

POLS303033 Environment, Human Security, and Conflict

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Week 8: Food and conflict

Overture music

Bob Marley. 1977. "Them Belly Full (But We Hungry)." Live at The Rainbow Theatre, London. https://youtu.be/UCOK8HstW_k.

Band Aid. 1985. "Do They Know It's Christmas?" (Live Aid 1985)
<https://youtu.be/Gifrd7ljNL4>.

Mary O'Hara. 1958. "The Famine Song." *Songs of Ireland*. https://youtu.be/GPO_e49qLTw.

Video #1: Linking food production and prices to conflict

Photo of French tractors blocking a highway in Paris, November 2019

Photo of French pumpkins being dumped on the street in Vaucluse, November 2014

Photo of a French tractor trailer flinging manure on a government building in Toulouse, November 2014

Photo of French protesters throwing apples at police in Marseilles, November 2014

Screenshot of a recent Foreign Policy article about food price spikes and social unrest

Photo of crowd in Petrograd, Russia during February Revolution, 1917

- As Bob Marley sang "A hungry mob is an angry mob."
-

Holodomor memorial in Kiev photo

Holodomor

- From the Ukrainian words hunger (hold) and extermination (more)
- A 1932-1933 man-made famine in Ukraine.
- Part of a broader Soviet famine stemming from Stalin's 1929 decision to collectivize agriculture.
- This decision led to some armed peasant uprisings and deportation of wealthier peasants (kulaks).
- Across USSR at least 5 million people died of hunger from 1931-4.

- 3.9 million were Ukrainians.
- Not mentioned in USSR until 1986
- 16 countries have recognized it as a genocide.
- Australia did so in 2003.

For more info: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Holodomor>

Food shocks and US dollar supply from the Foreign Policy article

Graphs of food prices and the food price index from the Foreign Policy article

Today

- I want to focus on potential and actual **resource conflicts/disputes** centering on **land access** and the **food** that can be grown (or grazed) on that land.
- Motivating question: How are food production and consumption linked to human security and conflict?

Photo of Live Aid, 1985

- Raised US\$127 million dollars

Video #2: Food security trends

Sustainable Development Goals

- #2 goal is zero hunger

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report, 2020

- The number of undernourished people in the world continued to increase in 2019.

Countries can have both overweight and underweight children.

- Reversals most noticeable in areas of conflict and conflict in areas of droughts and floods.
- 2019–38 million children were overweight.

Food insecurity figure

- Over half of the people affected by moderate or severe food insecurity in the world live in Asia

Conflict and undernourishment

- Figure from 2019 report
- Conflicted countries are more likely to have undernourished people

Venezuela and undernourishment

- Dramatic increase since 2014

Food insecurity is slightly higher in women than in men

This insecurity gap varies by region

The majority of stunted children under 5 lived in countries in conflict

The Economist Intelligence Unit Global Food Security Index 2019 cover

Global Food Security Index world map

Interconnected risks for food security

What is the Global Food Security Index?

- Central question: “How food-secure is a country?”

Democracy increases food affordability

Scatterplot of democracy and affordability

2019 country food security list

- Australia was 16th (down four spots)
- Venezuela was last, even below Yemen and Syria

Geography and government matter

- Between 2015-6 more countries saw scores for national nutritional standards **decline** rather than improve.
- 35 of 40 most food secure countries in 2016 are **coastal**.
- **Political instability** exacerbates food insecurity.

Map of agricultural import tariffs

- Australia has some of the lowest tariff rates in the world

Australian map of wheat production declining over time.

- Between 1990 and 2015, production dropped in much of Australia's Wheat Belt due to drier than average conditions.
- The areas that disappear from this map are those where output dropped 50 percent or more.

Conflict and food insecurity in South Sudan

- Maps of food security before and after conflict

Table of conflict and climate-related shocks associated with food crisis in 2016

Sudden food price surges have triggered food riots and protests

- Timeline from earlier EIU report

Timeline of food prices and violence from van Weezel (2016: 768)

Takeaways from international trends in food security

- Food security is an international priority (SDG#2)
- Scarcity and overabundance are both issues.
- Conflict bad.
- Democracy helps.
- Women slightly more insecure.
- Climate shocks can lead to food crisis.
- Price shocks can lead to protest.

LECTURE QUESTION #1: How price sensitive are you in your food purchasing decisions? Did you notice any price fluctuations or availability constraints during the early months of the pandemic?

Video #2: Connecting food and security

How are food production and consumption linked to human security and conflict?

- **Climate change** can combine with political and economic **instability, poverty, inequality** and historical **grievances** to exacerbate tensions and/or trigger conflicts.
- Poor **governance**, weak institutions, capacity constraints and corruption restrict the ability of states and their citizens to address climate change.
- Simple **scarcity** and/or **shocks** affect adaptive capacity.

United Nations Environment Programme's (2007) causal mechanisms in a path diagram

Homer-Dixon's (1994) familiar path diagram

Benjaminen et al. (2012)

- A creative mix of quantitative and qualitative **inductive** research design.
- Focuses on conflict in Mali's Mopti region in the Niger river delta
- They find that **three structural factors** were the most important to explain this conflict:
 - **Agricultural encroachment** obstructed the mobility of herders and livestock.
 - A **political vacuum** led to rural actors' opportunistic behavior.
 - Government officials' **corruption** and **rent seeking**

Rowan et al. (2011)

- Theoretical focus on the links between **malnutrition** and conflict
- Focus on the **eastern** side of the **Sahel**.
- Empirical evidence from Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia.
- **Satellite** data analysis did not show significant relationship between land degradation and either malnutrition or armed conflict.

van Weezel (2016)

- This article looks at the links between **food prices** and violence.
- Empirical analysis looks at **prices** of food imports, international prices for foodstuffs, and violence in Africa from 1990 to 2011.
- Results suggest that **increases** in prices are associated with violence, and there are significant **spillover effects**.
- The size of the **substantive** effect is **pretty small**.
- This is consistent with other research on this topic.

Theoretical and empirical links between readings

- Political **incentives** and **history** often of greater substantive importance than the specific nature of agricultural challenges or changes.
- The **climate change**'s effects are likely to be **indirect**.
- **Governments' capacity** (and willingness) to respond is crucial.

Video #3: Case study: Climate change in the Sahel

Map of the Sahel

The Sahel

The Arabic word sahel ("shore") denotes the transition zone between the Sahara Desert to the north and the savannah plains to the south,

It is a semiarid region with an average rainfall between 30-50 cm per year.

Since the definition of the Sahel is based on climate, it does not abide by strict international borders, and it covers all or part of 12 countries.

In 2008 the UN's chief advisor, Jan Egeland, referred to the Sahel region of West Africa as "ground zero" for vulnerable communities struggling to with climate change.

The Sahara desert has gotten 10 percent bigger since 1920.

Sahel background

- Temperatures have risen by nearly 1°C since 1970, nearly twice the global average rate.
- The region faces increasingly variable rainfall, and more frequent droughts and storms.
- The population of sub-Saharan Africa, estimated at 920 million in mid-2014, will more than double in the next 36 years.
- At least 95% of the food production in the Sahel is based on rain-fed agriculture.

- The agricultural sector employs, directly or indirectly, more than half of the Sahel's population.
- Many of these are small-scale subsistence farmers.

The Sahel's rainfall levels are quite variable and have seen significant decreases (on average) in recent decades.

Temperatures in the Sahel are also significantly increasing.

Overall food security rankings in sub-Saharan Africa

Overall food security rankings in Aisa and the Pacific

These changes contribute to competition between pastoralists and agriculturalists

- Given the often porous borders in this region, the competition for resources and land often spill across borders.
- This can be seen in the next video of conflicts along the Omo river crossing Ethiopia/Kenya border.
- This is another example of the effects of a lack of state capacity and coordination.

Also a further example (as in Mali) of how a dam being constructed in Ethiopia can have cross-border effects.

Map of Lake Turkana

Three satellite photos of Lake Turkana from 1986 to 2015

Screenshot of Yale Environment 360

Gibe III dam photo

Google map of the Gibe III dam

Map of the Omo river region and dam

Screenshot of The Independent article

"The drained Aral Sea is the world's worst environment disaster—now it's happening again in Africa

Screenshot of VOA article

"Forced displacement causes controversy in Ethiopia's Omo Valley

Screenshot of the Conversation article

"Fears over Ethiopian dam's costly impact on environment, people"

Report cover "How They Tricked Us"

Satellite photos of sugar plantations expanding in Lower Omo

From the report above.

How can we reconcile:

- the compelling local stories of conflicts between pastoralists and farmers at the local level and
- the mixed results at the national level?

Lecture question #2: At the end of the Abramson video (link below) there is a call for a regional response. Given the actors involved, their environment and capabilities, what type of regional response do you think is necessary?

Lecture question #3: Once you have completed question #2, go to <https://reliefweb.int>. In the search box type “Omo Turkana.” Click on the second result (it should be posted on 3 Feb 2019 and from UNDP”. Was this the sort of regional response you were thinking of? Why or why not?

Alternate questions:

The Abramson video “Where the Water Ends” does include some nudity. If you would rather not watching the video here is an alternate assessment based on the CGTN video.

Lecture question #2—What country helped provide critical financing for this dam project?

Lecture question #3—Using online research what other funding agencies or organizations declined to help fund this dam? What were the reasons for them declining?

Conclusions

Motivating question: How are food production and consumption linked to human security and conflict?

- Resource disputes relate to water, land access, land use, and displacement
- Food production patterns are changing.
- Food prices fluctuate domestically and internationally with substantial effect
- Governments face tough balancing acts when developing policy about land use and food production.

Omo River videos

Evan Abramson. 2010. When the Water Ends.

<https://vimeo.com/103528480> (Make sure to turn on English subtitles)
<https://youtu.be/J78UU7Cshik>. (Subtitles didn't work for me)

CGTN Africa. 2016. Ethiopia launches hydro-electric plant Gibe 3.
<https://youtu.be/vQS-jcuTINI>.

Video #4: Literature reviews

2020 Literature review topic word cloud

2016-2019 literature review topic word clouds

Number of sources used histogram

Number of sources used histograms, 2016-2019

Page numbers

- 74% of literature reviews use page numbers
- Up from 39% in 2019 and 50% in 2017

ANIP deadline is 30 September

Video #5: How to write a research proposal

Photo of Bates Hall, Boston Public Library

- Founded in 1848
- Third largest library in the US with ~24 million volumes
 - Only Library of Congress and NY public library are larger

My “writing a political science research proposal” guide

- Elements of a research proposal
- Why research proposals matter
- Elements of a research proposal
- The literature
- The research question
- Your argument
- Evidence
- Questions and challenges

Research proposal rubric

Exeunt music

U.S.A. For Africa. “We Are the World.” <https://youtu.be/9AjkUyX0rVw>.

Johnny Cash. 1991. "Beans for Breakfast." *The Mystery of Life*.
<https://youtu.be/8rK5LJ6w00g>.