



Public Lecture Offerings

Decolonizing African Agriculture: Prioritizing Food Security and Agroecology in African Development

In this talk, I argue that failed agricultural development efforts in Africa are the result of intellectual colonization in the agricultural sciences, that we must reimagine the way forward, and that this effort will require new institutions. Following a broad conceptual introduction emphasizing political agronomy and political ecology, I review past food security and agricultural development experiences in four countries where I have undertaken research: Mali, Burkina Faso, South Africa and Botswana. I then examine successful efforts in each of the aforementioned countries and outline future directions that emphasize a more well-rounded understanding of food security and agroecology. I conclude with some ideas about institutions at the national, regional international levels.

When Agronomy Flirts with Markets, Gender and Nutrition: A Political Ecology of the New Green Revolution for Africa and Women's Food Security in Burkina Faso

Advocates of the Green Revolution for Africa (GR4A) argue that the best way to address malnutrition is to incorporate smallhold farmers into the global food economy via value chains involving the use of improved inputs, production technologies, and access to markets. I critically assess these tactics using a feminist political ecology lens to analyze GR4A efforts in southwestern Burkina Faso which target female rice farmers. I examine the nature of the GR4A rice value chain, the degree to which a GR4A project is impacting the nutrition of participating women, and the influence of gender roles on GR4A rice project outcomes.

Classroom Discussion Topics

1. A Plan to Address UN Sustainable Development Goal #2: HLPE Report #15 on Food Security and Nutrition.

Based on my work as a member of the UN High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE). I discuss the work of the HLPE and the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and this recent report on SDG2.

2. The New Green Revolution for Africa: A Political Ecology Critique.

A discussion of the reboot of the Green Revolution approach (involving improved seeds, pesticides and fertilizers) in Africa and its shortcomings. Broader and less specific than public lecture #2 above.

3. The Vulnerability and Resilience of African Food Systems, Food Security and Nutrition in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

By examining the key dimensions of food security in Africa, I discuss the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on African food systems, food security and nutrition. The vulnerability and resilience of African food systems is shaped by the particularities of place as well as the position of various African countries in regional and global systems of economic exchange.

4. Agricultural Change and Underdevelopment in Mali (West Africa)

A photo essay and discussion of agricultural change and underdevelopment in Mali during the colonial and post-colonial periods.