Seminar: Louie Rivers

Presenter:
Louie Rivers, North Carolina State University

Time of Event:
Tuesday, November 7, 2017 - 11:00

Location:
National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC)
1 Park Place, Suite 300
Annapolis, MD 21401

Modeling Food Security in West Africa: A Social Sciences Perspective

Seminar presented by Louie Rivers, Professor of Forestry and Environmental Resources at North Carolina State University.

Despite recent gains in global agricultural productivity; sustained, equitable, and stable access to food continues to be a concern in the Sub-Saharan region. This issue is even more pressing when combined with climate change, reoccurring hunger, and volatile humanitarian relief that can undermine the vulnerable livelihood of affected people. Food security is a complex problem that involves many stakeholders (e.g., families, tribes, NGOs, farmers, and governments) across different spatial scales (e.g., individual, local, regional, and continental), and within different contexts (e.g., social, economic, political, cultural, and natural). Consequently, this project uses modeling: [1] to understand the key elements of the food system, [2] to explain food insecurity, and [3] to provide tools for long-term policy-making for improved food availability, access, and stability. This project will enhance understanding of the critical societal problem of food security and will communicate potential solutions to decision makers by developing tools that synthesize qualitative and quantitative information from geography, sociology, decision science, and sustainability science as well as cross-disciplinary knowledge on food insecurity. To this end, the investigators will develop and test a collection of small and independent models used to describe and understand different aspects of the food system. This presentation focuses on the mental models developed by the research team. Mental models are a modeling technique/conceptual framework developed in cognitive psychology to examine complex systems. This modeling approach is used to examine farmer’s perspective on food security.

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