



Finnish Citizens' Concerns about Global Food Security and Agri-Environmental Issues

BACKGROUND

- The global population growth and economic growth of large developing nations increase the global demand for food.
- Sufficiency of food is a challenge especially in developing countries.
- Since the global arable land and water resources are limited, it is crucial that agricultural production is sustainable and takes environment into account.
- Citizens are important indicators of the state of food security.
➡ It is important to examine citizens' views related to sustainability and food security not only in developing countries but also in developed ones.

OBJECTIVES

The research questions are:

- 1) **What are the global food security and agri-environmental dimensions the Finnish citizens are most concerned about?**
- 2) **Which personal factors are connected to specific concerns?**

METHODS

- The study is based on quantitative survey data set (n=1,623).
- The research data was collected via nationwide mail survey in 2007 by the National Consumer Research Center of Finland.
- A four-point Likert scale from no cause for concern (1) to extremely worrying (4) was used to determine the citizens' concerns.
- Explanatory factor analysis was conducted to identify different latent components of concern.
- Cluster analysis was applied to identify groups of homogeneous citizens with regard to concern of the respondents.

RESULTS

- Principal component analysis resulted in a solution of two components:
Food security and agri-environmental dimension (e.g., environmental effects of food production, loss of biodiversity due to agriculture, global adequacy of food*) and **risk dimension** (use of gene technology*, increase in food import, availability of food in crisis*) *very worrying
- The components explain 59,4 % of the total variance

A cluster analysis of the respondents produced **four clusters**:

GENERALLY CONCERNED

- Middle-aged or over 64-year-old woman
- Worried about the environmental effects of food production and animal welfare
- Very concerned about gene technology in food production
- Favours domestic food

CONCERNED ABOUT FOOD SECURITY AND BIODIVERSITY

- Under 34-year-old woman from Southern Finland
- Academically educated and lives in a city
- Vegetarian and concerned about environmental effects of food production and global adequacy of food

RISK-CONCERNED

- Middle-aged man from Eastern Finland
- A blue-collar worker from rural area or a small town
- Concerned about increase in food imports and adequacy of food in crisis
- Favours domestic food

NOT CONCERNED

- Under 34-year-old man
- Well-paid or unemployed
- Prefers cheap food, country of origin not important

CONCLUSIONS

- Finnish citizens are concerned about global food security if it might have affect on their own safety and daily adequacy of food (e.g., use of gene technology, adequacy of food in crisis, increase in imports) (Partio et al. 2014).
- On the other hand, citizens weren't that worried about the loss of biodiversity due to agriculture or the impacts of food production on the climate change. Citizens, however, consider the state of environment in Finland and its surroundings very important (e.g., EC 2014).
- Citizen clusters differed by their demographic, economic, attitudinal and

consumer profiles.

- Women, and especially the younger ones living in the cities, are concerned about global food security and agri-environmental issues. They also take environment into account in their consumer behaviour.

Literature

European Commission (EC). 2014. Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment. Special Eurobarometer 416. 161 p.

Partio, H., Pouta, E. & Kuhmonen, T. 2014. Finnish citizens concerns about various dimensions of agricultural policy. In: European Association of Agricultural Economists, 2014 International Congress. 6 p.