

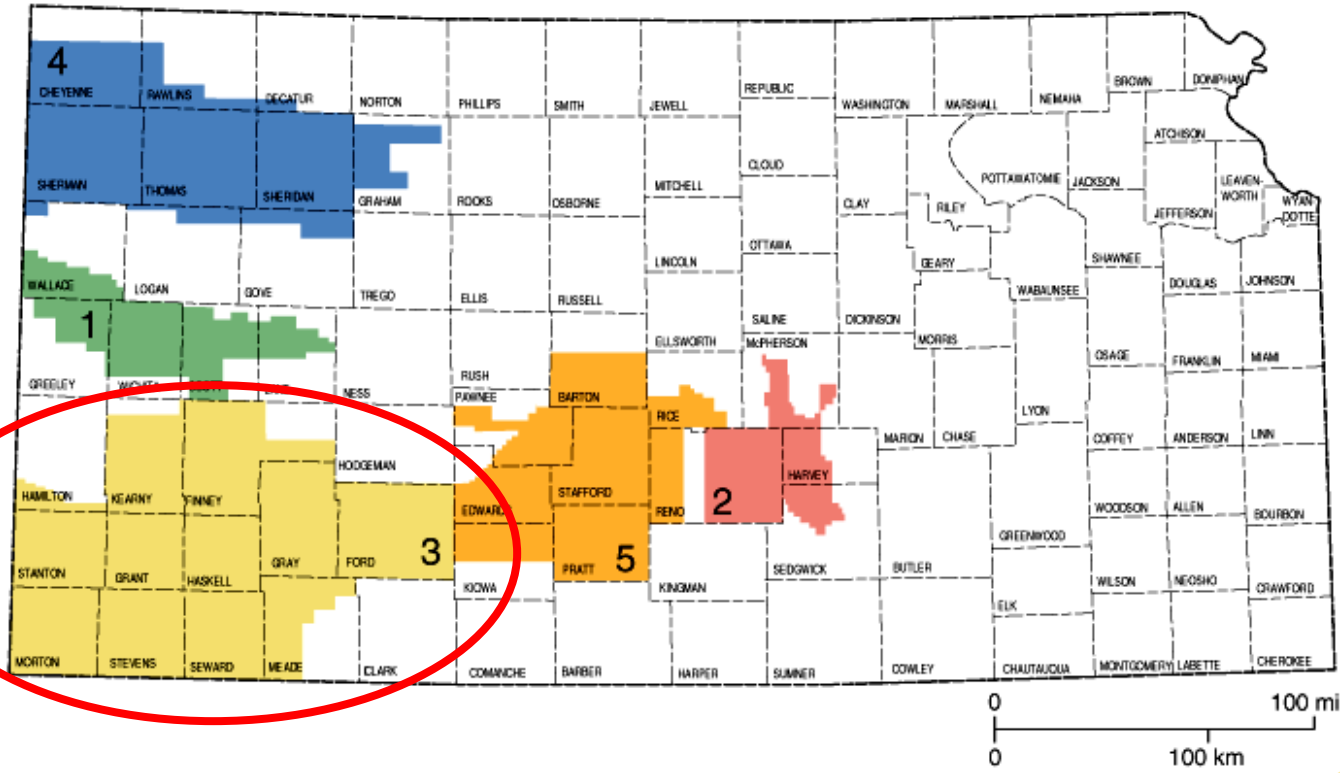
Water Becomes Blood

Southwest Kansas Producers and the Ogallala Aquifer

Benjamin J. Gray
University of Kansas

Background

- Dissertation Research
 - 2014
 - Many developments in water planning and governance.
- Fieldwork
 - Semi-structured interviews with producers
 - Conversations with other agricultural professionals
 - Public meetings
 - Conducted in southwest Kansas GMD3



Motivation

- Why were producers hesitant to adopt conservation measures although they recognized the Ogallala is declining?
- Voices of producers
 - Lots of research, but not many words from producers

Cultural Models

Cultural models are presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared (although not necessarily to the exclusion of other alternative models) by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behavior in it.

Holland and Quinn, 1987

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role in their understanding = used for interpretation

widely shared = cultural

taken-for-granted = assumed

Competing Individuals Seeking to Control Risk



Individual = Independence

- I own the water that is under the ground that I farm. Now, don't tell me that because you are two miles away that I can't take mine.
- So when people come knocking to ask about how they can help us manage the water, I say, "Well, you never helped me buy that \$350,000 combine."
- Should we be expected to absorb that economic burden of losing it, of giving up that income if that is for the betterment of the whole state? If the whole state, if they benefit, do they have any responsibility in sharing part of that burden?

Competition

- I am not willing to sacrifice my independence for the good of us all.
- We compete mighty hard with each other for land.
- If you are a couple days late getting your wheat cut, your landlord is going to get a stack of letters from other farmers saying they can do better.
- I don't share everything I learned the hard way.

Risk

- I go to Vegas and I like the shows and the dining, people watching and stuff like that. People say that's surprising because look at what you do for a living.
- This is one of those years where I should have told my banker to give me my operating note and I'll go over to Vegas and put it all on red. Then we will know real quick whether we are going to go around again. Why wait and work all summer to know?
- It's a huge gamble in proportions that people don't really understand.

More Risk

Specifically about the condition of water resources

- Play the hand you've been dealt.
- Do your best with the cards in your hand.
- Luck of the draw.



Agriculture Preserves the Past
and Builds the Future

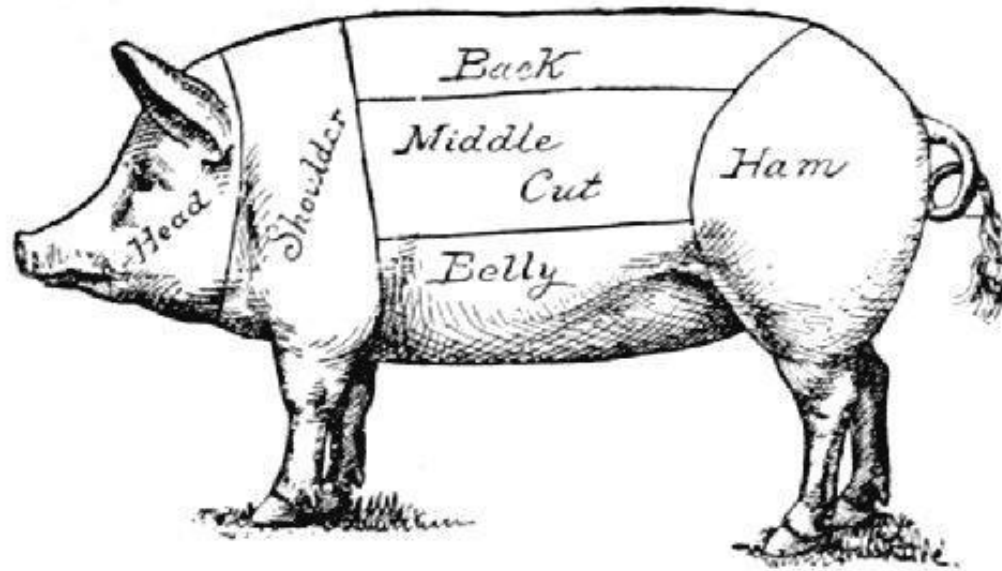
Duty to Family

- We are third generation, we would like to pass on the land in better condition, so we can't let it fail with us.
- I want to pass this on to my son. Don't want to burn up my resources in my generation. For longevity's sake, I want to use water properly.
- Sometimes the tension is between leaving water for your son or taking all the economic value you can today and leaving the money for your son.

Water Becomes Blood



As soon as the legislature wants to save our bacon we need to put the hogs in the shed.



Thank you.

