

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD SECURITY TO CONFLICT PREVENTION

Preventing Conflict Through Food Security Management

OUTLINE

- Hunger and anger in autocracies and democracies

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Illustrate the importance of Food Security to Conflict Prevention

HUNGER AND ANGER

- Hunger and anger are closely related.
- Examples of hunger triggering demonstrations, uprisings, and conflict are plentiful. The most recent being:
 - Syria
 - Yemen
 - Venezuela
- Cause for hunger-induced conflict is often an increase in food prices, often triggered by food price inflation.
- Considering Engel's Law, real income of the poor is affected worse by food price inflation than real income of the rich.

WHAT DETERMINES FOOD PRICES?

The case of scarcity

- Climate Change
- Population Growth
- Economic Development

The case for “insanity”

- Subsidies
- Trade regulations
- Commodity gambling

AUTOCRACIES AND DEMOCRACIES

- In a democracy, taxes are used for the redistribution of income. Furthermore, tax rates tend to increase with food price inflation and with the level of income inequality. Thus, in a democracy all poor citizens have practically access to the income of the rich through redistributive taxation.
- In an autocracy, the authoritarian regime often applies a consumption subsidy system to match the utility that an individual would receive under democratic redistribution. Thus, as long as the hypothetical utility from democratic redistribution is equal or less to the utility from a consumption subsidy system, the authoritarian regime enjoys political stability.
- Yet, the overall disposable income to appease the poor is smaller under an authoritarian bargain than the available redistributive resources to a poor in a democracy, since under autocracy usually an elite monopolizes decision making and the authoritarian bargain (redistributive burden).

AUTOCRACIES AND DEMOCRACIES

- The emergence of trouble is likely when there is not enough money to meet the redistributive demand of the poor.
- In an autocracy, food price inflation increases the authoritarian bargain if
 - The benefits of being a member of the elite are low
 - The population share of poor is high
 - The size of the elite is small
 - Income inequality is high
- An authoritarian regime is inferior to a democratic regime in meeting the redistributive demand of the poor, because the authoritarian leadership is comprised of only a fraction of all the rich.

HUNGER AND ANGER

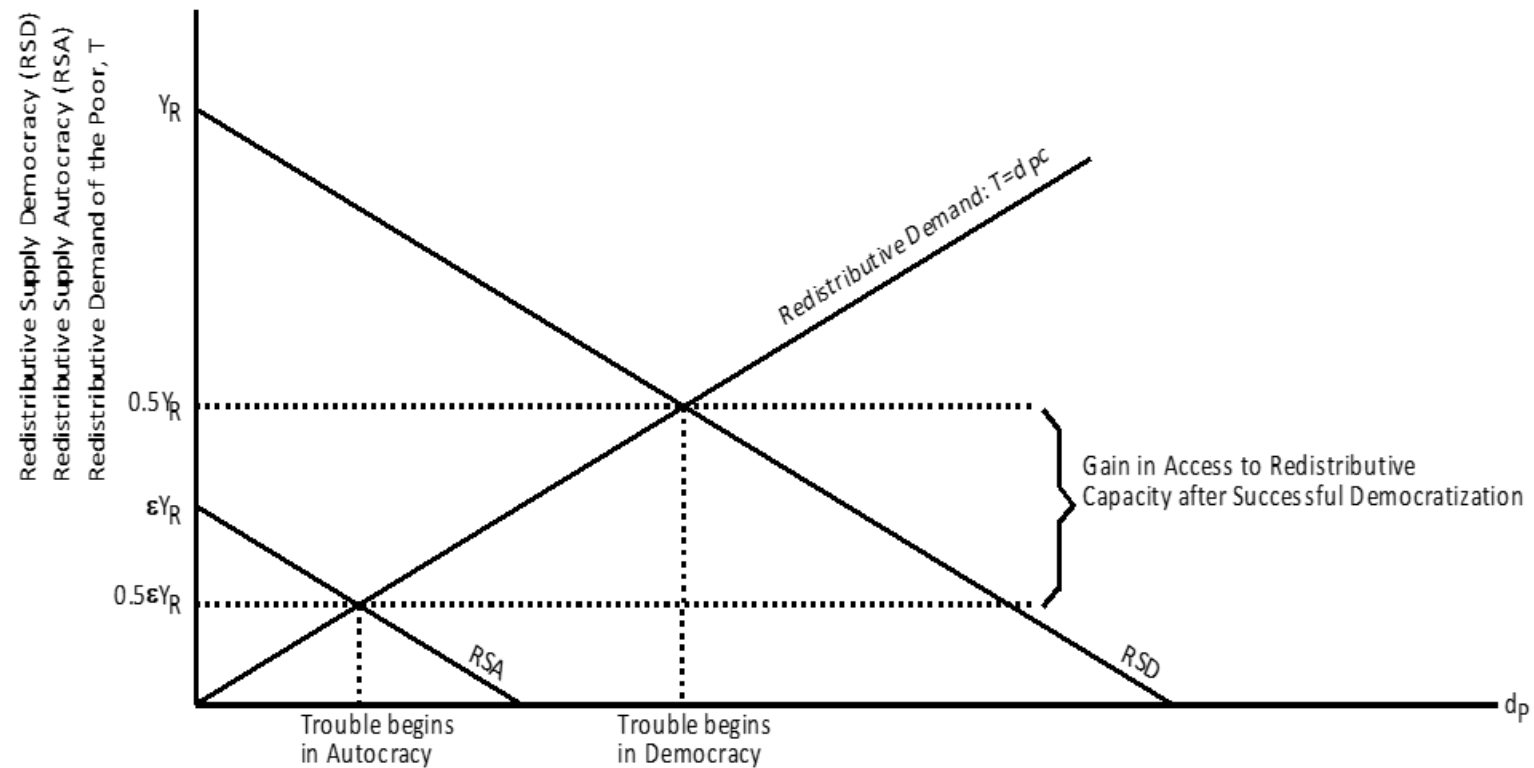
- Food price inflation increases the redistributive demand of the poor.
- Deprivation of these basic human needs leads to trouble in the form of uprisings, food riots and the like in both authoritarian and democratic regimes.
- Food prices are a plausible source of political instability. Thus, food insecurity is a plausible source of conflict.

HUNGER AND ANGER

- How do democracies and autocracies respond to rising food prices?
 - Authoritarian regimes must match the redistribution that the poor would obtain in a democracy to prevent an uprising.
- Interpreting authoritarian regimes as the rule of a faction of the rich, suggests that
 - food price inflation is both a threat to democracies and autocracies,
 - food price inflation is more of a threat to autocracies than to democracies, and
 - food price inflation is more of a threat to autocracies that are more factionalized.

AUTOCRACIES AND DEMOCRACIES

- Thus, the poor under autocracy gain from a democratic transition.



SUMMARY

- How do democracies and autocracies respond to rising food prices?
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COMPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

- Marktanner, M., & Merkel, A. (2019). Hunger And Anger In Autocracies And Democracies. *International Journal of Development and Conflict*, 9(1), 1.

EXERCISE

- Against the background of this module, examine the case of Venezuela.
 - What triggered the uprisings in Venezuela in 2014? Think locally and globally.
- Write an essay, including appropriate definitions and models from this course.

SOURCES

Marktanner, M., & Merkel, A. (2019). Hunger And Anger In Autocracies And Democracies. *International Journal of Development and Conflict*, 9(1), 1.