



MULTI-STAKEHOLDER'S INVOLVEMENT IN FOOD SECURITY: ANALYSIS OF INITIATIVES THROUGH SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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RESUMO: *HUNGER IS A GLOBAL PROBLEM THAT HAS INCREASED DURING AND AFTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. FOOD SECURITY REPRESENTS A POLITICAL PROBLEM, WHICH REQUIRES MULTISECTORAL AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INTERVENTIONS. DECISIONS REGARDING FOOD SECURITY DEPEND ON A SYSTEMIC STAKEHOLDER ENVIRONMENT, DUE TO THEIR INTERDEPENDENCE. THEREFORE, SOLUTIONS TO PROMOTE FOOD SECURITY REQUIRE INTEGRATED STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT. GIVEN THIS CONTEXT, THE AIM OF THIS ARTICLE IS TO MAP A LITERATURE REVIEW ON HOW TO MANAGE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY. THROUGH A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW, 16 ARTICLES WERE SELECTED IN WHICH THEY PRESENTED MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES TO DEAL WITH ISSUES RELATED TO FOOD SECURITY. THROUGH THE SELECTED ARTICLES, IT WAS POSSIBLE TO MAP SOME IMPORTANT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN. THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES CAN BE HIGHLIGHTED: COLLABORATION, DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNICATION PLAN BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS, DESIGNATING AN AGENT TO COORDINATE ACTIONS RELATED TO FOOD SECURITY, CREATING INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES AT AN ORGANIZATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL LEVEL, AND FLEXIBILITY TO MANAGE CHANGES.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVES: *STAKEHOLDER; MULTISTAKEHOLDER; FOOD SECURITY; FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Global concerns over food and nutrition security have increased in recent decades. The Covid-19 pandemic has raised global alarms about these problems (PASLAKIS, DIMITROPOULOS; KATZMAN 2020; UNITED NATIONS, 2022). Global hunger, remained relatively unchanged from 2021 to 2022, but is still far above pre-pandemic levels, affecting around 9.2 percent of the world population in 2022 compared with 7.9 percent in 2019 (FAO, 2023).

Progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2, to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture is far from being achieved by 2030. It is estimated that between 691 and 783 million people faced hunger in 2022 in developed as well as developing economies (FAO, 2023). It is projected that almost 600 million people will be chronically undernourished in 2030.

The difficulty in achieving the goals SDG 2 is yet another challenge that the food system needs to face (VILLE; HICKEY; PHILLIP, 2017). Fighting food insecurity while addressing sustainability-related issues requires multisectoral and multi-stakeholder interventions as well as coordination between researchers, private sector, funders, and policymakers (AGYEMANG et al., 2023). In 1984, Freeman defined stakeholders as those who can influence or be affected by a specific decision. According to Campos and Reich (2019), stakeholders refer to persons, groups, or organizations that possess interests and exert influence over policies.

Food security, from a governance perspective, represents a policy problem for which there is no neutral diagnosis or solution: a ‘wicked’ problem that transgresses traditional policy boundaries and requires for policy-making processes that orient and include diverse experiences, knowledge and values (RITTEL; WEBBER 1974; TERMEER et al. 2015; DUNCAN; CLAEYS, 2018). To address wicked problems, as food insecurity, some authors propose the use of a collective form of governance, such as using multi-stakeholder initiatives (MAYER; GEREFFI, 2010; MENA; PALAZZO, 2012).

The process of making decisions regarding food security is heavily dependent on a thorough and systemic comprehension of the stakeholders (TJILEN et al., 2024) due to the interdependence of all the agents in the food supply chain (HALLORAN et al., 2014). The solutions, therefore, need to go beyond the organizational boundary and need to integrate more stakeholders executing joint actions. The efficacy of food security initiatives relies on

the management, active engagement and cooperative efforts of these stakeholders.

In this sense, it is necessary to map in the literature the existing multi-stakeholder initiatives that have emerged to deal with food security, identifying how they are managed. This mapping is important especially due to the increase in food insecurity after the pandemic and the difficulties in achieving SDG 2. Agyemang et al. (2023) highlight that identify these factors in the context of different stakeholder priorities is necessary for achieving a more sustainable and healthier outcome while addressing the combined nutrition and environmental crises our food system presents. This paper aims to provide a literature review on how to manage multi-stakeholder initiatives in order to achieve food security. This research will help identify the unique contributions each stakeholder can make in food supply chain, how to manage multi-stakeholder initiatives; clarify their roles and responsibilities to ensure food security.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the research design and methodology used to obtain and analyse the results, which are presented and discussed in Section 3. Finally, Section 4 presents the conclusions and suggestions for future research.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

To achieve the proposed objective, a systematic literature review (SLR) was carried out, involving multi-stakeholder management and food security. This type of review allows mapping, selecting and evaluating existing studies on the research topic. Literature review is the first step to achieve a wide contribution to research advance, as it intends to provide an overview of the research topic and highlight the key issues to be discussed (COLICCHIA; STROZZI, 2012).

The SLW follows the three macro stages proposed by Tranfield et al. (2003) and Tranfield et al. (2004), as well as the steps of Prisma Statement Flow Diagram (MOHER et al, 2009). As a form of guidance and transparency, a research protocol was established with all the details of each stage (Table 1).

The first stage refers to planning the review. The scope and objectives of the research guide the literature review process, defining the selection of studies and the data that must be extracted from each document. The research question used were: “How does the management of multi-stakeholder initiatives when dealing with food security work?”

TABLE 1 – Review protocol.

Macro stages	Steps	Details
Planning the review	Review question formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish review questions and keywords based on the aim of the study.
	Review protocol for location of studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop search strings; Search on Web of Science and Scopus; No time period
Conducting the review	Selection and evaluation of studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filter 1: title, abstract and keyword screening; Filter 2: introduction and conclusion; Filter 3: read full paper and assessing inclusion and exclusion criteria to guarantee that articles have good potential to answer the question.
	Analysis and synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical and careful reading process by crossing data from different concepts, discussion and authors.
Reporting and dissemination	Presentation of results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer the review question; Highlight the relevant points in the literature.

Source: created by the authors.

The Scopus from Elsevier was database chosen as a search mechanism because it is regularly updated, with a wide breadth of coverage in most scientific subjects (JACSÓ, 2005; CHADEGANI et al., 2013). This base also offer powerful features for conducting and refining results (JACSÓ, 2005; BOYLE; SHERMAN, 2006). It was also necessary to define which keywords would be used to cover the research points of interest. These keywords were later used to build search strings. The keywords and search strings (Table 2) were previously tested to observe the results that were generated in the databases.

TABLE 2 – Keywords and search string for the review.

Keywords	String	Database
Stakeholder Multistakeholder Governance Food security Food insecurity Food nutrition Food systems	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("stakeholder*" OR "multistakeholder*") AND ("food security" OR "food insecurity" OR "nutrition* security"))	SCOPUS

Source: created by the authors.

The second stage was conducting the review, in which three filters were used to select articles (see filters in Table 1). In the database filter mechanisms, only articles and reviews were selected, aiming to increase the level of quality of research, since these works normally go through a peer evaluation process and are aimed at the academic community (SEURING; GOLD, 2012). Furthermore, it was selecting only articles written in English or Portuguese and with full content access. This research was made in April 2024 and did not limit the field 'year' to obtain the largest number of articles on the theme. Furthermore, the search was focused only on peer-published journal articles to ensure the quality of this review.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 3) were necessary to select the most

important and relevant documents for the research.

TABLE 3 – Exclusion and inclusion criteria.

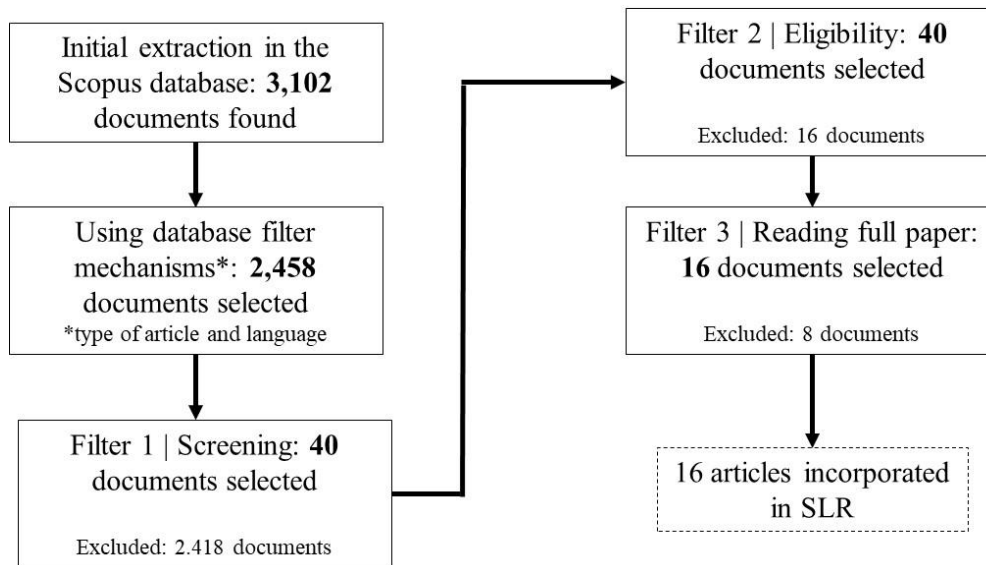
Inclusion	Exclusion	Phases
Deal with multi-stakeholder management with a focus on food security and/or food systems	Refers to (multi)stakeholder and food security focusing on an area other than supply chain and operations management.	Reading title, abstract and keywords (Screening - Filter 1)
Full content and written in English or Portuguese	Non-availability full content and not written in English or Portuguese	
Scientific journals with peer review	Scientific journals without peer review, business magazines, conferences, books and websites	Reading the introduction and conclusion (Eligibility - Filter 2)
Theoretical, empirical studies and review papers, either qualitative or quantitative papers	Articles that do not address the management of multi-stakeholder initiatives	
Multi-stakeholder initiatives anywhere in the supply chain with a focus on food security and/or food systems	Multi-stakeholder initiatives that do not focus on food security and/or food systems	Reading full paper (Filter 3)

Source: created by the authors.

Based on the search strings, 3,102 articles returned, of which those that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria were considered in this review. Ultimately, a total of 16 articles were selected from this process to help answer the review question. Figure 1 presents the steps and processes involved throughout the development of the review.

The last stage was analysis and reporting of results. Selected articles (16) went through a critical and careful reading process seeking to identify the aspects necessary to answer the question that guides the RSL and contribute to the development of the study. In this way, the articles were processed in an electronic spreadsheet seeking classification regarding the journal, research method, study location, research objective and the type of stakeholder management.

FIGURE 1 – Steps of the review.



Source: created by the authors.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

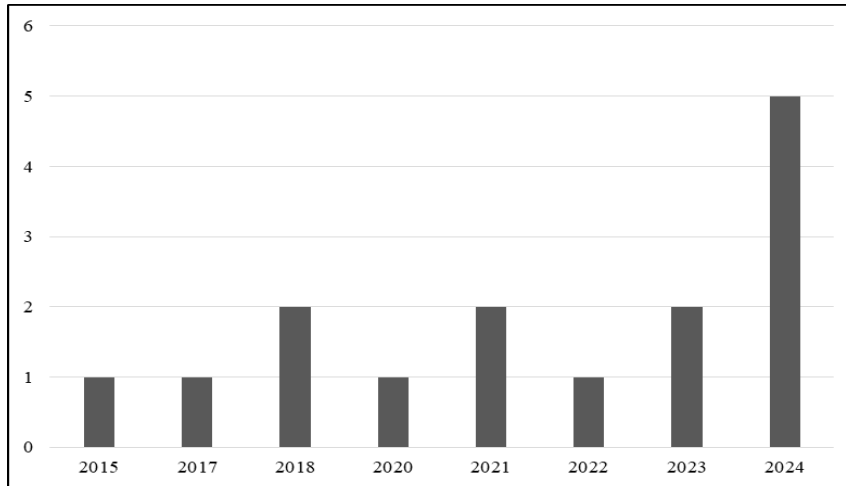
First, the profile of the identified studies is presented to contextualize the results (Section 3.1) and, then, the research question (Section 3.2) are discussed with the articles found in SLR.

3.1 Descriptive analysis

The first analysis of the characteristics of the 16 articles identified in this review was the year of publication (Figure 2). After the pandemic, there was an increase in publications on the topic, confirming that, in addition to food insecurity having increased, there was a concern in dealing with this problem from a multi-stakeholder perspective.

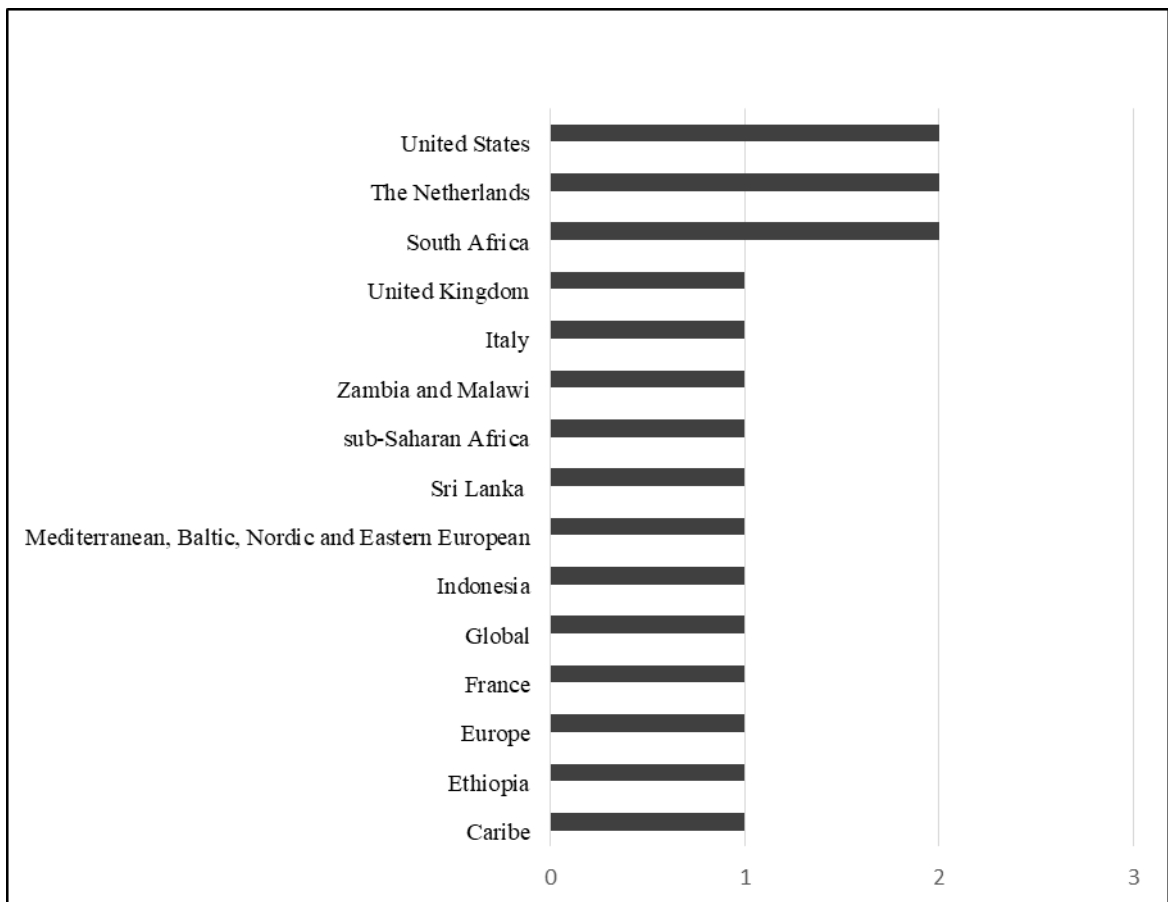
The analysis of the selected documents showed the application of multi-stakeholder initiatives to address food security research in 20 countries across 4 continents (Figure 3). The distribution of the studies conducted in each continent is as follows: Africa (5 countries), Europe (6 countries), Asia (2 countries), North America (2 countries). One study had a global focus. Despite the Caribbean being located close to South America, no studies on the subject have been mapped on this continent, as well as Oceania. According to FAO (2023) progress was made in Latin America and the Caribbean in the fight against hunger and food insecurity, driven by improvements in South America. However, no studies were found that investigated whether this improvement in food security in South America was due to any multi-stakeholder initiative.

FIGURE 2 –Articles per year.



Source: created by the authors.

FIGURE 3 – Region covered in the studies.

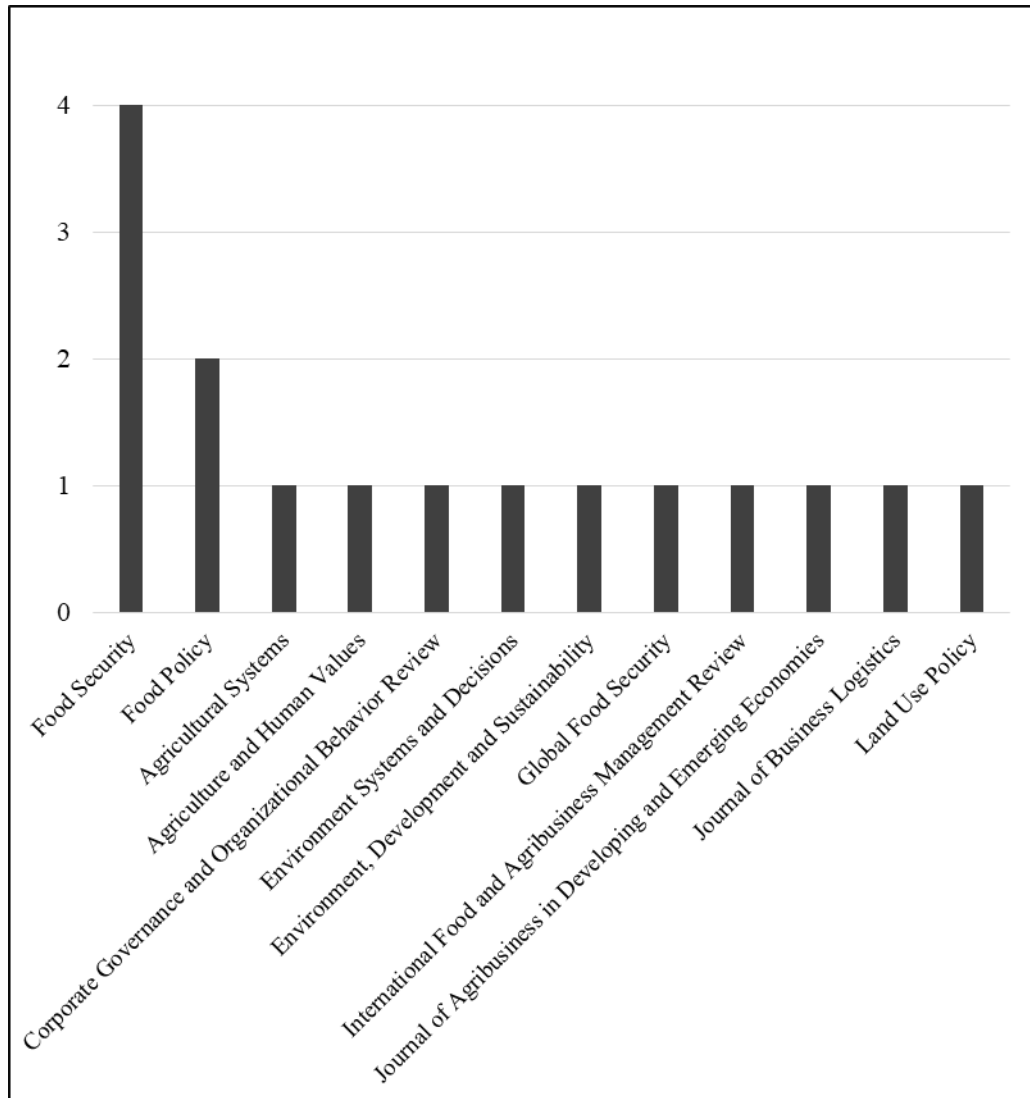


Source: created by the authors.

The articles are published in journals from different areas of knowledge (Figure 4), but

the vast majority of them cover aspects such as the food system and sustainability. The journal with the largest number of publications is Food Security, followed by Food Policy. The other journals have the same number of articles (1 for each).

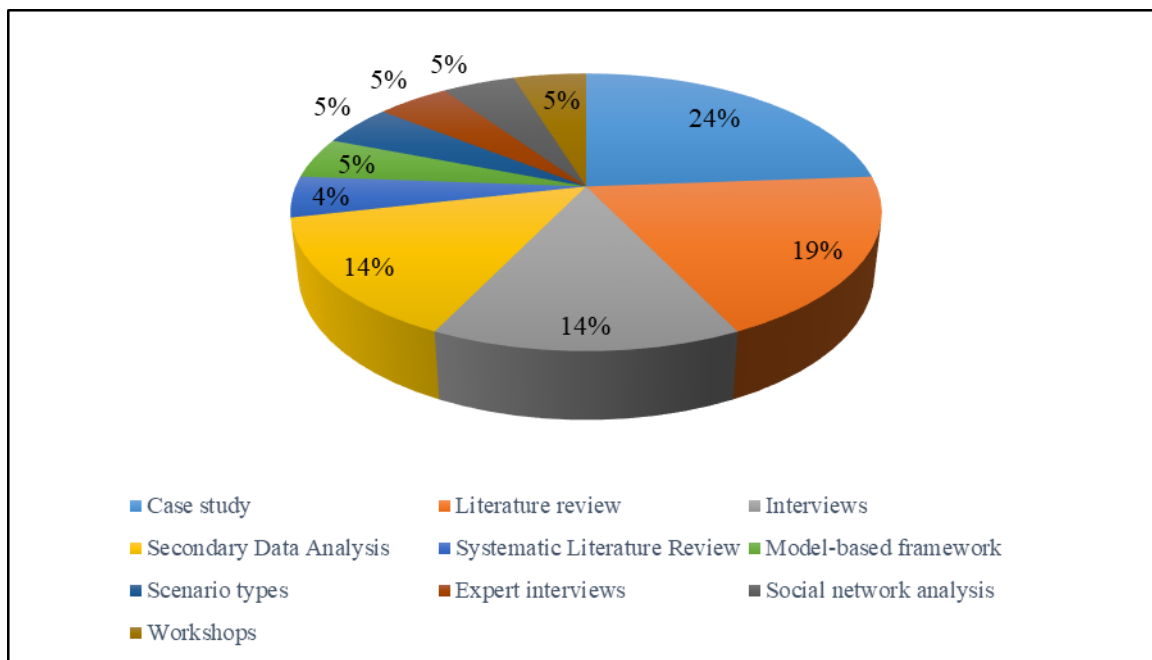
FIGURE 4 – Publications journals.



Source: created by the authors.

Regarding the methodological approach (Figure 5), there is a greater use of qualitative methods, mainly literature review, which demonstrates the early stages of the topic development, driven by the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Empirical studies use the case study as an approach. It is necessary to better understand how to manage the multi-stakeholder initiatives that have emerged to help people in social vulnerability to obtain food during and after the pandemic, as a way of maintaining the efficiency of these initiatives.

FIGURE 5 – Methodological approach.



Source: created by the authors.

3.2 Stakeholder management to deal with food security

In this section, the multi-stakeholder initiatives that appeared in the review will be addressed, as well as the management mechanisms that were cited by the authors as a way of guaranteeing the interaction of multi-sectoral actions to deal with food security.

Ville et al. (2017) explores the nature of the stakeholder interactions surrounding the development of Saint Lucia's (a small island developing state in the Caribbean) National Agricultural Policy, between 2009-2015. Despite efforts by the Ministry of Agriculture to utilize a consultative participatory process, their findings suggest limited success in identifying common goals. The nature of the reported interactions between stakeholders do not appear to meet the threshold to create integrative food security-related policy. Ville et al. (2017) also highlight in their study that while individual institutions, ministries, donors and corporations, through varied projects may be able to address elements of food insecurity in their initiatives, the integration of these initiatives will be required to reduce duplication and enhance coordination between the disconnected institutions operating at various levels.

In the same direction, van Dijk et al. (2020) carried out in their study the construction of global scenarios to assess global food security. In all scenarios, a participatory approach involving a diverse group of stakeholders leads to the creation of innovative and diverse solutions to deal with food insecurity.

Tjilen et al. (2024) highlights that sustainable solutions will require collaboration among all stakeholders, innovation in farming approaches and practices, as well as strong governmental infrastructure and policy support. To solve food security challenges, Ville et al. (2017) suggest a stronger collaboration across government sectors, better reconciliation of policy conflicts and, increased policy innovation involving multiple stakeholder groups through the work of boundary organizations.

Several papers (PEREIRA; RUYSENAAR, 2012; JIREN et al., 2018; ALFONSI, NAIDOO; GASPARATOS, 2024; LOWREY; BOYER, 2024; MORENO-PÉREZ et al., 2024; TJILEN et al., 2024; DEVINEY et al., 2023) highlight the active engagement of the stakeholders can lead to the development of more comprehensive and integrated policies that consider various aspects and contributing to the establishment of long-term food security. Collaboration and synergy among the government, farmers, NGOs, and agribusiness entities are the keys to success in addressing the complex challenges of food security (TJILEN et al., 2024). More specifically, maintaining collaboration between different stakeholders is an efficient mechanism of management (van EWIJK et al., 2021). In this sense, Lowrey and Boyer (2024) emphasize that, although the complexity of the collaboration may increase with the number of nonprofit organisations (NPO) partners, localized private–public partnership (PPPs) could help align the goals of all stakeholders and improve outcomes related to food security.

Deviney et al. (2023) analyse in their study the sustainability of the phosphorus component, in which a number of initiatives and cross-sector consortia have come together to address sustainable phosphorus management at either global or regional scales. Although not directly linked to food security, the study is interesting, as the authors argue that coordination acts to facilitate communication and alignment toward a common goal and a shared sense of purpose among agents. Even within an individual organization, will help ensure fairness to all stakeholder groups, which is particularly important when diverse or conflicting perspectives are involved, as food security.

Another initiative that try to engagement stakeholder participation was identified in Boukharta et al. (2023) research. Boukharta et al. (2023) compared four case of Urban Agriculture in France, analysing the alignment between governance structures and stakeholder involvement. The four cases analysed have a well-defined and respected main governance structure, in a rational way. This well-defined governance allows them to identify their needs, both in management terms and in terms of task implementation. The governance mechanisms implemented enables them to better express their needs to the stakeholders, and thus to obtain

subsidies and continue in their projects, ensuring better food security in the region. Likewise, Smaal et al. (2021) highlighted in their study that a participatory process, in which providing stakeholders a voice in decision-making can be useful in ensuring better social justice in the context of food security.

Agyemang et al. (2023) mention in their research that there is a need for policies that stimulate joint and intersectoral efforts to improve the health and nutrition status of a targeted population through the lens of sustainability. To achieve the SDGs, it is important that efforts to promote food security are aligned with the dimensions of sustainability. Therefore, there is a need for better multisectoral coordination and interaction between stakeholders for the integration of food security (JIREN et al., 2018) with a well-defined network structure with the same goals between the agents. In food security, the translation of good policy – based on common objectives among stakeholders – into practice through proper implementation is crucial as the lack thereof leads to poor integration (JIREN et al., 2018). Tjilen et al. (2024) point out that ensuring the integration of various policies related to agriculture, the environment, and the economy is a challenge. To summarise, the way collaborative stakeholders perceive the importance of dual goals may affect the outcomes of policy (JIREN et al., 2018) and consequently, in actions against food insecurity.

Consequently, the need for strong interconnection among stakeholders involved in the development of national food security policies is vital to ensure achieving overall food security outcomes. Policies must be developed through a common forum where all the stakeholders can have a dialogue (WEERABAHU et al. 2021). Moreover, it is crucial for governments to play a facilitative role in fostering cross-sector collaboration, ensuring the active involvement of indigenous communities, local farmers, NGOs, and the private sector in the policymaking discourse (TJILEN et al., 2024).

Table 4 seeks to summarize the findings of the review, presenting the main mechanisms necessary to ensure efficient management of stakeholders dealing with food security.

TABLE 4 – Mechanisms to manage multi-stakeholder initiatives in the context of food security.

Mechanisms	Management strategy
Stakeholder identification	Determine the stakeholder groups (as industries, government, food banks, NGOs, society, private company and others) relevant to food security.
Coordination	Designate an institution or an agent whose function is to work with multiple stakeholders, leading the role of coordinator of actions involving food security.

Communication	Develop a communication plan for all stakeholders to determine when and how information should be exchanged. Ensure a transparent, frequent communication to provide opportunities to voice concerns, address emergent food security issues.
Cooperation and collaboration	Involvement of agents in actions across the multi-stakeholder network. Engagement must involve an alignment of values and perspectives that builds trust. Provide to stakeholders, in all levels, advice and voice in decision-making.
Flexibility	To build a mechanism for managing change intra and inter network. This includes short and long-term planning of the stakeholders agenda, addressing sustainable disruptions (e.g., economic, pandemics, social justice). It also involves respond more holistically to changes within the food system.
Institutional structure	Institutional support at the organizational and individual level of stakeholders. Structure and funds to sustain the initiatives to guarantee food security. Potential funding sources include grants, member contributions, government resources. Projects working with local communities and farmers.
Power	Emerge from the central structural position in the network, but it could also stem from their formal authority or from their popularity within the network – through resource mobilization, fostering collective action, and enabling flows of knowledge, resources and information. Depending on the form of governance, it can lead to abusive power.

Source: adapted from Deviney et al. (2023) and based on SLR findings.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore through a literature review on how to manage multi-stakeholder initiatives in order to achieve food security. Through a systematic review, 16 articles were selected using exclusion and inclusion criteria, which can be mapped Multi-stakeholder initiatives anywhere in the supply chain with a focus on food security and/or food systems.

After the pandemic, there was an increase in publications related to food security – with the majority of publications on multi-stakeholder initiatives concentrated in 2024. Most of the selected journals involve aspects such as the food system and sustainability. Regarding the methodological approach, there is a greater use of qualitative methods, mainly literature review, which demonstrates the early stages of the topic development. The research carried out is concentrated in countries on the African continent and Europe. Despite efforts to improve food security in South America, no studies on multi-stakeholder initiatives in food security were found in countries in this region.

In particular, it was possible to map some important management strategies for dealing

with stakeholders within the food supply chain. Some management strategies to deal with stakeholder initiative were found and discussed. The stakeholder identification is important to determine who the relevant stakeholder groups are to participate in the initiative. Coordination and power is useful to determine which organization or agent will assume the role of coordinator and central structural position of actions in the chain. Developing a communication plan together with all stakeholders is valuable to ensure a transparent, frequent communication. Cooperation and collaboration is essential to create stakeholder involvement and engagement, in addition to building trust in intra and inter organizational relationships. It is also important to create institutional support and resources at an organizational and individual level, and flexibility to manage changes.

This research could help identify how to manage multi-stakeholder initiatives, clarifying their roles and responsibilities to ensure food security in the food supply chain. One possible research avenue is to map the facilitators and difficulties that each multi-stakeholder group has in dealing with the initiative, considering the particularities of each country, such as political, social and governance issues.

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