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Office hour: Mon 14-16 (by appointment)

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Food Security – History, Theory and Policy

BA Seminar, VAK-Nr. 08-26-5-M11-1

Pol-Modul 11 “International Politics”

Tue, 08-10 hrs – GW2 B3009

About the seminar

As indicated in the title, this class is about the history, theory and policy of food security. A ubiquitous topic in media, political and academic discourses, food security is connected to about everything else in the world, such as climate change, gender relations, poverty, development, technology, violent conflicts, international trade and human rights., This introductory class is an attempt to make sense of this complex phenomenon from a variety of angles. After a brief introduction to the “problem” as well as some conceptual and methodological issues, it will, firstly, be approached from an historical viewpoint. We will study some “solutions” offered by past green revolutions and juxtapose them with calls for future green revolutions. Secondly, we will dig into some contemporary debates around food security that tackle its linkages with, for instance, poverty, conflicts, agrarian change, land rights and sustainability. While these debates are often rooted in other disciplines than International Relations, we will be guided by the overall question of: why is this relevant for us? In this vein, also student presentations are meant to bring some international politics in by discussing international organisations that work in the respective subject areas. Thirdly, we will then debate the place of food security in the international trade regime and international law, as well as speak about ways to theorise international organisations at the macro- and micro-levels. At the end, students are supposed to be equipped with a sound basic understanding of food security that will enable them to explore in more depth any of the diverse links between food security and international relations.

Assignments and grading

Formulating questions: The first thing all students are required to do is the submission of questions on a total of four readings. Students can choose any four texts from all sessions for this little ungraded assignment. On the chosen text, students should send me two or three questions by email before the beginning of the respective class (i.e. the class in which we discuss the text to which the questions refer). The questions should lend themselves for a discussion in the group and we may use some of them in

class if time allows. Their main point is to support your own active reading by keeping an eye on: why is this interesting (if it is)? In particular, I would like you to practice posing questions on the topics that would be interesting from an IR point of view.

Besides the obligatory but ungraded questions, there are the following graded assignments, depending on whether you want/need to obtain 3 or 6 credit points (CPs).

3 CP = Questions on a total of four readings **plus either** a presentation plus handout and 5-page summary *or* one 8-10-page essay

6 CP = Questions on a total of four readings **plus either** one 15-20-page term paper *or* two 8-10-page essays

Presentations: The presentations should pick one international organisation (IO) that thematically fits the respective session. Besides giving a bit of background info on the IO (founding year, headquarters, membership...), the presentations should discuss: what does this IO do with regards to food security? I.e., what are the main topics it works on; how does it define and tackle food security; how does it operate and where? There are seven sessions which could accommodate a presentation (sessions 6-12). (If interest to present exceeds slots, we might have to re-arrange.) Presentations should take 15 minutes and provide a handout for the rest of group in addition to the five-page summary to be handed in to me. You have until the third session (29.10.2019) to make up your minds about the session in which you will present (but you do not yet have to have picked the IO). On the 29th we will finalise the syllabus. Presentations do not have to make use of power point. If you wish to, though, make sure to arrange the necessary equipment in due time.

Term papers and essays: Term papers and essays should follow the [guidelines](#) of the Institute of Political Science and need to be submitted by 31st March 2020 (via email as a soft copy). Make sure you plan enough time for an office hour with me to discuss your ideas (and be aware that I will be absent for parts of February and March). The 15-20-page terms papers are the more classical type of writing where you have more room for theoretical and empirical elaborations. The shorter essays have a somewhat different structure and aim given the scarcity of space. They are usually more argumentative and do not normally study a case in depth but draw on diverse evidence. (All of this is described in the study guide – see link above – but I am happy to provide additional guidance.) If you choose (for 6 CP) to submit two essays, you are welcome to submit one of them until the end of February in order to receive feedback before you write the second one **N.B.** Make sure to include all necessary information on the cover sheet! Best idea is to use the [template](#) provided by the Institute.

Reading: The amount of reading to do for each session is relatively big. I have therefore divided the group in two: students with surnames beginning on A to K, and students with surnames beginning on L to Z. Apart from a few exceptions where I expect everyone to read all assigned texts (sessions 2, 12, 13 and 14), each of you hence has one weekly obligatory reading only, depending on your surname. Obviously, you are very welcome to read both! This also implies that we will need to bring everyone on the same page during our sessions by reporting the two texts to each other. This means, everyone should be able to summarise the main points of the text they read for the other group. As a guide to your reading, it helps to focus on the following questions: 1. what are the main points made by the author(s)? 2. How do they arrive at those points (i.e., what is their line of argumentation/what do they do in the text)? 3. How does this relate to other texts you have read, and to the topic of the seminar? **N.B.** Not all texts are available as open source, i.e. you might need to download/access them while in campus wifi (eduroam)! A few texts that are not online will be made available in this [cloud](#)!

Office hours: please do not hesitate to drop by my office during the office hours Mon 14-16 for quick chats of 5-10 minutes, but please make an appointment if you think we will need more time.

Overview

Part 1: Basics

Session 1, 15.10.2019: Introductions

In the first session, we will introduce ourselves to each other, brainstorm issues to do with food security and why IR is interested in it, discuss the syllabus as well as our expectations of the seminar. If time allows, we will also discuss what the presentations on international organisations should address as a common framework. There are no readings assigned.

Session 2, 22.10.2019: Definitions and measurements

Readings:

- **A-Z:** Devereux, Stephen, and Lauren Tavener-Smith. 2019. Seasonal Food Insecurity among Farm Workers in the Northern Cape, South Africa. *Nutrients* 11.7. Available online: <https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/11/7/1535/pdf>
- **A-Z:** Schanbacher, William. 2010. The politics of food: the global conflict between food security and food sovereignty. ABC-CLIO. Chapter 3, pp. 53-76. Will be provided via [cloud](#).
- Non-mandatory: You could browse the FAO report “The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019” for some terms or concepts. Available online: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5162en/ca5162en.pdf>

We will begin the session with a little game: guessing concepts. This is just a warm-up and meant to familiarise ourselves with a couple of the technical terms that will re-appear in the course of the seminar. We will then discuss a recent article by Stephen Devereux and Lauren Tavener Smith on seasonal hunger in South Africa. Based on that, we will speak about different ways of measuring (“operationalising”) food security and insecurity for empirical research. In addition, you can take a cursory look at the latest FAO report on the state of food security and nutrition in the world in order to get a sense of what is being discussed. FAO is one important global actor in the field that we will meet again at later points. The other mandatory reading is by Schanbacher who makes the point that we should promote food sovereignty rather than food security, as a more rights-based and anti-neoliberal alternative.

Part 2: History, or: What lessons can we learn from the past?

Session 3, 29.10.2019: Past and future green revolutions

Readings:

- **A-K:** Mingay, Gordon Edmund. 1977. *The Agricultural Revolution: Changes in Agriculture, 1650-1880*. London: Adam and Charles Black: pp. 3-27, 65-68, and 312-16. Will be provided via [cloud](#).
- **L-Z:** Toenniessen, Gary, Akinwumi Adesina, and Joseph DeVries. 2008. Building an alliance for a green revolution in Africa. *Annals of the New York academy of sciences*. Available online: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.362.5583&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

In this session, we will discuss an account of the green revolution in Europe and compare it with a contemporary call for a green revolution in Africa. The introduction to Mingay’s 1977 book on the

agricultural revolution in Britain between 1650 and 1880 offers an interesting re-reading of the actual impact that new seeds and technologies made in that period. Mingay relativises the “revolutionary” character of the changes and says that they were in fact quite gradual and not as far-reaching. Attached to Mingay’s introduction is a very short note written by J. Caird in 1878, who was an observer of British farming. It points to debates in Britain at the time about protecting domestic farmers after the repeal of the “corn laws”, an historically important state intervention. Secondly, Toennissen et al. are part of the *Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa* that aims to support smallholder farmers with “greater access to affordable yield-enhancing inputs, including well-adapted seeds and new methods for integrated soil fertility management, as well as to output markets where they can convert surplus production into cash”(p. 233). The two texts in tandem provide a basis for discussing the role of technological change for improved (global) food security.

Session 4, 05.11.2019: The place for peasants

Readings:

- **A-K:** Harwood, Jonathan. 2009. Peasant friendly plant breeding and the early years of the green revolution in Mexico. *Agricultural history*, pp. 384-410. Available online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40607496.pdf?casa_token=e1ziYSIUvywAAAAA:DMjbjJobj5eMc1YkDVzVvUyGWcKP6yk0JavVFGxRdnrr-17xIF1eHPhwLPCLcgOmx7YEiSnKeNiPmgbCHccBsiUfJU48WrEglZHHaysb8UYgzUGHhs
- **L-Z:** Massicotte, Marie-Josée. 2010. La Vía Campesina, Brazilian Peasants, and the Agribusiness Model of Agriculture: Towards an Alternative Model of Agrarian Democratic Governance. *Studies in Political Economy*, 85:1, pp. 69-98. Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19187033.2010.11675036>

This session will centre around the role of small-scale farmers (usually defined as farmers cultivating up to five hectares of land) in the past and present. Firstly, Harwood discusses the green revolution in Mexico under the question of why it did not reduce hunger to a greater extent and provide more improvements for smallholders. He argues that the Mexican Agricultural Programme of the Rockefeller Foundation – which was a key driver in the green revolution there – eventually needed to set aside the needs of small-scale farmers under pressure for quick results. Secondly, Massicotte’s paper is a critical investigation of the current global food system and the role of peasant movements in calls for sustainable agriculture and adequate living and working conditions for rural people.

Session 5, 12.11.2019: Who talks about, and who benefits from food security?

Readings:

- **A-K:** Bezner Kerr, Rachel. 2012. Lessons from the old Green Revolution for the new: Social, environmental and nutritional issues for agricultural change in Africa. *Progress in Development Studies* 12.2-3, pp. 213-229. Available online: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/146499341101200308?casa_token=2nN9rdsKsksAAAAA:YvsOHD0Tq_rA14DwKJ8dSEO-mJdTdDuBOBLWLLe7aYTPHx1EPosyC9HblhZyQfyh9Fa_cj6wIOW8k
- **L-Z:** Waldmüller, Johannes M. 2015. Agriculture, knowledge and the ‘colonial matrix of power’: approaching sustainabilities from the Global South, *Journal of Global Ethics*, 11:3, pp.

294-302. Available online:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17449626.2015.1084523>

This session is concerned with questions of power and distribution. We will read a paper by Bezner Kerr who reflects critically about the green revolutions in India, the Philippines and Mexico and argues that they that did not reduce social inequality. She concludes that other interventions are needed than agronomical ones if urban-rural inequalities are to be addressed. Waldmüller's text is a discussion about the knowledge system underlying the SDGs and generally the discourse around food security. He points us to the persistence of a colonial knowledge production system and explains how the focus on industrial agriculture continuously silences alternative approaches to sustainability.

Part 3: Policy, or: contemporary debates around food security

Session 6, 19.11.2019: Land "grabbing" and land rights

Readings:

- **A-K:** Nolte, Kerstin. 2014. Large-scale agricultural investments under poor land governance in Zambia. *Land use policy* 38, pp. 698-706. Available online while in eduroam: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0264837714000155> (if not, search for the GIGA working paper with the same name)
- **L-Z:** Zoomers, Annelies. 2010. Globalisation and the foreignisation of space: seven processes driving the current global land grab. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 37.2, pp. 429-447. Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03066151003595325?needAccess=true>

Presentation: tba

In this session, we will approach the important issue of large-scale investments in developing countries which often lead to so-called "land-grabbing" (i.e., residents being deprived of their land and hence often source of survival). The paper by Kerstin Nolte is a case study of commercial land acquisition in Zambia that takes place in a complex institutional structure of state and customary land rights. Annelies Zoomers offers a more general account of what she identifies as seven processes driving the global land rush.

Mid-term evaluation

Session 7, 26.11.2019: Agriculture and poverty reduction

- **A-K:** Handa, Sudhansu et al. 2015: The Social and Productive Impacts of Zambia's Child Grant. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 357–387. Available online: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/pam.21892>
- **L-Z:** Xiaoyun, Li, et al. 2013. What can Africa learn from China's experience in agricultural development? *IDS Bulletin* 44.4, pp. 31-41. Available online: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1759-5436.12040?casa_token=ldZuGHobPIMAAAAA:VTJcbdlsxVev3TyreXRjc1i6ixg-mXS758_KltOz6NjM0YpVM6skgV0aEg_09DTkUqla41m3xutHFoM

Presentation: tba

Agriculture and poverty (reduction) are linked in various ways. Not only are many countries with high poverty rates largely rural, but agriculture is also the main source of livelihood for subsistence farmers. This session will explore the links from two directions. The paper by Handa et al, written within the framework of a bigger FAO project on “protection and production” reviews the effects of a social welfare programme in Zambia on, amongst other things, (agricultural) productive capacities of recipient households. From quite a different viewpoint, the paper by Li Xiaoyun and co-authors discusses the possible effects of agricultural reforms on poverty reduction, transferring lessons learned from agricultural policy reforms in China to Africa.

Session 8, 03.12.2019: Violent conflicts

Readings:

- **A-K:** van Weezel, Stijn. 2018. Food security and armed conflict: a cross-country analysis. FAO Agricultural Development Economics Working Paper 18–03. Rome. Available online: <https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/288955/files/ca0971en.pdf>
- **L-Z:** Tranchant, Jean-Pierre, et al. 2019. The impact of food assistance on food insecure populations during conflict: Evidence from a quasi-experiment in Mali. *World Development* 119, pp. 185-202. Available online: <https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S0305750X18300378?token=B2FA35813405FD770AB63AF2715E83170F11A9E2A5C0748B3732EB06349FA7C3FFFC03C9606E398FA555D6876B29E5DE>

Presentation: tba

Empirically, food insecurity and famines are highly positively correlated with violent conflicts and forced displacement. Complex webs of crises exist between food, violence, displacement, and political disorder and are difficult to entangle. One session can obviously only provide a glimpse into those relationships. In a large-N comparative analysis, van Weezel studies the relationship between armed conflict and food insecurity and finds, among other things, differences with regards to the type of conflict. The paper by Tranchant and colleagues is a case study of Northern Mali and the effects on food security of the humanitarian emergency there. (The second paper is part of a special issue on food security and conflict in *World Development*.)

Session 9, 10.12.2019: Women and food

Readings:

- **A-K:** Sharaunga, S. et al. 2016. Effects of ‘women empowerment’ on household food security in rural KwaZulu-Natal province. *Development Policy Review*, 34 (2), pp. 223—252. Available online: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/dpr.12151>
- **L-Z:** Doss, Cheryl, et al. 2018. Women in agriculture: Four myths. *Global food security* 16, pp. 69-74. Available online at: <https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S2211912417300779?token=19B0F62EE868B9A387A69CACA56F28F3B8D09C247767B27CBBFD151C39B7F6B3BB871D2947EB49487CB2DCC6E9069C5B>

Presentation: tba

There are many assumptions not only about the gendered nature of poverty, food insecurity and agricultural practices but also about the specific responsibility of women in transformation. Women are often the targeted group of social interventions because of these beliefs. For this session, we will read one text by Sharaunga et al. that studies the effects of “women empowerment” on food security in a province in South Africa. It explains the notion of empowerment and why women are successful “change agents”. The second text can be read as a criticism of the former: Doss et al. deconstruct some of the commonly held views that lead to a portrayal in development discourse of women as “either saviours or victims”. They argue that there is no sound empirical evidence to back that picture.

Session 10, 17.12.2019: Sustainability: climate change and the SDGs

Reading:

- **A-K:** Dobermann, A., et al. 2013. Solutions for sustainable agriculture and food systems: Technical report for the post-2015 development agenda. Thematic group 7 on sustainable agriculture and food systems. The United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). Available online at: <https://www.biovision.ch/fileadmin/pdf/sdgs/130919-TG07-Agriculture-Report-WEB.pdf> --> read summary and sections 1 and 3 of the report!
- **L-Z:** Nyanga, Progress H. et al. 2011. Smallholder Farmers’ Perceptions of Climate Change and Conservation Agriculture: Evidence from Zambia. Journal of Sustainable Development, 4.4, pp. 73-85. Available online: <http://www.taccire.suanet.ac.tz:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/184/farmers%20perception.pdf?sequence=1>

Presentation: tba

Accelerated climate change is posing several new questions about food security and agricultural development. These include, for instance, how to increase agricultural productivity in an environmentally friendly and emission-saving way, as well as how to adapt farming to changing weather and climate conditions and support subsistence farmers in coping with the changes. We will approach this topic from two angles: From a general perspective, Dobermann et al. 2013 suggest ways for agricultural change that are compatible with the aims of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) (N.B.: only the summary and sections 1 and 3 of the report are mandatory reading). As a country case study and adoptinh more the perspective of small-scale farmers, we will moreover discuss a paper by Nyanga and colleagues about Zambian smallholders’ experience with the changing climate, and the possibilities of using techniques of conservation farming to mitigate and adapt.

Session 11, 07.01.2020: The problem of wealth

Readings:

- **A-K:** Dykins Callahan, Sara B. 2014. The pursuit of happiness – At the intersection of food, performance, and consumer identity. In: Schanbacher, William D., ed. The Global Food System: Issues and Solutions. ABC-CLIO, pp. 115-38. Will be provided via [cloud](#).
- **L-Z:** FAO 2011. Global Food Losses and Waste. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i2697e.pdf>

Presentation: tba

Food security is a problem of wealth as much as of poverty. Besides various individual health-related effects of overconsumption, problems have to do with unequal access to food and negative externalities of dairy and meat intense diets. We will discuss two texts related to problems that wealthy people create. One of them is an exploration by Sara Dykins Callahan of “consumer culture” in the US and the important role of consuming food for one’s identity construction. She also describes how that plays out in the global food system. The other text is a study by FAO on food losses and waste, which, in fact, occur at all stages of the production cycle, but whether the main loss happens during consumption or production depends mostly on whether one is rich or poor.

Part 4: Theory, or: food security as an IR topic

Session 12, 14.01.2020: International trade

Reading:

- **A-Z:** Orford, Anne. 2015. Food security, free trade, and the battle for the state. *Journal of International Law & International Relations* 11. Available online: <https://heinonline.org/HOL/PrintRequest?collection=journals&handle=hein.journals/jilwirl11&div=15&print=section&format=PDFsearchable&submit=Print%2FDownload&id=122>

Presentation: tba

Anne Orford (Professor of International Law) begins by reflecting on the most important debates and recent developments around food security, so that her text offers a nice recap of the previous seminar sessions. (When reading, you could ask yourself: which of the issues she tackles have we discussed before? Where does she repeat or contradict what other authors have said?) The focus of her paper is to understand “how food security came to be so unevenly distributed in our closely integrated international economy” (p. 19). She approaches the question through an analysis of the role of international law in the emergence of the international free trade system. She gives a history of free trade thinking since Adam Smith and explains how it shaped agricultural policies and food security. And she discusses how the international system, of which international law is an important ingredient, has reshaped the role of the state. It’s a rich text but making it through the 67 pages will be rewarded. (Note: for those particularly keen to read, the entire issue (Vol. 11 No. 2) of the *Journal of International Law and International Relations* is devoted to food security.)

Session 13, 21.01.2010: Cooperation and international organisations

Readings:

- **A-Z:** Kaasch, Alexandra et al. 2019. Exploring theoretical approaches to global social policy research: Learning from international relations and inter-organisational theory. *Global Social Policy*, Vol. 19(1-2), pp. 87–104. Available online: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1468018119845570>
- **A-Z:** Heucher, Angela. 2019. Evolving Order? Inter-Organizational Relations in the Organizational Field of Food Security Governance in Côte d’Ivoire. *Forum for Development Studies*. Routledge. Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08039410.2018.1562962>

In the second-to-last session, we will debate the role of international organisations in food security, which is meant as a way to reflect also on the presentations that we will have heard by now. The recent

paper by Kerstin Martens and colleagues is a more general discussion of how global social policy (of which, one could argue, food security is a part) can be studied through the prism of international organisations. From the other side, in a more “bottom-up” way, the paper by Heucher offers a country case study on how various different IOs operate together (or side by side) “on the ground” in Côte d’Ivoire.

Session 14, 28.01.2020: Food sovereignty as an alternative concept? Recap and wrap-up

Reading: tba.

In the very last session, we will summarise our main take-home messages from the course and talk about where we are and what is maybe still missing from the picture. We might assign another reading if something arises in the course of the seminar. In this last session there will moreover be space for clarifying any issues related to the essays and term papers.

Some additional resources to explore if interested:

- Video on population growth and food security in Tanzania: <https://vimeo.com/318000921>
- WB SDG atlas, data on hunger: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/sdgateatlas/SDG-02-zero-hunger.html>
- Video interviews with Henry Bernstein, founding editor of Journal of Agrarian change: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FM8uysA11dU&list=PLhL76SQ7-oWy3phjntnSgEkwU0jZpGNEk&index=5>
- FAO: five ways in which we can learn from indigenous people’s food production: <http://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1203793/>
- Lots of resources on the British corn laws: <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/cldebate.htm>
- FAO video: sustainable intensification of agriculture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tk95ZFI5jU4&feature=youtu.be>
- Short video documentary on Thai rice and its cultural significance to Thailand: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAOWAba-hAA>
- Short documentary on history and current developments of agriculture and livelihoods in Western Kenya: <https://vimeo.com/208639368>
- Short video on USAID-funded Aquaculture for Income and Nutrition (AIN) project in Bangladesh: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXTYADa18aQ>
- Why Was Agriculture So Important? BBC Big History Project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hx6-m510hjU>
- Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa, website: <https://agra.org/>
- FAO on the SDGs: <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/en/>
- Global Yield Gap Atlas: <http://www.yieldgap.org/web/guest/home>
- The “Food Systems Academy”: <http://www.foodsystemsacademy.org.uk/videos/geoff-tansey.html>
- The Guardian: “10 things you need to know about the global food system”: <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/food-blog/10-things-need-to-know-global-food-system>
- Special issue of *Nature* on food security: <https://www.nature.com/collections/jmrzgdndj>