ukrainian War have on European food security?
2. What plans do the European Union have to maintain food security going forward?

1.3. Research Objective

Based on the formulated research questions, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To understand the contribution of Russia and Ukraine to the European Union's food security and how the ongoing conflict impacts their agriculture capability.
2. To identify how the European Union will respond and prepare the region to protect food security.

1.4. Research Significance

Food security for the European region has been threatened due to the war between Russia and Ukraine. As major exporters of food, both nations played a role in supporting food security in Europe but the conflict between them has halted their exports of food products to other nations in the region. Food security is a high priority goal to achieve and maintain for a nation and its people to maintain stability, encourage growth, and to advance sustainable development within the nation. With bad food security, prices for existing products would rise, which would make it harder for people to acquire food products, especially those who are less than able. The research plans to identify the situation regarding food security in Europe as understanding the situation related to food security will be valuable for similar situations where food security is not guaranteed and subject to major changes.

1.5. Structure of Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters, which are:

1. Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter contains the introduction, research questions, research objectives, research significance, and the structure of the thesis.

2. Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

This chapter contains the literature review with two parts. It also includes explanations on the concepts relevant to the thesis.

3. Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter explains about the thesis' research approach, research method, data collection techniques, and the data analysis techniques.

4. Chapter IV: Analysis

This chapter provides the analysis, explanations, and findings on the topic which is split into three parts.

5. Chapter V: Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis and provides recommendations on how it can be improved further.

