Duffield (1990) Absolute Distress - Structural Causes of Hunger in Sudan

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It's a shame you didn't submit this in time to have the citation style checked by Harrison—it is in the wrong format.

In this article Duffield discusses and assesses the problems that are leading to an extreme scarcity of food in Sudan. The previously believed accepted idea was that African countries and their food insecurity that comes with them revolved around the idea that many African countries contain have subsistence economies that are affected by outside factors such as war or drought. (Duffield 1990) Duffield discusses notes that Sudan has begun to develop food insecurity has a recurring problem that has not been solved and continues to get worse (this sentence is awkward and needs to be restructured). He believes that the main factors in this recurring problem of food insecurity stem from the efforts of the Sudanese government to switch to a market economy as well as the ever present influence of warfare.

Duffield delves into the idea that one of the biggest problems causing causes of food insecurity in Sudan is the switch from a subsistence farming economy practiced by much of the Sudanese population to a market economy that has mechanized most of the agrarian market. This has caused wealthy owners to move much of the rural Sudanese off their land forcing them to practice either a much more naturally environmentally destructive form of subsistence farming that leads to famine and infertile lands or force them to work for the wealthy owners of farms that pay a wage that cannot pay for a suitable amount of food run-on sentence please rework. I do think, however, that Duffield has to look into the fact that Sudan is trying to become more of a modern economy and move away from a subsistence economy, even if the means in which this is being accomplished is not favorable to some of Sudan's population. You are equating modernity with a particular kind of economy. Why can't subsistence farming also be modern?

Another contribution Duffield believes that has added to the food insecurity crisis in Sudan is the constant warfare that has plagued the nation. Sudan has, up until 2005, been involved in a violent civil war between factions in the South and the government in the North. The war caused many of the Sudanese people to flee and seek refuge in places where they could find food. When this article was written the war was still raging between these two sides and he believed that the North would eventually overpower the South and take advantage of the resources that are present in the southern part of the country. Though his prediction turned out incorrect many of his projected outcomes turned out true. Much of the southern Sudan's population fled to the north and occupied the lowest rung of the social class ladder adding to the already present poor that could not afford food. (Duffield 1990) This is an excellent point that Duffield brings to the table. Much of the food insecurity in present day Sudan is located in the southern parts of the country due to the lack of an effective government and the aftermaths of the war.

A final point that Duffield brings up is the efforts of NGO's and their attempts at bringing food security to poor parts of Sudan. The biggest problem Duffield believes is that much of the available help that NGO's are trying to bring to these parts of the country are being influenced by corruption and ineffective parts of the transportation infrastructure. In some cases "...only an insignificant 20 percent (of food aid) reached its destination."(Duffield 1990:9)

Though this article was written in 1990 many of Duffield's ideas remain causes of the food insecurity crisis in Sudan. I do believe that especially with the new government being instituted in Southern Sudan that the food crisis will not improve but in fact worsen if no form of food aid infrastructure is put in place as well as the idea that much of the northern part of Sudan food insecurity has come from displaced Southern Sudanese who do not have any work a nother run-on sentence. Northern Sudan has improved its food insecurity somewhat in comparison to Southern Sudan but it still faces this problem.