AGRICULTURE AND FOOD IN THE GLOBAL AGENDA

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Sébastien Treyer is director of programmes at IDDRI. He holds a background in environmental engineering, a PhD in environment management on water scarcity management scenarios in the Mediterranean, and is a specialist of foresight for environmental policies. He has been in charge of developing foresights at the French ministry for environment, has been coordinating the “Agrimonde” project (Scenarios for global food security in 2050) and is co-author of the 3rd Foresight Expert Group Report for the Standing Committee for Agricultural Research (SCAR) of EU’s DG Research : “Sustainable food consumption and production in a resources constrained world”. He chairs the Scientific and Technical Committee of the French facility for the global environment (FFEM).

Following his PhD in economics on the instability of commodity markets, Tancrède Voituriez joined IDDRI in 2005 to develop research activities on the effects of globalization on sustainable development. On this subject, and as director of IDDRI’s Governance programme, he coordinates projects for the European Commission, the European Parliament and the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment, among others. Since 2010 his work has focused on the conditions for implementing public policies for sustainable development (reform of the development agenda post 2015 and its governance; race for green technologies in a globalized world).

COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1: Introduction. Food security and the tension between National Sovereignty and International Cooperation

This introductory session first clarifies what we mean by “Food Security” and puts the concept in perspective by differentiating it from food sovereignty, the right to food and agricultural development. On the basis of this conceptual clarification, it shows that over the last 40 years, Food Security has continued to be addressed as a core issue by national governments, while it was also progressively constructed as a global public good, which has generated tensions at different levels.

Readings:

Session 2: Balancing national stakes and global governance challenges: the example of China

The stakes linked to food security in China are tremendous. The rising food trade deficit, originating from the evolution of the demand of 1.3 billion people and from the depletion of resources, revives the old fear of famines that have shaken the history of the country. Despite its growing dependency on international agricultural markets, the country does not appear to be at the forefront of the global governance of food security. This session will explore the reasons underlying this paradox.

Required readings:

Session 3: A historical perspective on global governance institutions of agriculture and food

Agriculture and food emerged as an object for international coordination already at the beginning of the 20th century. This session will focus on the history of how the need for international coordination and information sharing has emerged from national food security issues. It will explore the history of multilateral organisations dealing with food and agriculture – the FAO and the CFS – and will end by giving some elements on how the same issues are currently treated in more recent multilateral fora such as the G8.

Required readings:
- BRUN, Matthieu, TREYER, Sébastien, ALPHA, Arlène, BRICAS, Nicolas, TON NU, Christine, Évaluation d’impact et cadre de redevabilité pour le Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale, IDDRI Issue Briefs N°03/2014.

Session 4: Transforming agriculture? A short history of the agrarian question

Institutions and debates concerning food security continue to be centrally dealing with agricultural development, although this is but one dimension of food security. This session will show how current burning debates on food security continue to be mainly revolving around questions of agricultural transformation pathways, that have already been debated for more than two centuries. This session will therefore discuss some key historical references on the agrarian question, all showing the often implicit and sometimes explicit importance of the following themes and variables: the role and place of the primary sector in the economy, modernization pathways, changes in the structure of farms (land, workforce…), employment in agriculture, substitution of labor by capital, labor productivity increases…
COURSE OUTLINE

References:

Session 5-6: From national policies to global debates on development in the agricultural sector

Session 5: The rationale for public intervention in the agricultural sector: a retrospect

After structural adjustments, agricultural policies have gained again legitimacy. Why is there a need for public intervention in the agricultural sector, and for agricultural development in particular? This session will show the successive periods in the history of public policies in agriculture, in order to question the current framing of why we need a public agricultural policy, both in Northern and Southern contexts.

Required readings:

Session 6: “Modernizing” agriculture: social and technological innovation at the crossroads between global and local transformation pathways

Technological change in agriculture has been presented as one of the major levers of action for enabling the world to ensure food security in periods of rapid demographic growth. Without rapid growth in agricultural productivity after the second world war, situations of food insecurity would probably have been terribly worse than they have been. This session will show to that the impact of technological change on societies can not be considered only from a technical point of view but that social transformation and organizational change also have to be taken into account. It will introduce an analysis of the impacts of the global spread of the Green revolution from the 1960ies to today, and discuss possible scenarios of change in agriculture to 2050, the national and global institutions concerned by these scenarios, and their relation with food security.

Required readings:

Session 7-8: Trade negotiations, agricultural development and food security

Session 7: WTO negotiations on agriculture and food commodities: history and recent evolutions

Trade of food commodities and agricultural goods is considered to have a crucial impact on food security and agricultural development. International trade negotiations are therefore a key element of the global
governance of food security. What is the history of these negotiations, and what is the role and place of agriculture in the WTO negotiations?

Required readings:

Session 8: Impacts of agricultural trade liberalization on development

Can the impacts of trade liberalization on development in Southern countries be considered as positive? Under what conditions can it be considered to open new markets? Under what conditions can it be considered to have a negative impact on smallholders in the South, due to the competition with very productive Northern farmers? This question is at the heart of a very active controversy, between stakeholders but also between economists. Who says what? What can we learn from this controversy?

Required readings:

Sessions 9-10: The growing private sector’s involvement in the world food system and its governance: state of the art and governance implications

Session 9: A state of the art of the private sector’s involvement in the world food system

Transnational corporations now play a key role in most areas of the food system. This session will seek to understand their role by looking at their implication in a broad range of commodity chains, including palm oil, wheat and maize.

Required readings:

Session 10: The involvement of private corporations in hybrid governance mechanisms for food security: main impacts and accountability issues

Multilateral organisations are not the only arenas and fora for global governance of food security: several recent initiatives such as the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, the Global Alliance for Climate
Smart Agriculture or the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), are said to gain a growing influence. Private companies are highly solicited to get involved to these programs. While their contributions have been massively criticized by most NGOs, their actual actions / interventions have not been precisely described so far. This session seeks to clarify:

- Why and which corporations decide or not to get involved in international food policy programs, how they do so and with which results?

- How to make them accountable of the actions they take in such arenas.

**Required readings**


**Session 11: Regional initiatives for agriculture and food: what expectations and what impacts?**

On top of global intergovernmental cooperation, regional level international cooperation is also occurring at the level of a group of countries (EU, AU, ECOWAS…), and focusses on developing regional agriculture and food strategies or policies, creating a common market with aligned norms and standards, developing a common framework or benchmark for national level agriculture and food policies (CAADP of the African Union). What are those regional cooperation instruments expected to deliver? What can be said of their real impacts?

**Required readings:**

Session 12: Governance of food security and the Post 2015 agenda: how to articulate national policies and global governance processes?

How is food security discussed within the post 2015 agenda? What links are made between the development (ODA) agenda, and sustainable development Rio Conventions (Climate, biodiversity, desertification, etc)? What is the place given to food security in the currently ongoing discussion on Sustainable development goals and their “Means of implementation”? What institutions and fora could be useful in supporting pathways of transformation that would be ensuring food security in a sustainable manner?

This conclusive session will come back in a conclusive way to the possibility that the post 2015 agenda could offer a relevant framework for enabling each country to seek for its own specific transformation pathway in agriculture and food systems, while also enabling the relevant discussion on necessary international cooperation.

Required readings: