WN *Update*

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Development. Climate

Voices prophesying food war

Access June 2011 Editorial on food insecurity and food wars here
Access June 2011 Claudio Schuftan on food insecurity and food wars here
Access October 2014 Naomi Klein, Tony McMichael, Colin Butler on climate here
Access this issue Brooke Aksnes et al on Visions for this century here



Tunis, 2011. Street fighting that ignited riots, uprisings and civil war in North Africa began with mass protests against food insecurity, including sharp rises in bread prices. Revolutions start this way

The Update team reports:

'Why the next world war will be fought over food'. This end-of-year headline has been repeated by many media sources. Its source is not anti-capitalist rabble-rousers, but that bastion of big business, *Fortune* magazine, one of the *Time-Life-Fortune* empire, edited by a former deputy editor of the *Wall Street Journal*. Founder Henry Luce believed that his journals were in the business of making as well as recording history. The headline has some traction. Riots in Paris in 1789 over the price of bread sparked the French Revolution. Similarly, the protests and street fighting in North Africa as from 2011 that escalated and led to the overthrow of governments in Tunis, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, and civil war in Syria, have in part been caused by popular outrage at rises and fluctuations in the prices of staple foods.



Damascus, 2014. The line for food aid supplied by the UN Relief and Works Agency in a great city large parts of which have now been destroyed by civil war, along with basic food supply infrastructure

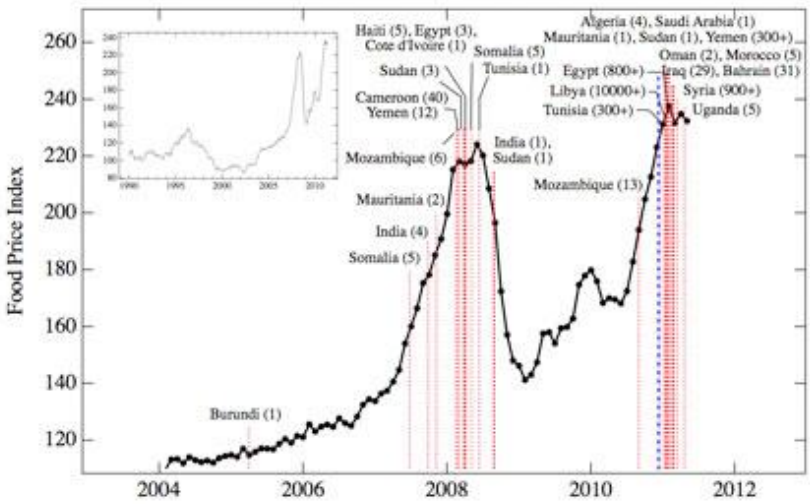
Justification for the vivid *Fortune* headline was given in the story by Usha Haley, director of the Robbins Center for Global Business and Strategy at the University of West Virginia, US, who has lived and worked in Mexico, Singapore, Australia, China, India, Vietnam and Russia, an authority on business and trade in and from China. What she actually said was 'The food scarcity problem is serious. I think the next world wars could be fought over resources like food and water'.

This not-quite as vivid statement does not indicate what is causing 'food scarcity'. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change chair Rajendra Pachauri and the World Bank president Jim Yong Kim explained, at the end of last March. The then new IPCC report, summarised in *The Guardian* in its feature 'Climate change a threat to security, food and humankind', draws a line

> Connecting climate change to food scarcity, and conflict. The report said climate change had already cut into the global food supply. Global crop yields were beginning to decline – especially for wheat – raising doubts as to whether production could keep up with population growth. The report also connected climate change to rising food prices and political instability, for instance the riots in Asia and Africa after food price shocks in 2008. Climate change posed a threat to global food stocks, and to human security, the blockbuster report said. 'Nobody on this planet is going to be untouched by the impacts of climate change', said Rajendra Pachauri,

Commenting, Jim Yong Kim said

> Battles over water and food will erupt within the next five to 10 years as a result of climate change. The water issue is critically related to climate change. People say that carbon is the currency of climate change, water is the teeth. Fights over water and food are going to be the most significant direct impacts of climate change



This graph plots rises in food prices (solid line) shown over time, against multiple food riots and uprisings between 2008 and 2011 in countries in Asia and Africa. Price doubling is highly predictive

These statements by eminent and influential executives are not just common sense guesses. Work done by the New England Complex Systems Institute in Cambridge, Mass, USA, summarised in the graph above, shows powerful correlations between food price rises – in part pushed up by scarcity caused by climate change – and civil unrest, in many African and Asian countries. Doubling in price, causing further scarcity and insecurity, is strongly predictive of riots and uprisings. This evidence is clear enough to impress the World Bank, as shown in Box 1, below.

Box 1

The World Bank on climate and food

Extracted from Sydney Morning Herald news feature 'Climate change may disrupt global food system within a decade, World Bank says', 27 August 2014.



The world is headed 'down a dangerous path' with disruption of the food system possible within a decade as climate change undermines nations' ability to feed themselves, according to Rachel Kyte (above), World Bank Group Vice President and special envoy for climate change. Increased greenhouse gas emissions from livestock as well as land clearing will make farming more marginal in many regions, especially in developing nations, said Rachel Kyte. 'The challenges from waste to warming, spurred on by a growing population with a rising middle-class hunger for meat, are leading us down a dangerous path', she told the Crawford Fund 2014 annual conference in Canberra. 'Unless we chart a new course, we will find ourselves staring volatility and disruption in the food system in the face, not in 2050, not in 2014, but potentially within the next decade'.



Mediterranean Sea, 2014. Climate change, drought, speculation in food, riots and uprisings, cause mass migration to safer countries. This boat full of refugees from Africa was heading towards Italy

As well as climate change causing drought and thus flight from rural areas into cities, two other predictive factors are conversion of food crops into ethanol, and also speculation in food futures, liable to cause wild fluctuations in price.

Interviewed by *Fortune,* Stephen Scanlan of the department of sociology at Ohio University, US, says: 'We need a shift in the way we address poverty and inequality in the world. There should be a reframing of food as a fundamental human right in a way that governments actually stand by.' But global food supplies are at the mercy of some nations seeking to feed their own populations at the expense of others, explains Usha Haley. 'China is the largest purchaser of farmland in the world. They do this to acquire resources. They have a huge gap between what they produce and what they use.'

'What concerns us is biofuel expansion,' says Kristin Sundell of ActionAid, also interviewed by *Fortune.* 'We've seen a 50 per cent expansion in recent years in using crops like sugar, corn and soy to create fuels for gas tanks, and that's taking away food crops from people and making what there is more expensive'. She adds that land-grabbing by agriculture corporations in impoverished countries is forcing local growers out of business. Farmers who do have land in areas like East Africa often face a Faustian bargain, says Scott Ickes of the department of public health and nutrition at the College of William & Mary, Virginia, US. 'Farmers have to choose between growing specialty cash crops like cocoa, tea and coffee, or food staples. They usually pick the cash crops'.

The World Bank claims that by 2050, 50 per cent more food than now needs to be produced. 'The main way that most people will experience climate change is through the impact on food: the food they eat, the price they pay for it, and the availability and choice that they have' says Tim Gore, head of food policy and climate change for Oxfam.



Islamabad, Pakistan, 2012. People siphoning water from a truck. Sources of water from rivers and wells are drying up throughout the sub-continent. Rates of farmer suicides are very high in India

Lester Brown of the Earth Policy Research Center in Washington DC, writing for *Foreign Policy* at the time of the conflagration of uprisings in North Africa, points out that food shortages have caused civilisations to collapse throughout history, and that rational governance at all times has normally included assurance of stable prices and supplies of staple foods such as grains and legumes. He says:

> We are now so close to the edge that a breakdown in the food system could come at any time. Consider if the 2010 heat wave centered in Moscow had instead been centered in Chicago. There would have been chaos in world grain markets. Grain prices would have climbed off the charts. Some grain-exporting countries, trying to hold down domestic food prices, would have restricted or even banned exports. The TV news would have been dominated not by hundreds of fires in the Russian countryside, but by footage of food riots in low-income grain-importing countries and reports of governments falling as hunger spread out of control. With governments toppling and confidence in the world grain market shattered, the global economy could start to unravel.

And now? He says 'Our food production systems are unsustainable and toxic to the ecology. And they are practically certain to fail as ever-rising food demands far outsize falling production. Then what?' Speaking to *The Guardian* Rachel Kyte said:

> There is anger, and how it's going to get manifested I don't know. But if people feel that the policy response to climate is cutting off their options for the future and cutting off their kids' options for the future, I think people will get really angry.

Public health and nutrition professionals living in privileged situations may also become angry. Unlike people subsisting in impoverished communities, they can now consider how best to take effective actions, in their own work, and also in support of public interest civil society organisations and social movements.

The Update team. Voices prophesying food war. [Development. Climate] [Update]. World Nutrition January-February 2015, ***6****, 1-2, 11-15*



WN *Hot stuff. Public health action*

How far to go?

Access December 2014 Colin Butler on climate – we have been warned, here
Access ANZ JPH editorial by Boyd Swinburn and Michael Moore here



Colin Butler under arrest, having chained himself to the front gate of the Maules Creek coal mine, now being constructed at a cost of $A670 million as part of Australia's policy to increase use of coal

The Update team reports:

Two separate actions taken in Australia by *WN* regular contributors and family members challenge all who work in public health and nutrition to think about the nature and limits of their social responsibility. The actors are Boyd Swinburn of Deakin University, Melbourne and the University of Auckland, and Colin Butler of the University of Canberra.

Time for action

With Michael Moore, chief executive of the Public Health Association of Australia, Boyd has published *an impassioned call for integrity* in public policy-making. This reflects the view of many scholars and advocates of public health that the current Australian government's dealings with conflicted industry are corrupt:

> A blanket of suppression is insidiously descending upon the voices for public health. Transnational corporations are pulling down on one side of the blanket to quieten the access, and blocking funding… while unfortunately some governments are pulling down on the other side. There has been an escalation of government efforts to control public health information and messages. A 2006 survey of Australian public health academics documented 142 suppression events among 302 responding academics… Methods of suppression included: blocking or delaying publication, sanitising reports, denying data…

'It seems the original Big Tobacco "handbook of dirty tricks" to undermine public health has been widely adopted and enriched by other "disease vectors", *Big Alcohol* and *Big Junk Food*.', say Boyd and Michael, and they propose a series of strong committed actions that public health professionals can take.

Time for direct action

As can be seen in above, Colin Butler has gone further. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change contributor, his findings as a scientist emphasise the impact of climate on food systems, food security and world health. Together with other protestors including religious leaders and former Australian Rugby Union captain David Pocock, he has blocked access to the Maules Creek coal mine, owned by Whitehaven Coal, now being constructed at a cost of $A670 million to increase Australia's use and export of coal, chained himself to the gates of a coal-loading facility, and been arrested and manhandled. He has been warned by the police that the maximum penalty for actions of trespass including civil disobedience is 7 years in prison and that he faces a fine of $A40,000 to be paid to the mine. Others advise him that this is a bluff designed to intimidate. He says

> Conventional academic actions - papers, talks at conferences, editing books, and so on – are not enough to deeply engage with a sufficient number of the Australian community. Civil disobedience is needed, just as it was for the suffragette movement, or to drive the British out of India.

In further testimony, widely published in Australia and the international media, he has stated his commitment to non-violent civil disobedience, in the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi and, within the environmental movement, of Greenpeace:

> I went there to get arrested as a protest to the coal exports by Australia. I've just reached the point of utter frustration and I think we need civil disobedience about climate change. It's getting worse. The evidence for climate change is getting stronger and yet instead of moving away from coal exports [Australia] is just advocating it. It's the moral equivalent of selling heroin and saying, 'It's not my fault I'm selling heroin, it's the people who use it'. We profit from selling something we know poisons the future.

In statement that resonates with those of Boyd Swinburn and Michael Moore, he sees the coal industry now as similar to the tobacco industry when under threat for selling a toxic product:

> They're selling a substance we know is toxic, they're making an awful lot of money out of it, they're employing public relations companies to obscure their message, and they got the Prime Minister of our country to say 'coal is good for humanity', which is an idiotic statement, because it depends on the dose. Too much of it will poison us.

Civil disobedience can work. Between August and early December the share price of Whitehaven Coal dropped from $A2.03 to $A1.30.

The Update team. Public health action. How far to go?
[Hot stuff] Update. World Nutrition January-February 2015, ***6,*** *1-2, 16-17*

WN *Update*



WN *Development. WHO Executive Board*
New Era Resolution

Access November 2014 Update on International Conference on Nutrition here
Access December 2014 Update on International Conference on Nutrition here
Access Resolution 136/CONF.X/for 2015 WHO Executive Board meeting here

The Update team reports:

The United Nations and all its member states, and indeed all the people of the whole world, now confront an era of unique menace, to the human species, the living and physical world, and the biosphere. Last November the UN International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) was held in Rome. Its official outcome documents in draft and as approved were generally thought by independent observers to be grossly inadequate, amounting to a backward step and a disservice to public health with all this implies now at a time of gross inequities and destruction of public services.

By contrast, the unofficial outcome documents drafted and prepared by public interest civil society organisations and social movements on behalf of the world's people, addressing the immediate new era of 2016-2030, are seen by those 'outside the system' as identifying the real issues that have to be faced, and as proposing essential rational and feasible policies and actions. Details, with relevant documents, published in *World Nutrition* last November and December, are accessible above.

Box 1

The ICN official outcome documents

The two official outcome documents of ICN were its *Rome Declaration* and *Framework for Action*. The *Declaration* recognised that eliminating malnutrition requires cross-sectoral collaboration, including in agriculture and trade. But there was no reference to dumping of agricultural commodities, or to transnational corporation control of food systems, or to food sovereignty. It included little firm direction towards real commitments by member states. The *Framework for Action* had a list of 60 recommendations, all non-binding. Some recommendations, such as on human rights, were merely menus for member states to work from. Neither document was opened for discussion during the ICN plenary. They were approved by acclamation in 15 seconds during the opening plenary, despite the fact that, in the search of consensus, member states from the global South were pressed into conceding language that rendered initially relatively purposeful statements vague and bland.

Public interest civil society organisations and social movements strongly, persistently and methodically engaged in the ICN process before and during the conference held in Rome. They represent very many general and specific interests. But the importance and urgency of the issues, the inadequacy of the official documents in draft, and the dilution of successive drafts as a result of pressure from some powerful member States from the global North, all amounted to a powerful unifying force. The great range of organisations serving the public interest and committed to public goods, now speak in harmony.

Attached here is a proposed Resolution that has been circulated on the occasion of the 136th World Health Organization Executive Board meeting, being held in Geneva between 26 January and 3 February. Its originators ask that it be tabled by a Member State. It follows the unofficial ICN Statements and Declarations in reflecting and projecting the real issues. Some, such as the impact of climate change on world water supplies, food systems, and world health, need an altogether more radical response than merely suggested in the ICN official outcome documents. The Resolution is designed to encourage EB member states now, and also for the near future, relevant ministries in all WHO member states whose representatives will participate in the WHO World Health Assembly this coming May.

The World Health Organization member states that are currently Executive Board members are Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Brazil, Chad, China, Croatia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Gambia, Iran (Islamic Republic of). Japan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Namibia, Nepal. Panama, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Surinam. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America.

Box 2

Who is asking

The Resolution here is submitted to the 136th World Health Executive Board (EB) meeting held in Geneva between 26 January and 3 February 2015, and to the delegations of member states represented at the EB. It has been prepared through the *WHO Watch* project and the People's Health Movement and is based on the public interest civil society organisation and social movements statements made at the ICN in Rome, accessible though the links above. .

The People's Health Movement is a global network of organisations working locally, nationally and globally for Health for All. Its basic platform is articulated in the People's Charter for Health, adopted at the first People's Health Assembly in Savar in Bangladesh in December 2000. More can be found at *www.phmovement.org*. PHM is part of a wider network of organisations committed to democratising global health governance, working through the WHO Watch project. More about WHO Watch at: *www.ghwatch.org/who-watch*.

*The Development team. WHO Executive Board. New Era Resolution. [Development] [Update]. World Nutrition January-February 2015, **6,** 1-2, 18-19*



WN *Sick societies. Obesity*

The fix is in



The US is now super-saturated with ultra-processed products, including cola drinks and burgers. Profits, sales of Coca-Cola and McDonald's are beginning to slide. But it's not the end of the world

David Katz writes:

McKinsey & Company recently issued a report on effective means of fighting hyper-endemic obesity in the modern world. Among other things, they concluded that 'implementing an obesity-abatement programme on the required scale will not be easy'. I presume that is intended to be sombre, but the magnitude of understatement makes it almost funny. And sad. No, it will not be easy – not in the world as it is. In the world as it is, forget about fixing obesity, because the fix is in.

We live in a world where adults look on and shrug as multi-coloured marshmallows are marketed to children as part of a complete breakfast. ('What part?' one might constructively wonder.) We live in a world where knowledge that food companies literally engineer food to be as nearly addictive as possible produces no outrage. Perhaps we are all too busy eating to protest.

In the world as it is, fixing obesity will not be easy. But the world could change. As daunting as that may sound, all that is really required is to see things differently.

The power of that – seeing things differently – was famously eulogised by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. In his philosophising about literature in general, and poetry in particular, Aristotle characterized the writer's 'eye for resemblances,' by which he meant the use of simile and metaphor, and the underlying capacity to see similarity in dissimilar, as genius. At the pinnacle of expression, it is surely that -- and beautiful genius into the bargain.

But back to obesity. We could, potentially, fix it – and perhaps even rather easily – if we simply saw things a bit differently. I am staking no claim to genius in these suggestions; just pragmatism.

See obesity like drowning

Obesity need not be a disease to be medically legitimate. Drowning is not a disease, and it suffers not at all for want of legitimacy. Drowning victims are reliably treated as the state-of-the-art allows when they show up in our emergency departments.

Nor does drowning invite fractious debate about personal responsibility. Rather, we tacitly acknowledge by our actions that personal and public responsibility are complementary, and both required. Parents need to watch their children at the pool's edge or beach, and are well advised to teach them to swim. But there are lifeguards just the same. There are fences around pools. We don't focus on the ex-post-facto treatment of drowning. We focus on prevention. Drowning is too common if it happens at all; but it is very much the exception. The rule is prevention, by applying the combined defences born of personally and publicly responsible action.

We are drowning in calories engineered to be irresistible. We are drowning in labour-saving technologies that may be saving labour, but are costing us years from life, and life from years. As with drowning of the more literal variety, the fix is a combination of personal empowerment – the anti-obesity analogous to swimming – and public accountability at the water's edge.

If we treated drowning like obesity, we would have no lifeguards. We would not teach our children to swim. We would allow signs at shores with notorious rip tides to read: 'Come on in, the water's fine!' But if we treated obesity more like drowning, we would tell the truth. We would not market multi-coloured marshmallows to children as part of a good breakfast. We would not wilfully mislead about the perilous currents in the modern food supply. We would not look on passively as an entire population of non-swimmers started wading in over their heads.

Until or unless we choose to see things differently, McKinsey & Company is quite right: fixing obesity won't be easy. That's because the fix is in, and we are all OK with it. We apply the terms 'junk' and 'food' to the very same ingestibles, adopting a 'nudge, nudge, wink, wink' coyness -- even as formerly adult-onset diabetes engulfs our children. We line up for an endless succession of fad diets, while glibly asserting that our entire country runs, essentially, on donuts.

If we treated wealth like health, we would be gullible, indigent, and likely homeless. If we treated drowning like obesity, our emergency rooms couldn't keep up with the demand for resuscitations. But if, instead, we treated obesity like drowning, we could fix what ails us. It might even be easy.

Taken from David Katz's regular blog at www.davidkatzmd.com/

Katz D. The fix is in. Obesity.
[Sick societies] Update. World Nutrition January –February 2015, ***6****, 1-2, 20-21*



Brazilian dietary guidelines

A vision, a paradigm shift – or a war on junk?

Access Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population here
Access Guia Alimentar para a População Brasileira here
Access November 2014 Hagstrom Reports 'Brazil declares war' here
Access November 2014 Euromonitor 'Brazil declares war' here
Access December 2014 Editorial Mark Lawrence on the Brazilian guidelines here
Access December 2014 Update on the Brazilian guidelines here
Access December 2014 Patricia Jaime on the Brazilian guidelines here

The Update team reports:



They love the Guia! From left to right above, Michael Pollan, Marion Nestle, David Ludwig, Kelly Brownell. Robert Lustig, Olivier de Schutter, Jerry Hagstrom. Manufacturers are not happy

The Update team reports:



Michael Pollan and Marion Nestle, both contributors to *WN,* together have over half a million followers. They love the new Brazilian official dietary guidelines. Above is Michael Pollan's Tweet on 'Brazil's official and revolutionary new dietary guidelines'. Michael Pollan sees them as 'revolutionary'. Marion Nestle says the recommendations 'are based on foods, food patterns, and meals, not nutrients'. David Ludwig of Boston Children's Hospital says that the guidelines are 'A

paradigm-shifting vision!'

Accolades pour in. Kelly Brownell, previously of Yale, now dean of public policy at Duke University, writes:

> I am very happy to see these guidelines. I often mention that Brazil is the one country working hard to defend itself against against toxic changes in eating habits by fighting off outside influences and working to protect the native diet. It is wonderful to see this as part of the national dietary guidelines.

Robert Lustig of the University of California at San Francisco, and scourge of sugar and syrup as contained in ultra-processed products, writes:

> Congratulations on the Brazil dietary guidelines! I have been raving to everyone here that the U.S. needs to follow Brazil's lead, and stop talking about nutrients, and start talking about food! This is a landmark document. I cannot say enough for the leadership that you all have showed.

Olivier de Schutter, former UN special rapporteur on the right to food, writes

> I made this the Brazilian *Guia* the central message of my final address as UN Special Rapporteur in June. Now we must work towards encouraging other countries and regions to seek inspiration from the *Guia* in their own nutritional policies. There are two dimensions to this. One is the dissemination of the guide itself; the other is addressing the obstacles to the guide's principles being implemented.

John Cummings, an authority on the gut and on dietary fibre and colon health, writes:

> The Brazilian dietary guidelines are a major triumph as part of the work over many years to promote healthy eating in Brazil and prevent the move to highly processed, high fat, salt and sugar food products that have taken over in the USA. The food-based" focus is exactly the way to go. Many countries could learn from what you have done. I especially like 'the cultural dimensions of foods, meals and eating patterns and promote both personal health and well-being and sustainable food systems'. It is the only way to proceed to integrate nutrition and healthy eating into the overall strategy for conservation and economic reality that we all face as the world's population increases.

In the US two reports were headed 'Brazil declares war'. Both can be accessed in full above. The influential commentator Jerry Hagstrom writes: 'Brazil new guidelines mark the first time a developing country has tried to stop a change in consumer behavior before junk food dominates – as it does in America.'. Simone Baroke, in a report for the industry resource Euromonitor, instead advises Big Food corporations to challenge the Guidelines. 'Companies will have a very hard time indeed educating consumers against explicit advice emanating from their own government. The only way to ameliorate the situation is for the industry and food scientists to engage with the Brazilian government in order to bring about a reconsideration of its rigid black-and-white approach to healthy eating'. Watch this space…

*The Update team. Brazilian dietary guidelines. A vision, a paradigm shift – or a war on junk? [Update]. World Nutrition January-February 2015, **6**, 1-2, 22-23*



WN *Big Food Watch*

Cola-colonialism



Here is historian Bartow Elmore of the University of Alabama, at home in the big country. His first book Citizen Coke: The Making of Coca-Cola Capitalism, has recently been published in the US

A Big Food Watch team review:

Asa Griggs Candler (1851-1929) of Atlanta, Georgia, struck liquid gold when he bought the rights to Coca-Cola in 1888 for $US 550. He marketed it in the US as brain tonic. Robert Winship Woodruff (1889-1985) also from Atlanta, led a syndicate that bought the business in 1923. He controlled the company for six decades, and made it the leading branded product in the world. In Atlanta a legacy is Emory University, endowed with what became hundreds of millions of dollars.

As now told by Bartow Elmore (above) in his first book *Citizen Coke. The Making of Coca-Cola Capitalism,* the result has been the most powerful export of 'the American way of life', commonly called Coca-colonialism. *Citizen Coke* is recommended to us by Michael Pollan as 'an indispensible resource'. Coke chronicler Mark Prendergrast, author of *For God, Country, and Coca-Cola*, says:

> A fascinating, thought-provoking approach to Coca-Cola history through the drink's primary ingredients—water, sugar, high-fructose corn syrup, coca leaf, caffeine—and the glass, plastic, and aluminum that contain them

Vandana Shiva, Indian environmentalist and ecologist, author of *Stolen Harvest. The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*, says:

> *Citizen Coke* is a brilliant analysis of Coke's empire in ecological, economic, and social terms. It allows us to see an economy based on partnerships between governments and corporations like Coca-Cola. It makes us conscious of the giant ecological footprint of the Real Thing, which impacts the real lives of real people. If you want a deeper understanding of our world today, read *Citizen Coke.*



Coke giants Asa Candler and Robert Woodruff (centre) who built up the product and made it the world's best-known brand, with (left and right) two of the revealing images that gave Coke glamour

Lean and mean

How did Coca-Cola build a global empire by selling a low-price concoction of mostly sugar, water, and caffeine, with a 'magic mix' of flavours? The easy answer is advertising. But as *Citizen Coke* shows, the real formula to Coke's success has always been its strategy to offload costs and risks onto suppliers, franchisees, and the government. For most of its history the corporation owned no bottling plants, no water sources, no sugarcane plantations or corn fields. It took advantage of public goods like cheap municipal water. Its huge appetite for its ingredients gave it colossal influence over suppliers and local, state and national politicians. This was Coca-Cola capitalism. The Coke™ brand is now valued at $US 80 billion.

In *Citizen Coke*, Bartow Elmore explores Coca-Cola through its ingredients, showing how the corporation secured massive quantities of coca leaf, caffeine, sugar, and other inputs. Asa Candler, its first great owner, turned what had been a local Atlanta soda-fountain operation into a national empire. 'Boss' Robert Woodruff made the corporation global, and struck deals with other corporations such as Hershey and Monsanto. These men, and the executives that surrounded them and that followed them, have always been careful to be seen as responsible citizens, bringing jobs and development at first to the US and then to every corner of the globe. Their campaign to make Coke loved has also succeeded: it has almost 75 million Facebook fans.

Alongside Coca-Cola's recent public investments in water purification infrastructure, especially in Africa, it has also built big bottling plants in dangerously arid regions. Its annual use of many billions of gallons of water, strain a scarce global resource. Its use of cheap because subsidised high-fructose corn syrup threaten public health. Says Ted Steinberg, author of *Gotham Unbound. The Ecological History of Greater New York:*

> Coca-Cola is one of the most powerful economic institutions of our time, but its social and ecological impacts remain understudied. *[In Citizen Coke]* corporate capitalism gets the attention it deserves in a careful dissection of the material underpinnings of the world's most valuable brand. *Citizen Coke* will cause you to drink less and think more.

Big Food Watch team. Coca-colonialism.
[Big Food Watch] Update. World Nutrition January-February 2015, ***6,*** *1-2, 24-25*



Big Drink Watch

Lager empires



German beer in the form of lager has conquered the New World. Above, original products and as recreated in the US and Latin America. Below is Jeffrey Pilcher of Toronto. scholar and connoisseur

Toronto, Canada. Don Campbell reports:

It isn't just Coke and Pepsi that are world drink brands. Nearly every culture around the world includes some form of alcoholic drink. From Mexican *pulque* to Peruvian *chi cha*, or Indian palm toddy to African sorghum beer, the variety of taste, texture and aroma are as diverse as the societies that concocted them and the local ingredients from which they are made. But a rather bland type of German beer, known popularly as lager, now manufactured by a small number of transnational corporations that have taken over other breweries, has come to dominate the world markets for lower-alcohol drinks. Wine and liquor are other stories.

'Lager is so pervasive that it provides us with an ideal way in which to explain the modern world' says University of Toronto's Jeffrey Pilcher (above), who has discovered how beer, originally European, has been exported to and settled in the whole world in the past 200 years. He teaches a course on the topic within the university's department of historical and cultural studies and its Culinaria initiative. He is an expert in the emerging field of food history, with a special interest in the food culture of Mexico, and is making his new work into a new book. He says that the globalisation of beer is part of the story of 19th century European empires and what immigrants brought with them to other continents.

Box 1

Food – and beer – culture

Jeffrey Pitcher of the University of Toronto is author of *Que Vivan los Tamales! Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (1998), *The Sausage Rebellion: Public Health, Private Enterprise and Meat in Mexico City* (1998)., and *Planet Taco: a Global History of Mexican Food* (2012). He is an editor of *Global Food History*, edited the *Oxford Handbook of Food History*, and is editor of a four-volume anthology, *Food History: Critical and Primary Sources* (2014).

Once European brewers worked out how to mass-produce beer as their contribution to the Industrial Revolution, merchants established breweries wherever in the world they settled in search of new thirsty markets. It was not tepid English ales, but chilled German lagers that attracted customers, most of all in hot and tropical climates. The flood of central European immigrants to the US following the 1848 European revolutions created a brewing revolution in locations like Milwaukee, St. Louis and Cincinnati. Breweries established in these cities, such as Pabst and Schlitz (above) and Anheuser-Busch and Miller, became among the biggest in the world. Brewers emigrating to Latin America established other leading brands, like Bohemia (above) and Antarctica in Brazil, Dos Equis in Mexico, and Cusqueña in Peru.

'In many instances beer represented modernity, but it also fit well into traditional societies that were adopting western tastes' says Jeffrey Pilcher. He points to the German-style beer gardens in China, Japanese adoption of European brewing techniques during the Meiji restoration, and the proliferation of breweries in European colonies, as examples of how Western taste in beer was being adopted around the world. 'The thing with lager is that it's relatively bland. In many ways that blandness makes it the taste of modernity', he says. 'I will be examining how certain tastes came to represent modernity'. Sampling also, it seems. Cheers!

Campbell D. Lager empires
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How to respond

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