1. Food Security, Instability, and and the Domestic-International Nexus
by Mariano-Florentino Cuellar

• Food as a security issue
• (I)logic of the global food system
• U.S. role in the global food system
• (Possible) pressures for change
Large and powerful states, whose actions have the greatest impact on others, can be constrained only by their own people, working through their domestic institutions.”

“Many players are competing for influence, from rising powers to corporations to criminal cartels...”
Food access ==> insecurity?
How exactly?

• **Direct human security impact** (Gillespie et al. 2008)
  - Hunger, migration pressures
  - Malnutrition and infectious disease (HIV, tuberculosis)

• **Conflict disrupts access to food** (Jenkins et al. 2007)

• **Militarization associated with food insecurity** (Jenkins et al. 2007)

• **Disruptions in food (access & prices) can create instability** (Arekazi & Brückner 2010)
Human security impact of hunger: Context

![Image of people in a desolate area with clothes on the ground]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Kills People?</th>
<th>Estimated annual totals, decadal avg ~ year 2000</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism (intl + domestic)</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct battle deaths (combatants)</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct civilian deaths from conflict (e.g. genocide)</td>
<td>50,000 - 100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect civilian deaths from conflict</td>
<td>500,000 - 1 mil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger and malnutrition</td>
<td>6 mil - 8.5 mil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Sources: Human Security Report (2005); FAO State of Food Insecurity (2004); Lopez, Mathers et al. (2006)
Food security: Worsening trend

The declining trend in the proportion of undernourished in developing countries has been reversed.
(I)logic of the global food system

**Advanced industrialized countries:**
Solved food insecurity in the mid-to-late 20th century

**Problems:**
- Misallocation of ag. resources; subsidies & trade barriers hurt domestic production & encourage reliance on volatile int’l market;
- Governance problems in dev. countries;
- Inefficient aid

**Int’l actors:** UN, civil society

**Developing countries:**
- Food instability (reliance on volatile int’l markets); Arezaki and Bruckner 2011

**Emerging powers facing food insecurity:**
- Gaining influence.
Global Food System: U.S. Role

Largest provider of food aid

Shapes global food system through domestic agricultural policy

Major agenda-setter in international security
U.S. Domestic and Institutional Constraints: Consequences

- **Inefficiencies built into food aid:** U.S. flag vessels must carry, large % through Great Lakes ports, and focus is surplus commodities; only 50 cents of every food aid $ goes to food; rest subsidizes shipping (Barrett & Maxwell 2004)

- **U.S. ag subsidies, energy policy:** U.S. still subsidizes agricultural commodities, supports biofuels that increase price pressures on commodities.

- **Organizational fragmentation:** (1) Executive branch organization (within NSS and agencies) plays down connection between security, domestic agriculture, and energy policy; (2) congressional agriculture committees composed of preference outliers.

- **Irony:** Advanced industrialized countries justify subsidies on the basis of security
Understanding Food and Security: Next Steps (& Possible Pressures for Change)

• **Understanding domestic precedents and pressures:** Potential precedents (e.g., agricultural policy change in 1996, pressure from NGOs, case-studies involving the historical role of foreign policy concerns in domestic issues such as civil rights).

• **Role of changes in U.S. organizational structure** in affecting security and foreign policy (e.g., Cohen, Cuéllar, and Weingast 2006).

• **Climate change** may reshape migration, border disputes, and access to food.

• **Rising Powers and the Global Food System:** Unlike the U.S. & Europe, Brazil, India, and China all face chronic food insecurity problems that could raise controversy over the politics of food.