



Routledge Studies in Modern History

HOW THE WORLD HUNGER PROBLEM WAS NOT SOLVED

Christian Gerlach



How the World Hunger Problem Was Not Solved

The world food crisis (1972–1975) gave rise to new development concepts. To eradicate world hunger, small peasants were supposed to use ‘modern’ inputs like high-yielding seeds, fertilizer, pesticides and irrigation. This would turn subsistence producers into business owners, transform rural areas, invigorate national economies and the crisis-stricken world economy and thus stabilize capitalism.

Together with an in-depth account of the world food crisis, this book analyzes how this global scheme largely failed. It shows its diverse initiators, their reasoning and motives, its political breakthrough, the degrees to which it was implemented globally and nationally in the following decades and its socioeconomic effects in rural areas. Despite internationally coordinated policies and coercive means, the scheme failed on all levels: situation analysis, design, policies, incapable institutions (including big business), implementation and peasants’ responses. Selective realization in certain regions and for certain crops and the appropriation of funds by local elites often aggravated inequality and hunger. Case studies are about Bangladesh, Indonesia, Tanzania and Mali. This book shows limits to global social engineering, imperialism and state control.

It is aimed at students, scholars, activists and non-specialists interested in development and the world food problem.

Christian Gerlach is Professor of History at the University of Bern. His fields of research are mass violence, war and the history of agriculture, food, hunger and development. Among his earlier books is *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century World* (2010).

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfZ	Archiv für Zeitgeschichte, Zurich
Ag. Att.	Agricultural Attaché
AID	See USAID
ANA	National Archive of Australia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BA	German Federal Archives
BAPPENAS	National Planning Board (of Indonesia)
BARD	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BIMAS	Mass Guidance
BP	British Petroleum
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BRI	Indonesian People's Bank
BULOG	National Logistics Organization (of Indonesia)
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CCC	Commodity Credit Corporation
CCM	Party of the Revolution (of Tanzania)
CGFPI	Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment
CGI	Consultative Group on Indonesia
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for the Fight Against Drought in the Sahel
CIRDAP	Centre for Integrated Rural Development in Asia and the Pacific
CMDT	Malian Textile Development Company
CSSR	Czechoslovak Socialist Republic
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of OECD)
DDT	Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane
DM	German Marks (of the FRG)
DR	Due Reports
EC	European Community
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the UN
ECU	European Currency Unit (of the EC)

EDF	European Development Fund (of the EEC/EC)
EEC	European Economic Community
EPW	Economic and Political Weekly
ERS	Economic Research Service (in the USDA)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GAD	Gender and Development
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDR	German Democratic Republic
HWWA	Hamburger Weltwirtschaftsarchiv
HYVs	High-Yielding Varieties
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICD	Industry Council for Development
ICI	Imperial Chemical Industries
ICP	Industry-Cooperative Programme (of FAO)
ICRISAT	International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
IDA	International Development Association
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFAP	International Federation of Agricultural Producers
IFDC	International Fertilizer Development Center
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IFSS	International Fertilizer Supply Scheme
IGGI	International Group on Indonesia
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMC	International Minerals and Chemicals
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INMAS	Mass Intensification
IRD	Integrated Rural Development
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
KUD	Village Cooperatives
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LNOR	Liaison Office in North America (of FAO)
LUNO	Liaison Office at the United Nations Organization (of FAO)
MfAA	Foreign Ministry (of the GDR)
NACLA	North American Congress on Latin America
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration (USA)
NASA	National Space Agency
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NL	Nachlass (Papers of)
NMC	National Milling Corporation (of Tanzania)
NMP	National Maize Programme (of Tanzania)
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance

OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OMB	Office of Management and Budget (USA)
OPAM	Authority for Mali's Agricultural Products
OPEC	Organization of Petrol Exporting Countries
OSRO	Office for the Sahelian Relief Operation
PA AA	Political Archive of the Foreign Office (FRG)
PKI	Communist Party of Indonesia
PRC	People's Republic of China
RAFE	Regional Office for the Far East (of FAO)
REUR	Regional Office for Europe (of FAO)
RG	Record Group
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SOFA	The State of Food and Agriculture (FAO Publication)
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TNCs	Transnational Corporations
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNCTNC	United Nations Center on Transnational Corporations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNROB	United Nations Relief Organization in Bangladesh
UNROD	United Nations Relief Organization in Dacca
US, USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WCARRD	World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
WFC	World Food Council
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development

1 Introduction

On 16 October 2009, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Senegalese Jacques Diouf, warned in an address on World Food Day of what became known as the global food crisis. “The current crisis is unprecedented in many ways”, he said. After a rapid global increase in 2007–2008, staple food prices had remained high, and prices of agricultural inputs (and energy) rose as well. “[T]his crisis is unprecedented”, he reiterated, in a world more commercially and financially integrated than earlier. The causes of the crisis were low agricultural productivity, high population growth and limited land and water. As a solution, Diouf called for more “investment in agriculture” and acknowledged among “encouraging signals” a “shift in policy in favour of increased production by smallholders in food deficit developing countries”.¹

Diouf was profoundly wrong. The 2007–2010 crisis closely resembled an earlier one, the so-called ‘world food crisis’ of 1972–1975. Then, too, there had been a sudden peacetime rise in the prices of grain, technical inputs and oil worldwide that lasted for several years, which was closely connected to transnational economic relations and said to have been brought about by low production and population pressure. As then, in 2008, the FAO warned of skyrocketing costs for poor countries’ food imports.² Most importantly, the remedies offered in the 1970s – pursued for almost two decades and in some ways never abandoned – were the same: more investment in the agriculture of non-industrialized countries with an emphasis on raising the productivity of small agriculturalists. After 2008, as in the 1970s, many governments of industrialized countries, the ‘World Bank’, the Rockefeller Foundation and even critical experts shared these goals. The Gates Foundation that did not exist in the 1970s was a late joiner.³

What we can learn from the story behind Diouf’s address is, to begin with, that history books may be good for something. Apparently, the institutional memory of some of the development agencies involved was short and selective, and their

1 Address by the Director-General at the World Food Day Ceremony, Rome, 16 October 2009, www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/35350/code (accessed 29 September 2017).

2 “Droht eine globale Katastrophe?” in: *Tagesspiegel* online, 2 June 2008.

3 For 2008–2009, see Clapp and Cohen 2009a; Cornilleau 2019, p. 33. See also Pinstrup-Andersen 2015.

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fantasy limited. Most importantly, if the FAO proposed policies that had already been vigorously pursued, this raises the question of whether they had actually led, or contributed, to the 2007–2010 calamities in the first place.

This book explores the causes and consequences of the world food crisis and the consequent famines of 1972–1975. It shows how this crisis resulted in new, largely production-oriented development policies with the declared aim of eradicating world hunger and extreme poverty – which were known as the small peasant approach – and economic and social effects those policies had in the following decades on a global level, for big transnational companies, and in four countries: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Tanzania and Mali. The development policies of industrialized nations, non-industrialized countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), all subjects of this book, were quite similar. The book’s main argument is that, for a number of reasons, these policies often missed their ostensible goals and triggered complex social processes that frequently reproduced and did not necessarily reduce poverty and hunger.

The topic

The world food crisis of 1972–1975 attracted great international public and political attention. According to UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, the world faced one of the “gravest crises in its history”.⁴ Partly coinciding with the oil crisis, the food crisis seemed to many to herald a new age of scarcity. Relatively quickly, the UN held the World Food Conference, in November 1974, at which high-level representatives from over 100 states agreed, despite some controversy, on strong efforts to boost food production in non-industrialized countries and to create three new UN bodies, two responsible for investment and one to monitor the world food situation. They solemnly pledged to eradicate world hunger within a decade.⁵

The ubiquity of the discussion of the topic soon led to publications like *The Food Crisis in Prehistory* (about the late stone age) and the re-publication of a study from the 1930s on medieval agricultural crises.⁶ With a contemporary orientation, the philosopher Peter Singer declared in 1972 that Europeans had a moral obligation to help starving people worldwide. Many Catholics, among others, shared his view. But often this came down to bourgeois ideas of charity.⁷ Amartya Sen published his first article on his entitlement theory of famine in 1976, and his famous book *Poverty and Famines* of 1981 used three famines in 1972–1975 as case studies. He argued pointedly that it was not a general decline in the availability of food that caused famine; rather, crop failures, declining real wages and unemployment, all against the background a food staple price inflation, denied certain groups access to food. Thus, famines were about social exchanges more

4 Quoted in Vicker 1975, p. 100.

5 See Gerlach 2002a and Chapter 4.

6 Cohen 1977; Abel 1978.

7 Singer 1972 (based on the situation ca. in November 1971). For West German Catholics, see Stollhof 2019; a recent philosophical treatise is Müller 2020, pp. 53–69.

than inadequate production.⁸ This was even more the case with chronic hunger. “Malnutrition is not the consequence of local food scarcity”.⁹

There are essentially three schools of thought about famine, also existing at the time, according to which its cause is either food shortages, a “market event” or loss of purchasing power, or a failure of government.¹⁰ However, to understand the complex processes involved, and to design policies against it, one must combine these three perspectives, as Mohiuddin Alamgir did in his analysis of famines in South Asia.¹¹ If famine was not a natural but a “social fact”¹²; if “famines occur when the integrity of a community breaks down”¹³; and if “[f]amines are social crises that represent the failures of particular economic and political systems” in “coping” with natural calamity,¹⁴ producing more food was and is little, if any, help.

In addition to famine, policymakers also took steps to address the much larger problem of chronic hunger.¹⁵ But, although poverty had been discussed as the root cause of hunger for decades and this was reiterated during the World Food Conference,¹⁶ the influence of this idea on policies was negligible. Conferees and their resolutions emphasized technical, production-oriented solutions.¹⁷ The same was true in the longer run. “While the findings [of Sen and others] ought to have stimulated a searching reconsideration of the food supply paradigm, it [sic] instead produced only a parallel interpretation limited mainly to academic studies of food crises”.¹⁸ The “food shortage paradigm continues to this day to be the dominant narrative of agriculture’s primary role regarding nutrition and child survival”, a ‘World Bank’ study noted in 2014.¹⁹

The basic idea whose breakthrough came in the early 1970s was this. Most of the world’s 700 million hungry lived in the countryside of non-industrialized nations and were food producers themselves. If these peasant families received ‘modern’ inputs to raise food crops more efficiently, they would have more food and more would be available overall, thus eradicating hunger. Acquiring the necessary high-yielding seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation would also draw them into market exchanges, decisively boosting the rural economy (and the foreign industries supplying the inputs), transforming rural social relations through

8 Sen 1981; Sen 1976.

9 Reutlinger 1977, p. 719; see also Reutlinger and Selowsky 1976.

10 Seaman and Holt 1980, esp. pp. 283–284 (quote p. 284).

11 See Alamgir 1980, and the comments by Currey 1984, p. 186.

12 Moore Lappé et al. 1977, p. 93.

13 Currey 1984, p. 183.

14 Watts 1983, pp. 462–463.

15 Reutlinger 1977.

16 See, for example, Arndt 1987; Uvin 1994, p. 76; for the World Food Conference, see Shaw 2007, p. 135 (about the FAO’s Director-General Boerma); excerpts from Sayed Marei’s address are in Engels et al. 1975, p. 100.

17 See Gerlach 2002a. For the rewriting of a key document to de-emphasize complex socioeconomic issues and suggest technical solutions, see Weiss and Jordan 1976, p. 42. For the World Food Conference, see also Khan 1975; Weiss and Jordan 1975/76; Jachertz 2015.

18 Cullather 2010, p. 251.

19 *Learning From World Bank History 2014*, p. 8; see also *ibid.*, p. 16.

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monetization, and becoming business owners would immunize them against the temptations of communism and protect from the vagaries of nature.

This was a vision of a new model of capital accumulation (different from the rise of big farms and displacement of poor rural masses), and its implementation was an important attempt to reform capitalism. It was a project of global integration, but it focused on the poor, unlike earlier development concepts had, for example, modernization theory in the 1950s and 1960s (which really concentrated on developing infrastructure and large industries); community development in the 1950s (which was above all aiming at political structures and allegedly scale-neutral but in reality favored wealthy landowners); and the so-called ‘green revolution’ in the 1960s (which openly supported bigger farmers).²⁰

Other concepts existed but remained marginal, judging by resource flows and national planning. One approach was ‘food security’, a vague, malleable term that on most readings included building food reserves, early warning systems through crop (and sometimes market) monitoring and nutrition programs. Funding for these, and nutrition programs in particular, was dwarfed by the money that went to agricultural development,²¹ which was one reason why national food reserves usually trailed far behind the targets in the 1970s and 1980s.²²

Noting the contrast between “[g]rowing output and starving millions” in the mid-1980s, Walter Falcon et al. pointed out the “dichotomy between the world *hunger* problem and the world *food* problem”, which, though not identical, are intertwined.²³ For example, increased production can make food cheaper, easing the situation for the poor (but it can also hurt small food producers). However, national self-sufficiency means only that “effective demand” in a national market is met but “need not mean that people are not going hungry”.²⁴ That the food and hunger problems are not identical also guides this book. However, it was not by accident that the events in the early 1970s were called in English a ‘world *food* crisis’ and the 1974 meeting a “World *Food* Conference”; these indicated the dominant outlook and the favored solutions.²⁵

The small peasant approach for rural poverty alleviation failed for a lot of reasons, which the book lays out. Unlike one influential study, I do not think that the new development concept was merely rhetorical and that the project did not even aim at “economic transformation” and capitalist penetration.²⁶ That is not entirely

20 For example, see Cullather 2010; Unger 2015, esp. pp. 42–74; Immerwahr 2015.

21 See Ruxin 1996, esp. pp. 22, 108, 115, 186, 235; *Learning From World Bank History* 2014, esp. pp. 8, 17, 21; Escobar 1995, pp. 18, 105, 113, 115, 120; p. 237, note 7, wildly exaggerates the importance of nutrition planning. For food security in general, see Shaw 2007, esp. pp. 126–127, 179, 182–184, 238–243, 255.

22 See FAO Council, CL 64/27, “World Food Security: Evaluation of World Cereals Situation”, October 1974, pp. 2 and 4 of the document, FAO, RG 7, film 517, and Chapters 7–10 of this volume.

23 Falcon et al. 1987, p. 38 (emphasis in the original). See also Berg 1976, p. xi.

24 Patnaik 1990, p. 83.

25 However, in German, the events were called “Welternährungskrise” and “Welternährungskonferenz”; in French, “crise alimentaire mondiale”, etc., a terminology closer to “nutrition”.

26 See Ferguson 2014 (1990), esp. pp. 14–16. By contrast, Escobar 1995, pp. 51 and 112 considers the impact of such policies an open question.

true, despite some empty talk. Resources were shifted to agriculture, and new types of projects and institutions concerned with small agriculturalists were established; efforts were made. On the other hand, some contemporary analysts who employed a food systems approach (an early example of the commodity chain approach) exaggerated the dominance of transnational agribusiness in commodity chains, took transnational capitalist integration for granted, and the FAO to be an agent of the hierarchical integration of the global periphery into the world's agricultural system.²⁷ My findings contradict these assumptions and question the power of multinational corporations (see Chapter 6).

In any case, doubts about the small peasant approach were raised, at the latest, at the World Conference for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) in 1979. But in conjunction with structural adjustment policies, the approach was actually pursued further in the 1980s. Nonetheless, in that decade, the number of malnourished people rose, the production of staples *per capita* stagnated, and the use of new inputs fell in many countries. The accumulation of capital in the 1980s and later was often in sectors other than staple food production. These outcomes were the results of a complex mixture of poor policy design (the small peasant approach neglected groups of rural poor like landless workers and tenant farmers); institutions' dysfunctional structures and practices, which hampered policy implementation; the failure to reward the efforts of small producers to 'modernize' their production; and the widespread appropriation of rural development funds by rural elites, which spurred social polarization. According to Peter Uvin, "the way development (aid) is defined and implemented interacts with processes of elite reproduction, social differentiation, political exclusion and cultural change".²⁸ This book explores some of these unmanageable processes, focusing on the 1970s and 1980s. In doing so, it is in line with attempts at a "deeper" history of "development" by emphasizing nuances, heterogeneity and contradictory processes.²⁹ It has been criticized that current discourses about social inequality reflect a technocratic perspective of problem-solving conforming with the capitalist system³⁰; in my study, I try to point out in some detail what socioeconomic realities there were behind inequality growing through the policies I describe.

There is no question that the world hunger problem is important. Even critical scholars like Amanda Logan, who rejects the widespread practice to put Africa in the 'scarcity slot' as based on racist assumptions, acknowledges food insecurity and hunger there. Hundreds of millions of people were and are affected from hunger. The numbers cited by UN agencies like the 'World Bank' and the FAO differed (and still do) because they used different criteria for necessary caloric

27 See Collins and Moore Lappé 1980; George 1978, pp. 27, 35–36, 61 (the idea goes back to Ray Goldberg in 1966); George 1981; Maaß 1981, esp. pp. 194–196, 240–241; Dupuis 1984, p. 57. For a skeptical view, see Wallace 1985, esp. 492–493, 500. For the origins of the commodity chain approach, see Bair 2005, pp. 154–155.

28 Uvin 1998, p. 6.

29 See Hodge 2016, pp. 136–148.

30 Graeber and Wengrow 2022, pp. 19–20.

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intake to calculate the numbers of malnourished.³¹ Calories consumed had earlier become the yardstick for adequate nourishment.³² In recent decades, the percentage of the world's population that is undernourished has decreased (though less so in the 1990s and 2000s), but the absolute figure has not, hovering around 800 million according to the FAO.³³ In 2008, Paul Collier spoke accordingly of the "bottom billion".³⁴ The percentage of underweight children is still considerably higher in South Asia (46 percent) than Africa (28 percent).³⁵ At a closer look, it is difficult to measure caloric intake and also the extent of chronic hunger.³⁶ And national averages of calories consumed say little because of uneven distribution and consumption.³⁷

Equally difficult to determine, but much cited, is the number of deaths from starvation. In the 1970s and 1980s, it was estimated at over 10 million annually, primarily children, and in 2015, FAO's estimate was close to nine million. In 2005, about 12 million children under the age of five died, many of them starved, and 33 million in that age group in Africa were said to live with malnutrition.³⁸ Of course, malnutrition is not always a lack of calories. Although people who consume enough calories usually receive enough protein (see Chapter 4), the hunt for calories through eating starchy staples has often had the indirect effect of a neglect of micronutrient consumption, so that millions who consume too few, or just enough, calories suffer from undetected deficiencies and the diseases they cause.³⁹

The world hunger problem was not solved. It persists.⁴⁰ To eradicate extreme hunger and poverty was the first of the UN's "millennium development goals" for 2015 and the first to be missed.⁴¹ India, for example, still had far more than 200 million hungry people in 2013.⁴² The UN's target date to eliminate hunger is now 2030, which is again bound to be missed (see Chapter 12).

31 Reutlinger 1977, p. 717; Falcon et al. 1987, p. 18; Parikh 1990a, p. 115; Barraclough 1991, p. 2; Young 1997, pp. 27, 30. Quote: Logan 2020, pp. 1–2.

32 Vernon 2007, pp. 81–117.

33 Clapp and Cohen 2009b, p. 4; see already Umali 1979, p. 161.

34 Collier 2008, esp. p. 194. The best way to "transformation" that Collier had to offer to affected countries was commodity exports.

35 UNICEF 2006, p. 6.

36 See Grigg 1986, pp. 5–30; Kanbur 1990a, pp. 58–62; Parikh and Tims 1989, pp. 7–11; Osmani 1992; Pacey and Payne 1985. Svedberg 1991 regarded stunting as the only reliable indicator of chronic malnutrition. For another discussion of the statistical basis of hunger estimates, which is a dissenting and highly questionable view, sponsored by the 'World Bank', that tries to minimize the world hunger problem, see Lipton 1983. Lipton argued *inter alia* that people who spent 75–80 percent of their income on food were not automatically undernourished (p. 40).

37 Reutlinger 1977, p. 716; Pacey and Payne 1985.

38 U.S. National Security Council, National Security Study Memorandum 200, 24 April 1974, www.druckversion.studien.von.zeitfragen.net/NSSM%20200%20Executive%Summary.htm (accessed 20 November 2002); Latham 1987, p. 331; Speth 1995; Wines 2006. For 2015, see Tönsmeier and Wieters 2021, p. 232.

39 See Biesalski 2020 and Hans Konrad Biesalski's presentation at Caritas Luzern, "Der verborgene Hunger: Satt sein reicht nicht aus", 1 October 2020.

40 For example, see "Welthunger-Index 2015", 2015; Flatin and Nagothu 2015, pp. 1, 3, 17.

41 Easterly 2006, p. 9.

42 Siegel 2018, pp. 6, 221.

Is it unrealistic to expect to end world hunger? If so, does that make this book pointless? If hunger cannot be eliminated from this world, that is not trivial and says something about capitalism. But even if one responds to the first question in the affirmative and believes that, without question, the efforts described in this book could not have succeeded, one can still learn from *how* they failed.⁴³ Social engineering often fails,⁴⁴ but one guiding question of this study is what makes *this* failure remarkable. And it is not *any* concept in regard to which I ask this question: the small peasant approach was arguably the most targeted of all development policies claiming to eradicate hunger.⁴⁵

That the problems discussed in this book and their implications were of relevance to international public opinion is reflected in the fact that three Nobel Prizes were awarded in this context in recent decades, illustrative of discourses and mood swings. In 1970, the U.S.-American plant geneticist and agronomist Norman Borlaug, based in Mexico, received the Nobel Peace Prize for developing high-yielding varieties of wheat, his contribution to the ‘green revolution’. Technology then seemed to be on the way to solve the global food problem and, thus, preserve world peace. Only a few years later, the ‘green revolution’ would face severe criticism. In 1998, the Nobel Prize for Economics was awarded, in an expression of reduced optimism, to the U.S.-based Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen for his research on poverty and well-being, including his work on the social roots of famine mentioned earlier. The Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 went to the Bangladeshi economist turned activist Muhammad Yunus, the founder and director of the Grameen Bank – the world’s largest microcredit provider, admired and imitated abroad – for reducing poverty, especially among rural women, in other words, for a new means of capital accumulation.⁴⁶

It is important to note what this book is not about, for as a work of global history, it can be successful only if it has a delimited subject. It is concerned with staple foods, not export crops. It is not a general study of development, globalization or the world trade system.⁴⁷ It is not a comprehensive institutional history of the FAO, the U.S. government or Oxfam (whose sources I use).⁴⁸ Nor does it offer an account of all of the famines in the 1970s. As it is about development policies more

43 This is in line with David Mosse’s approach not “to ask *whether*, but rather *how* development works” (Mosse 2005, p. 2, emphasis in the original).

44 In 1991, Kaushik Basu wrote that “we have an inherent tendency to underestimate the complexities of social and political engineering”. Basu 1991, p. 347.

45 Other concepts like modernization theory, community development, the “green revolution” and neoliberal policies claimed to tackle hunger problem more indirectly.

46 This does not count two other Nobel Peace Prizes, one awarded in 1949 to the FAO’s first Director-General, the British nutritionist John Boyd Orr, for tackling the world food problem, and the other in 2020 to the World Food Programme, in charge of multilateral food aid.

47 It should be added that the research literature on ‘development’ is boundless and cannot be fully covered in this study.

48 The history of international organizations faces problems similar to those in business history. Working primarily with internal documents, it tends to reproduce an internal, elitist management perspective, which sometimes lacks context and a broader framework and often results in writing a success story. By contrast, I use the papers of the organizations and institutions mentioned as a lens through which to view subjects other than their organizational histories.

than development ‘aid’, individual projects play a minor role, as does the history of food aid, disaster relief⁴⁹ and agricultural research. It mostly ignores population and health policies as well as environmental issues.⁵⁰

Approach

Why should one research the history of development policies at all? In the tradition of Arturo Escobar, James Ferguson and what is called post-development theory, many have explored this subject in terms of international discourses and knowledge production and circulation.⁵¹ Others have studied non-industrialized countries’ development policies.⁵² A number of researchers have described industrialized countries’ ‘development aid’ for non-industrialized nations, more or less as a matter of foreign policy, including the Cold War.⁵³ Some of these studies locate the roots of development policies in late colonialism.⁵⁴ One can also consider ‘development aid’ as imperialist practice. Or one examines it as a minor sector in industrial countries’ economies, which converts tax revenue into corporate turnover⁵⁵; creates demand for industrial goods, such as machinery, vehicles and chemicals, and for food products; and, importantly, generates jobs and income for members of the intelligentsia as experts and activists, though scholars have pursued this approach less often.⁵⁶ Others are interested in the history of organizations involved in development, either international organizations⁵⁷ or NGOs either based

49 For food aid and disaster relief, see Shaw 2011; Ross 2011; Kent 1987; Klatzmann 1988; Barrett and Maxwell 2005; Stevens 2011 (1979).

50 For a refutation of the claim that population growth is a cause of famine, see Devereux 1993, pp. 46–65.

51 Ferguson 2014 (1990); Escobar 1995; Rist 2008; Arndt 1987; Hunt 1989; Cowen and Shenton 1996; Preston 1996; Leys 1996; Thorbecke 2006; Hodge 2007; Büschel and Speich 2009; Bonnacese 2010; Unger 2010; Unger 2015. Many but not all such studies are highly critical: Crewe and Harrison 1998, p. 17. For the historiography of development, see Cullather 2000; Hodge 2016. Rahnama with Bawtree 1997 and Klein and Morreo 2019 are important collections of works from the post-development school.

52 Noman 1988; Riaz 1993; Prawiro 1998; Thee 2002, 2003; Friend 2003; Schneider 2014; Lal 2015; Hossain 2017; Siegel 2018.

53 For the USA, see Bearth 1990; Perkins 1997; Simpson 2008; Cullather 2010; McDonald 2017; Meyerowitz 2021; Franczak 2022; for Japan, see Nuscheler 1990; for Canada, see Morrison 1998; for Britain, see Hodge 2007; for West Germany, see Hein 2006; Linne 2021; for the Netherlands, see Brinkman with Hoek 2010; for international perspectives: Raikes 1988; Stokke 1995a; Naudet 2000; Pharo and Pohle Fraser 2008; Whitfield 2009a; Frey et al. 2014; for the Cold War: Lorenzini 2019.

54 See van Beusekom 2002; Kothari 2005; Hodge 2007; Cooper 2010; Hodge 2016, pp. 130–136; an early study is Sieberg 1985. For continuities between Nazism and development policy, see Linne 2021.

55 Datta 1994, p. 211, in reference to Teresa Hayter and Catherine Watson.

56 Escobar 1995, p. 46, has called development “a lucrative industry for planners, experts, and civil servants”. For relevant transnational companies, see Widstrand 1975; Morgan 1980; Cook 1981; Dinham and Hines 1983; Green and Laurent 1988; Schwarzer 1989; Kneen 1995; Broehl 1998; Gerlach 2008; Schobinger 2012.

57 For the FAO, see Phillips 1981; Marchisio and di Biase 1986; Abbott 1992; Soudjay 1996; Cornilleau 2019; for the problem of nutrition at the FAO, WHO and UNICEF, see Ruxin 1996; see also

in rich countries or poor ones.⁵⁸ Still others have written the history of individual projects, both large and small ones.⁵⁹ Many such historical studies focused on the period from the 1940s to the 1960s.

The history of ideas, foreign policy, domestic economic policy, the interests and activities of corporations and groups, and organizations and global exchanges – all of these are important and must be taken into account in this study. I explore the political origins and aims of development policies globally, nationally and trans-nationally. However, my interest in the small peasant approach and rural poverty alleviation policies rests primarily on their socioeconomic effects. These policies were an enormous social engineering project; they were attempts to transform rural economies and societies in large parts of the world, and this raises the question about their consequences. So, in addition to ideas, structures and exchanges, the book is also concerned with practices. This concern and the complex nature of the hunger problem require a methodological mix of political, economic and social history. The questions it addresses include: what the economic developments in staple food production and the related social processes in the countryside were; how the hunger problem evolved; and how people's lives changed. To address these questions only on a global level would probably merely lead to either anecdotal or wholesale kinds of evidence. Therefore, I explore them in case studies of four countries, namely, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mali and Tanzania. Only case studies can show the tensions between theory and practice and the modalities of implementation of the new policies.⁶⁰

The case studies also detail different conditions, processes, outcomes and variations in the interactions of governments, foreign governmental agencies, international organizations, NGOs, private enterprises and the population. They are about very poor countries that suffered much malnutrition (Bangladesh and Mali also experienced famines during the world food crisis), substantial national and international development programs and interesting development concepts. It is impossible here to 'cover' the world with case studies which would be globally representative, but these four countries were important because of not only the ideas they produced but also the size of their population. These four countries in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa represent regions where most of the population lived in the countryside in the 1970s. Most of Latin America's population was urbanized

Staples 2006 and Talbot 1990 for various agencies; for the WHO, see Meyer 2012; for the World Food Programme, see Shaw 2011; for the 'World Bank', see Hayter 1971; Tetzlaff 1980; Ayres 1983; Clark 1988; Twele 1995; Kraske 1996; Sharma 2017; Kröss 2020; for regional development banks, see Kappagoda 1995; Mingst 1990.

58 For Oxfam, see Whitaker 1984; Black 1992; Jennings 2008; for CARE, see Wieters 2017; for the Grameen Bank, see Todd 1996; Yunus with Jolis 1998; Bornstein 2005; for BRAC, see Chen 1986; Lovell 1992; Smillie 2009; for Christian organizations, see Rui 2020.

59 For the large *Office du Niger* project, see van Beusekom 2002; Coulibaly 2014; for a small project in Senegal, see Adams and So 1996.

60 I chose national case studies (rather than other frames, such as case studies of certain regions, projects, social groups or climatic zones) because of pragmatic reasons like the search for material, because I felt the necessity to take various conditions into account as they existed in one country, and because of the apparent importance of national policies.

then, which is why none of its states is included. Around 1980, Indonesia and Bangladesh had the world's third and fourth largest rural populations.⁶¹ The UN listed three of the four – Bangladesh, Mali and Tanzania – among the “Most Seriously Affected Countries” in 1975, and the organizers of the World Food Conference counted them among countries suffering the most severe malnutrition.⁶² All four belonged to the World Food Council's 43 “food priority countries” in 1977.⁶³ For what such rankings are worth, seven years later, the ‘World Bank’ counted Mali and Tanzania among the 15 poorest countries globally, Mali in the late 1970s as fourth poorest, Bangladesh 1982 as second poorest and Tanzania in 1997 as third poorest.⁶⁴ Indonesia appeared in such rankings in the 1950s and 1960s.⁶⁵ Until the late 1970s, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Tanzania were among the largest recipients of credit from the ‘World Bank’ Group's International Development Association (IDA).⁶⁶ All four were long ruled by dictators or authoritarian regimes; three were predominantly Muslim.

This book is a work of global history. In its attempt to overcome the artificial separations and limitations of national history and Eurocentric views, global history explores transnational links and influences and compares parallel and contradictory processes in different societies, states or regions. At its best, global history reveals previously unnoticed connections, trends and causes and, thus, offers new perspectives. Global history differs from international history (and the framework of international relations) in that it includes non-state actors.

Among the potential pitfalls of global history is the possible lack of an empirical basis (see the next section on sources).⁶⁷ Specific topics help avoid baseless macrostudies. A serious problem is the affirmative thinking that is often behind global history, which leads scholars to fading out power hierarchies, conflict and war and to find global connections (e.g., mobility) principally positive.⁶⁸ Such studies want to conjure up a “global community” or “global society”.⁶⁹ To justify this ideology or to underline the importance of one's research, global historians often exaggerate the power of global entanglements. Naturalistic metaphors like “flow” and “circulation” can make the growth of globality, a process they call ‘globalization’, seem inevitable (in part by ignoring the role of power structures).⁷⁰ If it is then only relations between non-industrialized countries and Europe (or North America) that matter, Eurocentrism and epistemic imperialism may enter through the back door.

61 Andrew Jenkins, “Bangladesh: Problems and possibilities”, n.d. (1981), Oxfam, Country reviews.

62 “List of Most Seriously Affected Countries”, 23 May 1975, FAO, RG 12, Commodities and Trade Div., FA 4/25, M.S.A. General I; UN World Food Conference 1974a, p. 67.

63 UN World Food Council, WFC/36, 25 March 1977, p. 3, FAO Library.

64 Iiffe 1987, p. 231; Hart 1982, p. 23; Hye 1985, p. 34; Bryceson et al. 1999, p. 19. These rankings were based on GDP *per capita*.

65 See Maurer 1986b, p. 29 note 38 (on 1971).

66 Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 174.

67 For an overview of pitfalls, see Conrad 2013, pp. 87–111.

68 For example, see Iriye 2004, p. 193. Concerning mobility, see Conrad 2013, p. 101.

69 Iriye 2004, title and p. 81.

70 See the critical comments in Gänger 2017, esp. pp. 312–315; Rockefeller 2011; Cooper 2007; Conrad 2013, pp. 101–111.

Two things need to be added. First, global history is my approach, not my subject. How global mechanisms worked is only a secondary question. Second, one of my central arguments is that the global social engineering that the book describes failed in many respects. So, I do not share a naïve belief in the power of globality, and as I explain that failure not only with a lack of global entanglements, I do not call for more globalization. For global history (and especially the ‘new’ imperial history) tends to re-enact past glory, to resurrect and multiply images of a ‘white’ dominance that is long past. But this study does not. The opposite view that a global history involving Europeans is thereby contaminated and thus worthless, which is a mirror image of fantasies of ‘white’ omnipotence, would also be wrong.

This study focuses on development policies in a sense broader than development ‘aid’. The latter’s reach is limited. Resource flows from industrialized to non-industrialized countries are finite, and their amounts are often overstated. The great majority of ‘aid’ money is spent in the ‘donor’ country on goods (like machinery, chemicals and food) and services (like the salaries of well-paid academic or private ‘experts’).⁷¹ It seems that the latter is the larger of the two, that is, ‘aid’ funding primarily pays the ‘donor’ country’s intelligentsia. In the early 1980s, there were 80,000 expatriate ‘specialists’ in Sub-Saharan Africa working for ODA, and around 2010, the aid industry had about half a million highly paid employees.⁷² (Many of whom seemed to think that their work had little impact.⁷³) The projects of the FAO and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) had a reputation for especially high administrative costs.⁷⁴ Given that non-industrialized countries soon had to repay more than they officially received in ‘aid’, the ‘aid’ led the former to export capital to the industrialized states.⁷⁵ Which country has ever been lifted out of poverty by foreign ‘aid’? It is also true that most of the locally distributed money for many development projects was spent on local salaries, vehicles and buildings.⁷⁶ But the governments of non-industrialized states have a much greater influence on socioeconomic processes than external actors do, and they have their own development policies. Since the mid-20th century, every non-industrialized

71 Examples are in USAID, “Introduction to the FY 1974 Development Assistance Program Presentation to the Congress”, Ford Library, Vice Presidential Papers, Box 136, AID; Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 90; Hartmann and Boyce 1981, p. 204; Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 196; Kimaru 1996, p. 69 (USA); Hancock 1989, pp. 232–233 (USA and West Germany); Escobar 1995, p. 166 (international). This was also the case where ‘aid’ was ‘untied’: address by Marie Schlei in Forum SPD 1977, p. 149; Krueger et al. 1989, pp. 73–74; Schmidt 2008, p. 123. In addition, for whatever they paid to UN development organizations, industrialized countries received several times as much in salaries and commissions (see Hancock 1989, p. 236; Mingst 1990, p. 96; “Entwicklungshilfe bringt” 1998; see also Hüрни 1980a, pp. 144–146). But the Asian Development Bank awarded more contracts to firms and persons from non-industrialized countries after 1986: Kappagoda 1995, p. 35.

72 Timberlake 1985, p. 8; Moyo 2011, p. 93.

73 Dünki 1987, esp. pp. 9, 26. Dünki as well as Mosse 2005, pp. 14–20, think that domestic politics are far more important for ‘aid’ workers than anything in the ‘target’ country.

74 See FAO, RG 13, GII, IN 2/1, Press criticisms, vol. I (brown file), for 1973–1974.

75 “Studie” 2004. According to USAID, “Introduction to the FY 1974 Development Assistance Program Presentation to the Congress”, Ford Library, Vice Presidential Papers, Box 136, AID, what was spent abroad was less than foreign “repayment and interest”.

76 For a national project in Nigeria, see van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 139; see also Uvin 1998, pp. 121–123.

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country has pursued ‘development’.⁷⁷ This is why external actors tried to influence non-industrialized nations’ domestic development policies through what was called ‘policy dialogue’, in addition to their own projects. In these exchanges, and through the UN system, ideas were also flowing from non-industrialized to industrial countries.⁷⁸ In this study, the term ‘development policy’ encompasses the strategies and activities of actors from non-industrialized and industrialized countries and those of international organizations and NGOs.⁷⁹

Many observers, scholars and members of the ‘development community’ with different outlooks have frowned upon the quick succession of changes in development concepts applied internationally, by industrialized countries and by non-industrialized countries.⁸⁰ The obvious reason is that they have all failed. Development, the organized acceleration and steering of socioeconomic change, was unmanageable and self-contradictory; so, policies required continual readjustment. Therefore, the point of this study is not to demonstrate *that* the small peasant and rural poverty alleviation approaches failed (which would not be too original) but to explain *how* they failed and what their consequences were.⁸¹

This book does not aim at offering a solution to the world hunger problem. History, my discipline, is not action oriented. Historians cannot cure the ill of the past. We can neither feed the past’s hungry, nor can we predict the future. We don’t do solutions; at best, we find problems. What a historical study can do is to provide critical distance from its subject: in this case, independence from the ‘development community’,⁸² whose members have interests that lead most to take an affirmative approach and perhaps raise political awareness and question prevailing ideology. For example, few historians nowadays believe in the existence of historical laws, unlike practitioners of some other disciplines. In development discourse, “history has a direction and a destination”⁸³; for most historians, it does not. In addition, work in other disciplines often lacks a long-term perspective, even if it includes brief historical glimpses.⁸⁴ Contemporary history, which investigates an era when political and socioeconomic processes were under

77 Mudoola 1985, p. 117, called this “an article of faith in the Third World”. As Gitelson 1975, p. 4, phrased it, “the leaders of most or all of the new states talk about national development as a vital goal”.

78 See Meyerowitz 2021, p. 7 about the USA.

79 For this term, see also Lerch 1984, p. 5. A study demonstrating such multi-level negotiation, which also deals with practice, is van Beusekom 2002.

80 For example, see Escobar 1995, p. 112; for fashions in Pakistan, see ul Haq 1976, p. 20. Thorbecke 2006 makes it seem that the many conceptual turns were logically coherent.

81 This is similar to the claim by Mosse 2005, p. 2 (in reference to external ‘aid’).

82 Colin Leys (1996, p. 29) described the “development community” quite narrowly as consisting of “the staff of ‘donor’ and recipient country development ministries, of multilateral ‘aid’ agencies, financial institutions and non-governmental organizations, and academic and non-academic consultants”.

83 Cullather 2000, p. 644.

84 According to Ellis 1998, p. 8, for example, rural income studies rarely examine a time span that reaches back more than two or three years. Ferguson 2014 (1990), p. 66, even claims that development experts intentionally de-historicize their subjects. Neveling 2017, pp. 166–169 relativizes Ferguson’s claim.

constant observation by the social sciences, can make its own contribution by adding a consistently processual understanding; combining material and views from different disciplines; and, of course, utilizing unpublished material and thus a broader empirical basis. It does not need to make the simplifications that are necessary for problem solvers (e.g., economists) to make their proposals operational. A study of the world hunger problem that offers no solutions may seem worthless, incomprehensible, disturbing or even cynical to activists, some lay people and those scholars who have all the answers. It will not be popular, but it may offer relevant insights.

Sources

To write global history on an empirical level, I have consulted a great number of primary sources. I have concentrated on the records of three types of institutions that undertook global development activities and had global interests: the FAO, an international organization; the U.S. government, one of the most important national players; and Oxfam, a large and influential NGO.

One of my main resources is the archive of the FAO. Based in Rome, the FAO is the United Nations' largest specialized agency. In the 1970s, it employed about 6,000 staff. It organized or co-organized a number of international events important to this study's topic, drafted policies and collected statistics and reports from – or about – countries around the world. It had representatives (whose files I could not locate) in 60–70 countries and, thus, a large network and far-reaching activities.⁸⁵ The most relevant records were those of the Economic and Social Policy Department, the Development Department and the Regional Offices.⁸⁶ The documents of the UN World Food Council held at FAO's library were also useful.

The records of the U.S. government that I used most intensely were those of the Department of Agriculture and its Foreign Agricultural Service and the papers of Nixon's and Ford's White House staffs, though I also consulted documents of the State Department, the Agency for International Development (USAID) and the CIA. The reports of the U.S. Agricultural Attachés and Counselors from the 1970s, including regular and special reports, attached official and unofficial documents from the countries in which they worked, and notes of conversations, proved particularly valuable. The Agriculture Department/Foreign Agricultural Service maintained such posts (which it introduced in 1954) in about 60 countries in the mid-1970s, and they produced about 1,300 reports annually.⁸⁷

85 See "FAO Country Representatives, Situation Report – 1 July 1975", FAO, RG 9, PR 10/30 (1975); "Notes for Dr. Phillips: Address to the FAO Bankers Programme General Committee Meeting", 7 June 1979, FAO, RG 9, DDD, BK 51/1; Matzke 1981/82, p. 180. Shaw 2007, p. 236, gives a higher figure. For employees, see George 1977, p. 185.

86 For the FAO's archive, see Gerlach 2001.

87 For the role and number of these officers, see the address of the U.S. Agricultural Attaché to Guatemala to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Guatemala, 25 June 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 38, GT Guatemala 1974 DR. For 1954 and the number of reports, see OMB, Executive Office of the President, "Executive Summary of the Staff Report: Commercial and

Oxfam, a British secular NGO based in Oxford, began to establish a network of field directors after 1961 in the former British colonies; it extended the network to other countries in the 1970s. In 1976, it had 27 field offices and began a great expansion in 1979. Oxfam broadened its focus from combatting famine, starvation and poverty to meeting broader defined basic needs in the mid-1970s.⁸⁸ Like many of the NGOs that proliferated in the 1970s and 1980s, Oxfam (UK) received one-third of its funding from the state.⁸⁹ In Oxfam's archive, I focused on the records of the Asia and Africa Field Committees and field directors and travel reports from the 1970s and 1980s. I put less emphasis on project files because they are not very informative about conditions on the ground. Oxfam's field directors did not have the time to study the effects of their programs at the village level.⁹⁰

I also consulted some German and Australian records, some documents of a major grain-trading company (Alfred C. Toepfer), and in the Archiv für Zeitgeschichte in Zurich, the papers of Victor Umbricht, a former Swiss and UN diplomat who was also a tycoon from the multinational firm Ciba-Geigy. Access restrictions made working in the archive of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development ('World Bank') impractical.

There are problems with the sources. Of course, the documents produced by these agencies must be read critically, for they reflect their interests. With the U.S. documents, these were national political and business interests. The USA were and are the world's largest grain exporter and used food in many ways for politics. Oxfam was decidedly political and many of its functionaries had leftist-liberal leanings in the 1970s and 1980s.⁹¹ NGOs from industrialized countries, unlike 'aid'-providing governments, may not seek "political colonies" or "dictate internal economic and social policies",⁹² but whether or not they interfere in countries where they operate is a different matter. They certainly introduced certain outlooks on the issues in question, which influenced their reporting. Elizabeth Stamp told me that before or after working with Oxfam, functionaries worked for the British colonial administration, the 'World Bank', and, as in her own case, *The Economist*.⁹³ All of the institutions whose papers I studied may have exaggerated the problems they worked on to justify and perpetuate their involvement and authors' jobs. "Both donors and recipients had vested interests in portraying the situation

Economic Representation Abroad", January 1973, NARA, Nixon papers, FO, Box 49, International Investment, May-August 1973.

88 Jennings 2008, pp. 117, 119, 121; Whitaker 1984, pp. 36, 125.

89 See Whitaker 1984, p. 55; Buijs and Grijpstra 1985, pp. 158–159; Riddell and Robinson 1995, pp. 29–31; Barrow and Jennings 2001b, pp. 6–7; Jennings 2008, pp. 5–6. Critical discussions of the activities of development NGOs, including poverty reduction, as they became fashionable in the 1990s are in *The Annals of the American Academy of Social Science* 554, 1997.

90 One of my sources for the last point is an interview with Elizabeth Stamp, 28 March 2001.

91 Jennings 2008, pp. 115–137; Whitaker 1984, pp. 30–31.

92 Whitaker 1984, p. 50.

93 Interview with Elizabeth Stamp, Oxford, 28 March 2001.

in the worst possible light”, Allan Hill remarked.⁹⁴ Accordingly, the reported data must be cross-checked whenever possible.

There are other problems. The formulation of official UN documents is intentionally obscure. As a rule, they avoid names and direct quotation, often refusing even to say which country’s representative said what.⁹⁵ And papers written by FAO’s functionaries are usually in an odd technical and bureaucratic jargon, which some call “FAOese”.⁹⁶ U.S. representatives attending international meetings had standing instructions to express no opinions deviating from official policy, unless they specified that they were personal and unofficial; they were not allowed to make financial commitments, or perhaps even to agree to new meetings; and they had to stay in contact with the U.S. embassy or local consulate.⁹⁷

A serious problem is that outside observers, mostly whites from industrialized nations, usually wrote these documents. Arguably, they had an imperialist perspective, which assumed their own cultural superiority and disparaged of southern cultures, concepts and practices. But working with these sources, and using scholarly methods of European origin, does not have to include adopting imperialist perspectives or discourses, for they can be critically interrogated, in which case the sources are quite revealing.⁹⁸ Documents in these archives from non-industrialized countries, and research by scholars from there also help counterbalance the imperialist gaze. In social terms, there was a wide gulf between the perspectives of the well-educated, urban, middle-class scholars, functionaries and activists from industrialized countries and those of the underfed, often illiterate rural people their work concerned. The latter are much more difficult to reconstruct than the former. In addition to a few documentations and interviews, they are found in anthropological and sociological village studies.⁹⁹ Diverse studies, many of which are quantitative, record villagers’ living conditions and ways of life. Other perspectives can be sifted from travel reports and project evaluations when read critically. I have used complementary sources of all three types to provide multiple perspectives.

But statistics pose another set of problems. Some parameters used in mainstream scholarship do not seem at all useful to me. Among them is the gross domestic product because it “aggregates economies that are, in large part, unrecorded”,

94 Hill 1985b, p. 1.

95 “Annex: Committee’s Reports” (1974), FAO, RG 12, UN 43/2A, Working Group on the Preparation of the WFC.

96 Abbott 1992, p. 90. For the language in ‘World Bank’ reports, see Moretti and Pestre 2015.

97 See Jackson to Brunthaver, 29 August 1972, NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73, Box 460, 8/1/72; “General Guidelines for United States Representatives and Chairman of United States Delegation to World Food Conference in Rome November 5–16, 1974”, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr., Box 5847, Food 2, Oct 1–Nov 27, 1974.

98 For example, I have earlier conducted extensive research on Nazi German policies of violence based on German sources. Few would call my findings forbearant.

99 For reflections on the genre of village studies in Bangladesh, see Hye 1985. See also von Oppen 1996.

which results in underestimated and contradictory figures.¹⁰⁰ The same is true for many agricultural production figures, which have to be used with caution and disaggregated wherever possible. However, whether the same sorts of limitations apply to all statistics of non-industrialized countries is controversial.¹⁰¹ The official statistics of Tanzania in particular have a bad reputation, whereas those of Bangladesh have also earned some praise.¹⁰² Clearly, socioeconomic figures must also be used with great caution. I mostly refrain from basing arguments on official GDP, employment and poverty data, which are especially politicized and not necessarily useful to properly describe social conditions.

Most of my archival material is from the 1970s; some is from the 1980s. I did most of the archival work in the late 1990s and early 2000s when there were restrictions concerning declassification that limited my access to later documentation. Since then, both the FAO and Oxfam closed their archives for several years to reorganize them, which drove researchers to despair. (Some documents have also been re-classified, as occurred at the Gerald Ford Presidential Library, or destroyed, as I saw being prepared at the FAO's archive.) Thus, for later time periods, I rely on published material and I have a less dense documentation.

My secondary sources are from the 1960s to the 2020s and a wide range of disciplines. These include development studies, political economy, gender studies, economics, agronomy, political science, sociology, anthropology, geography, history, futurology, demography, legal studies, medicine, biology, ecology, and work of journalists and development practitioners. I have also used a lot of grey literature, like official reports, evaluations and published planning documents. Their authors come from all over the world. Development and hunger studies are highly politicized fields, where different camps exist. The larger camp has produced a technical, affirmative, so-called "managerial" literature, aiming to improve 'development' performance, and they present that goal as "inherently good" and their technical approach as objective, neutral and universal.¹⁰³ Arguably, their texts serve a "technical management of poverty on a global scale" to exert power and channel the discourse in certain directions.¹⁰⁴ The smaller camp creates mildly to radically critical studies, some of which are of a general character.¹⁰⁵ The former is dominant. This can also be said about the "technocratic elite" in famine and famine policy studies¹⁰⁶ and about literature about 'development' NGOs.¹⁰⁷ My study

100 Jerven 2013, pp. 16, 18–19, 28. For the emergence of the concept of GDP, see Speich 2013.

101 This tendency is also in Jerven 2013; for crop data, see *ibid.*, esp. p. 120.

102 For Tanzania, see Jerven 2013, pp. 65–72; Rugumamu 1997, pp. 245–258; Sarris and van den Brink 1993, pp. 120–122; Government of the United Republic of Tanzania et al. 2000, pp. xv, 80–81, 145, and Chapter 9; for Bangladesh, see Elkington 1976, pp. 67–69, and Hossain 2017, p. 149; more critical on Bangladesh are Currey 1979, pp. 140–144; Boyce 1987, pp. 85–116; Asaduzzaman 1993, pp. 28–29, 33–37; Islam 2005b, p. 374.

103 See Ferguson 2014 (1990), p. 10 (first quote); Crewe and Harrison 1998, pp. 15 (second quote), 23, 25, 33; Apthorpe 1996; Karim 2011, pp. 163–189.

104 Karim 2011, pp. 163–164.

105 See Ferguson 2014 (1990), pp. 11–12; Cullather 2000.

106 De Waal 1997, p. 24.

107 Lewis 2005 argues that the hegemony of a positive take on NGOs was followed by mounting criticism but I think that the affirmative side is still more influential. This affirmative view is in

draws extensively from all camps. All of these secondary sources have helped me comprehensively consider the subject from multiple perspectives.

The structure of the book

The first two chapters after this introduction describe the world food crisis of 1972–1975 as a global phenomenon and the famines in its course on a national level. Chapter 3 focuses on the social processes that these famines involved. The next three chapters return to the global level. Chapter 4 explains the small peasant approach to alleviating poverty, its political background and rise to dominance. Chapter 5 describes the ways in which, and extent to which, different players implemented that approach, its structural problems, and some of the overall effects of the new policies in the 1970s and later. In Chapter 6, I show that the distribution and adoption of technical agricultural inputs were limited and uneven, primarily because transnational corporations lacked the capacity, and sometimes the will, to expand their business accordingly.

Chapters 7–10 are case studies of policies for pursuing the small peasant approach for poverty alleviation and their consequences for economic processes and rural social change in four countries: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Tanzania and Mali. They are primarily about the 1970s and 1980s but include glimpses of what happened later. I compare the four countries' experiences in Chapter 11.

In the final three chapters, I add some general observations. The policies studied involved strikingly many plans, projections and forecasts. Analyses of how their authors imagined the future reveal a great deal about their ways of thinking in general (Chapter 12). Continuing to insisting on a narrative of progress, despite its having been undermined by the threats of nuclear war and environmental degradation, the development community pursued merely technical visions, and thus, its plans and predictions were bound to fail. Hunger and development policies also interacted with issues of gender, though these were often ignored. Developmentalists often viewed poor rural women as the last frontier of development, as I explain in Chapter 13, but this problem was addressed more in theory than in practice, and policy outcomes in terms of gender varied greatly. Chapter 14 concludes the book by placing its topic within long-term processes involving mass hunger, the world's recurring waves of famine and their causes, and forms of capitalist accumulation and rural social change.

Finally, here are a few words about language. I usually translate quotations from other languages into English. 'Development' is a normative, teleological and vague concept that connotes that all countries quasi-naturally need to industrialize and reach the correlative state of social organization on the European or North American (or, according to some, the Japanese) model. Since the concept is so questionable, I should perhaps always put the term in quotation marks, as Ferguson has done, but I have mostly not to be friendly to the reader.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, the 'development'

part fueled by the fact that many analysts have been staff or consultants of NGOs themselves. See Lewis 2005, pp. 206–207; Karim 2011; Mannan 2015, pp. 1–8.
108 See Ferguson 2014 (1990).

discourse is harmful, which is why this book does not use this term in an affirmative way. I do avoid the expression ‘developing country’, and, of course, the Eurocentric and patronizing ‘Third World’, and speak instead of non-industrialized countries,¹⁰⁹ and I put the self-proclaimed ‘World Bank’ in quotation marks.¹¹⁰

Other terms have to be used with caution. One is ‘household’, a Americo- and Eurocentric notion that may not apply to African and Asian realities.¹¹¹ Another is ‘village’, whose use became prominent in the early 20th century and came to express an ideological construct of neoclassical development strategists that connoted both a village community and backwardness.¹¹² The same goes for sentences like “What should Lesotho do?” which obscure group interests and construct fictional communities and seemingly inescapable necessities.¹¹³ ‘What shall we do?’ is equally questionable.

109 Although there were some factories in all of such countries, I avoid terms like ‘lowly industrialized’, ‘less industrialized’ or ‘little industrialized’ as either implicitly deterministic or confusing.

110 For efforts of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to get itself referred to as the ‘World Bank’ in the UN’s “non-legal documents”, see Hoffman to Yriart, 29 May 1974, FAO, RG 9, UN 12/1.

111 For example, see Caplan 1981, p. 102; Sender and Smith 1990, p. 158 note 7; Datta 1998, pp. 26–30.

112 Development-minded observers sometimes also criticized a lack of village because they saw only dispersed and/or temporary settlements. Sackley 2011; von Oppen 1996, pp. 19, 29, 31; Escobar 1995, p. 47. See also Sender and Smith 1990, p. 13.

113 Ferguson 2014 (1990), p. 62.

The global level



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2 The world food crisis, 1972–1975 – a macro-perspective

On 7 July 1972, the French Minister of Agriculture, Michel Cointat, invited his U.S. counterpart Earl Butz to a conference on “global trade in agricultural and food products”. Nothing in the preliminary agenda for the symposium indicated that Cointat was aware that events the next day would trigger turbulences in the world food economy.¹ Evidently, the FAO, too, was incognizant of the impending events.² On 8 July, U.S. president Nixon announced a three-year, 750 million dollar grain sales agreement with the USSR, “the greatest long-term commercial grain sales agreement ever made between two countries”. Butz would soon call it “the greatest grain transaction in the history of the world”.³

On the same day, it became clear to the White House – though the public learned it only seven weeks later – that the Soviets had already bought grain from commercial firms in the USA, and in other countries, in more than the agreed amount. In all of 1972, their purchases would amount to 28 million tons, including about 20 million tons for US\$1 billion from the USA.⁴ Still in July 1972, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) received messages from their agricultural attachés abroad, as the FAO did from their country representatives, about the effects of longer-term rain failures and the erratic monsoon in five Indian states and floods in the Philippines.⁵ The West African Sahel had suffered from drought for years; conditions

1 Quote: my translation from the French in Cointat to Butz, 7 July 1972 with attachment, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1972, Box 5566, Food 2 (World Food Situation). This chapter is an updated and revised version of Gerlach 2005.

2 USDA, International Organizations Staff, Report on the June 1972 meeting of the US FAO Interagency Committees, 3 July 1972 (about a meeting on 27 June), FAO 15, Reg.-Files IL-2.57, USDA 1972–1976.

3 Press Statement (Confidential, Eyes Only until 9:00 a.m., July 8, 1972) and other documentation, NARA, Nixon, NSC, Box 330, Grain Shipping; Butz to Secretary of Commerce Peterson, 12 July 1972, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1972, Box 5572, Grain 3, Jan–July 1972, 2.

4 Memo Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, “Grain Deal”, 9 July 1972, 8:00, NARA, Nixon, NSC, Box 330, Grain Shipping; cf. Memo Butz to Nixon, 9 August 1972, *ibid.* See also Porter 1984; Trager 1975; Caldwell 1979, p. 68.

5 Reports from 14 and 27 July and news clipping from 27 July 1972, FAO 12, Policy Analysis Div., FA 4/15, vol. II and III; U.S. Agricultural Attaché Manila, Grain and Feed Annual Report, 3 August 1972, NARA, RG 166, U.S. Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 26, PH Philippines 1972DR; IN-2073 and IN-2059 of 26 July and 9 June 1972, *ibid.*, Box 15, IN India 1972. For the following, van Apeldoorn 1981, pp. 43–44; Sen 1981, p. 87.

now cast a cloud over the harvest in northern Nigeria. Simultaneously, the most important annual rains in northern Ethiopia hadn't arrived.

These events were the start of an “economic tsunami” that would put the global grain economy in turmoil for three years.⁶ Because of the first substantial drop in world grain production in two decades and dwindling reserves, international market prices for wheat, rice and corn tripled or quadrupled within 20 months. Famines that may have killed three million people spread from Haiti over the Sahel, Ethiopia and India to Bangladesh, and numerous other states experienced food shortages. Many contemporaries called this a “world food crisis”. A new age of scarcity seemed to have begun.

The world food crisis is no part of the collective memory of industrialized nations. This is not surprising, as not much seems to have distinguished it from the endless sea of hunger the world had faced for decades, and long-term undernutrition causes far more deaths than crises, however spectacular. Europeans were shielded from inflation in the prices of food by the European Economic Community (EEC) or their socialist governments more than were U.S. consumers,⁷ and the energy crisis outshone everything else. Even among those directly hit, memories differed. Many who lived in the Sahel endured so many crises that this one did not stand out in their memories. In the 1990s, after nearly 20 years, few remembered the famine of 1972–1974.⁸

The term “world food crisis” was customary in the early 1970s to refer to the situation.⁹ It and equivalents in other languages were also used for severe shortages in the immediate aftermath of World War II, and especially since the Indian famine of 1965–1967 for a chronic situation.¹⁰ And it has sometimes been applied to circumstances after 1975. The crisis covered here was mostly dated to the years of 1972–1975. However, there remained a debate about the question, “Was there really a world food crisis [. . .]?”¹¹

The thesis of this chapter is that, in these years, a significant transformation occurred: an adaptation crisis caused by attempts at a commercialization of the international grain trade and at an intensified incorporation of new world regions into an expanded world market. The result was a new pattern in the global grain trade and let appear new measures for ‘food security’, food production and international cooperation necessary.

6 Lyle P. Schertz, “Present shock – food prices”, draft, 25 June 1973, FAO 9, SF, II, LNOR 1972/73.

7 See Gerlach 2009 and Gerlach 2017.

8 Cross and Barker n.y. (1992), pp. 2–16, 100, 102, 112–13, 119 (interviews of 1989–1990); also Gado 1993. But Twagira 2021, p. 179, sees the early 1970s drought “ever present in local memory”.

9 See Marx 1975; Sobel 1975; *Give us* 1975; Rochebrune 1975; Marei 1976.

10 See Coe 1946; The Department of Agriculture During the Administration of Lyndon B. Johnson, November 1963–January 1969, NARA, RG 16, Records of John A. Schnittker, Box 8, p. IV/44; FRG embassy to FRG Foreign Office, 8 December 1965, PA AA IIIA2, Nr. 140; FAO Council verbatim records, 18 July 1974, p. 152, FAO, RG 7, film 517 (Marei speech). For the term “Welternährungskrise” in German, see Vereinigung 1968; Mitteilungen über die Welternährungswirtschaft der Verwaltung für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten des Vereinigten Wirtschaftsgebietes, Abteilung VI Planung und Statistik, Nr. 2, 15 August 1949, BA B 116/1856.

11 Answered to the affirmative by Talbot 1994, p. 11.

The world food crisis was interlinked with things as diverse as the breakdown of the international currency regime; the global economic crisis from 1973 to 1975 but also new demands of consumers living in socialism; *el niño*; the oil crisis; the politics of *détente*; an electoral campaign in the USA and the enlargement of the EEC to nine countries; the social consequences of the ‘green revolution’ in Asia; the Vietnam War; and changes in international development policy that this book analyzes in detail. It was also at the beginning of a long-term crisis in African agriculture.

Such globality imposes severe limitations on this chapter. I consider national famines in Chapter 3. I pay special attention here to developments in the USA because it provided roughly half of the international market’s grain and was tremendously influential on global economic affairs and development policies. I start with the origins and course of the world food crisis before reconstructing government policies aimed at the expansion and restructuring of the world grain markets, efforts interconnected with private business interests when companies faced global economic upheaval. Then, I describe the international political response to the increasing market volatility due to the commercialization of the world grain trade. Finally, I locate the food crisis in longer-term globalization trends.

Evolution of the crisis

The world food crisis came unexpectedly to most. “There is a near-certainty that an excess supply of food will continue in developed countries”, the FAO’s Deputy Director-General Oris Wells predicted in 1971, and Francisco Aquino, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, stated that his organization would need no additional funding through to 1973–1974.¹² In January 1972, the Indian government stopped asking for U.S. food aid, and the USDA considered ploughing wheat over.¹³ As late as mid-July 1972, the Japanese government, misjudging the situation, planned to eliminate the country’s rice reserves.¹⁴

Many of the weather events mentioned earlier were caused by the strongest *el niño* in decades. It brought drought to Eastern Africa, parts of India, and Southeast Asia and torrential rains to the Philippines and the west coast of Latin America. In fact, it was the strength of the condition in 1972–1973 that led climatologists to understand the *El Niño-Southern Oscillation* as a global phenomenon.¹⁵ A major grain-trading company was already teaching apprentices some of its effects, for example, the collapse of the anchovy fishery off the Peruvian coast.¹⁶ Its decline

12 “Official Report of the US Delegation to the 19th Session of the UN/FAO Intergovernmental Committee of the World Food Program, 29 March-6 April 1971”, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, 1970–73, Box 465, AGR 4/1/71.

13 Alfred C. Toepfer, “Marktbericht”, 13 January 1972, Alfred-Toepfer-Archiv.

14 U.S. Agricultural Attaché Tokyo, report JP 2034, 20 July 1972, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 19, JP Japan 1971DR [sic].

15 Caviedes 2001, pp. 17, 96–103; Davis 2001, pp. 230–234.

16 “Ursache der Hausse: Russen-Käufe, Ausbleiben der Anchovis-Fische in Peru, Humboldt-Strom wird warm (Nino-Strom), innenpolitische Situation in den USA [. . .]”. Dr. Rudolf Stöhr,

from 11 to 4.8 million tons in 1972 and to 2 million a year later was a further strain on the world feed grain and soybean markets.¹⁷ Whether or not *el niño* affects North America and Russia is still contended; in any case, the Soviet Union experienced an abnormal loss of winter grain due to insufficient snow cover and heavy frost in the winter of 1971–1972.

Traditionally, the USSR would have coped with such a situation by reducing domestic consumption or using reserves, combined with limited imports from Canada, Argentina and elsewhere. However, in about 1970, the Communist Party (and the leaders of other socialist countries) had embarked on a long-term policy of increasing meat, milk and egg consumption. The policy was reinforced by food riots in Poland that brought down the Gomulka government in December 1970. It was politically impossible to retreat from the new standard of living.¹⁸ Hence, a reduction of livestock production was no option and imports became necessary. The spectacular rapprochement of the superpowers with Nixon's visits to Moscow in 1971 and Beijing in 1972 rested in part on grain deals. Aside from the Soviet purchases, China imported an additional 5 million tons.¹⁹ Other deals followed. Within months, most of the world's grain reserves were gone (see Table 2.2).

The U.S. administration knew about the new Soviet policy. A first, medium-scale grain trade agreement was reached in December 1971, following tough negotiations in which National Security Advisor Kissinger was involved. In 1972, U.S. authorities also knew about some Soviet crop losses. But the USDA revealed to the public only bits of information before the end of August 1972, and it seems to have underestimated the Soviet demand and the amount of grain they wanted to buy.²⁰ Though the USDA got most of its information from the Soviet press, it was still more accurate than the CIA's,²¹ though inferior to Canada's market intelligence, the knowledge of the grain-trading company Alfred C. Toepfer and even of collaborators

“Entwicklungen und Tendenzen am internationalen Getreidemarkt (Referat Heide-Seminar 26.10.73, ACT Lehrlinge)”. Thanks to Rudolf Stöhr for providing me with copies of this and some of his other papers.

17 Cavedes 2001, pp. 17–19; Voituriez and Jacques 2000, pp. 106–108; Matzke 1974, pp. 70–71.

18 U.S. Agricultural Attaché Moscow, Report of 11 February 1971 on the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CPSU, 2–3 July 1970, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 33, SS USSR 1971DR; see Deutsch 1986, pp. 111–147; Nazarenko 1989; Gerlach 2017.

19 Material in NARA, Nixon, EX FG 20, Box 1, files 6 and 7.

20 Trager 1975, pp. 20–25; Broehl 1998, pp. 153 ff.; Morgan 1980, pp. 11, 199–201; Peterson to Nixon, 9 December 1971, Kissinger to Nixon, 14 April, and Flanigan's memo, 12 June 1972, NARA, Nixon, CF, Box 9, CO 158, USSR 1971–74. For the initial negotiations, see *ibid.*, Box 66, TR 38–4, Russia, 1971–74; speech of Deputy Assistant Secretary, USDA, Andrew Mair, 16 June 1972, FAO 12, ES, FA 8/6 I; NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1972, Box 5571, Grain 3, Oct 16, 1972–; US/USSR Trade Negotiations Press Kit, “II. Soviet plans to upgrade citizens diet”, 14 July 1972, *ibid.*, Box 5572, Grain 3, January–July 1972, 2.

21 Reports since December 1971 in NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 33, *ibid.*, SS USSR 1971 and SS USSR 1972 DR; cf. secret CIA reports from November 1971 to August 1972, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1972, Box 5572, Grain 3, Jan–July 1972, 1. For December 1971: NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1971, Box 5405, Grain 3 (Foreign Trade), 1971.

of the Cold War stations Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe.²² In parallel negotiations with several major grain-trading companies in the summer of 1972, Soviet negotiators concluded huge contracts at very favorable conditions. Observers in the USA complained: “They beat us in our own game – capitalism”. The administration was criticized for allowing sales to the USSR on preferential terms and for subsidizing the splendid business of U.S.-based grain companies while clueless farmers made very little on their wheat and corn.²³ Public pressure grew to the point that the White House considered firing Caroll G. Brunthaver, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for International Affairs and Commodity Programs, on the fictional grounds of lying to the Secretary of Agriculture.²⁴

On 17 July 1972, the USDA published the new wheat support program for the next crop year; a little more than one month later, baking industry representatives warned the department that the set aside program, which guaranteed farmers financial help for not growing wheat, could lead to a shortage. Washington responded with reassurances.²⁵ But USDA officials soon called upon other countries to increase grain production.²⁶ At the end of September, various actors in the USA, including grain growers, warned of impending domestic shortages as a result of the country’s large exports.²⁷ At the same time, the FAO noticed a “dramatic transformation in the world grains situation” because of Soviet imports, surging prices, low stocks in exporting nations and tight rice supplies. The FAO’s Director-General Addeke Boerma was “very concerned about the possibility of shortages in grains”,²⁸ but he refused to issue a public warning for fear that it would exacerbate the panic that had already begun. After repeated delays, a helpless Boerma finally met with the international press, which had rather alarmed him than vice versa, in February 1973. “At first the scope of the incipient world food crisis was not appreciated”, the FAO representative in North America, Howard Cottam, recalled, “and

22 The Canadian Wheat Board received a report from an Ottawa-based plant geneticist that the Soviet wheat shortfall through winter kill alone would amount to 20 million tons already in February 1972: Fowler and Mooney 1990, p. x. See also Alfred C. Toepfer, “Marktbericht”, 16 March and 13 April 1972, Alfred-Toepfer-Archiv; Vicker 1975, pp. 61–62.

23 NARA, Nixon, CF, Box 62, TA 3-CO# (Exports); Trager 1975; Robbins 1974, pp. 179–205; Morgan 1980. Quote: former USDA official Don Brock in San Jose Examiner, 1 August 1975, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1975, Box 5980, Grain 3, September–October 1975. For later inquiries into charges of favoritism, see Broehl 1998, pp. 187–210.

24 Memo Colson to Haldeman and Ehrlichman, “Possible Scenario”, 28 September 1972, and further materials, NARA, Nixon, CF, Box 62, TA 3-CO# (Exports).

25 Cf. letters by Southern Bakers Association, Atlanta, and Rainbo Baking Co., Johnson City, Tennessee, 28 and 31 August 1972, *ibid.*, Box 5626, Wheat 1 (Acreage allotments); Daspit (American Bakers Association) to Butz, 8 August 1972, ditto, Box 5625, Wheat 3 (Sept 21–Oct 10, 1972).

26 Assistant Secretary Andrew Mair according to “Official report of the U.S. Delegation to the 12th FAO Regional Conference for Latin America, Cali, Colombia, August 21–September 2, 1972”, NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73, Box 459, AGR 3 FAO 9/1/72.

27 Dole to Butz, 11 September 1972, and National Soft Wheat Association, 22 September 1972, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5625, Wheat.

28 Quarterly Review of the world commodity situation, July–September 1972 (and April–June), FAO 12, Comm. Div., CO 1/4; second quote: Cottam (FAO) to Ralph Phillips, USDA, 12 September 1972, FAO 12, ES, FA 8/6 I.

as it became clearer there was no effective global mechanism for consultation and action”.²⁹

With orders from all over the world, the USDA saw the chance to get rid of its expensive price support programs (the set aside programs cost US\$3.6 billion in 1972) and cut its storage costs (\$200 million annually). Secretary Butz urged Assistant Secretary Brunthaver, in charge of international trade: “If ever we had an opportunity to get our stocks down to the zero level, or as close as that we practically can, that time is now”.³⁰ While Brunthaver denied that this was happening in response to increasingly distrustful FAO officials, an employee in his office reported that the USDA was “aggressively moving its stocks”, held by the public Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), onto the market, and the department intimated that it would not hold corn from the next harvest.³¹ “The Government is selling its grain stocks with the objective to literally emptying its grain bins”, a White House paper noted. In April 1973, Butz reported to Nixon with “a great deal of pleasure” that the operation, which had begun in August 1972, had all but eliminated the grain reserves. Henceforth, the market would operate unrestrained.³²

What was a crisis for some seemed an opportunity for others. It was symbolic that a report in a West German magazine about famines in India and Bangladesh, which blamed South Asians themselves, was flanked by two advertisements for commodity trading companies.³³ The U.S. rice stocks were halved in 1971–1972. As a result, and with the CCC’s stocks available for food aid depleted, India, for example, could expect no more concessional deliveries in February 1973 and only small ones in 1974.³⁴ Several countries requested food aid in vain.³⁵ The USA

29 Jackson to Cottam, 19 December 1972, FAO 12, ES, FA 8/6 I; quote: Howard Cottam, “How the US became involved in World Food problems”, draft notes for address of 27 August 1973, FAO 15, LNOR, IN-7.2. Boerma: Boerma to Butz, 15 December 1972, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr., Box 5719, Grain 3 (Jan–10 Aug 1973); Economic and Social Policy Department, Summary Record, meeting on 13 September 1972, FAO 12, ES, FA 7/11; U.S. Embassy Rome to Secretary of State, 2 February 1973, NARA, RG 59, SNF, Economic, Box 461, 1/1/73.

30 Butz to Brunthaver, 5 December 1972 and response, 11 December, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr., Box 5572, Grain 6, April 1, 1972-. Costs of the set aside program: Melvin H. Middents, Assistant Vice President, Cargill, to Butz, 9 June 1972, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1972, Box 5571, Grain.

31 Brunthaver to Boerma, 5 January 1973, Binder to Tetro and to Ojala, 14 and 16 February 1973, FAO 12, Comm. Div., FA 4/15 II; Behrens (USDA) to House of Representative Member Peter Kyros, 21 December 1972, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1972, Box 5572, Grain 6, April 1, 1972. Cf. Leeks to Tetro, 19 April 1973, FAO 12, ES, FA 8/6 II.

32 “Food Prices”, 20 March 1973, NARA, Nixon, Staff Member and Office Files, Herbert Stein, Box 95, Food Prices, 3–20–73; Butz to Nixon, 27 April 1973, NARA, Nixon, FG 20, Box 4, EX FG 20–6.

33 “Hunger” 1974.

34 Moynihan (U.S. Ambassador to India) to Butz, 6 February 1973, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr. 1973, Box 5720, Grain 6–1 (Storage); Moynihan telegram, 23 October 1974, Ford Library, Presidential Country Files for the Middle East and South Asia, Box 12, India – State Dept. Telegrams Secstate – NODIS (1); Tony Vaux, “The Politics of Hunger: a supplementary note on the drought in Gujarat”, December 1974, Oxfam, file Reports on visits to areas affected by national disasters.

35 Müller 2007, p. 39 (Mali). Limited or postponed food aid: U.S. Embassy Dacca to Secretary of State, 2 February 1973 and State Department to McGovern, 7 August 1973, ditto, Box 466, AGR B (Bangladesh); Kissinger memo for Nixon, 17 September 1973, NARA, Nixon paper, CF, Box 8,

suspended food aid shipments for several weeks in mid-1973.³⁶ Countries denied such aid had to buy what they could commercially, with another portion of demand uncovered,³⁷ so that differences in purchasing power exacerbated international inequality. CIA director William Colby wrote to Earl Butz:

This is the crux of the matter: the poor food-deficit LDCs [Least Developed Countries] will have extreme problems paying world prices for such shipments. Famine does not require a world-wide shortage of food, only uneven availabilities – within parts of India today.³⁸

One might argue that these sales stabilized prices in the short term, but the language in the correspondences cited earlier indicates that, on the contrary, the intention behind the elimination of U.S. reserves was to push grain prices higher³⁹ for a long time in order to bring about a fundamental change, namely, to end the government's support policies for farmers' incomes. In addition, however, it did not ease its restrictions on planted acreage in 1973 as much as some wanted.⁴⁰ In this way, the "little-noticed American legislation, in virtually eliminating U.S. food stocks and thus pulling out – just in a time of increasing price volatility – the cushion that had previously kept world food markets reasonably stable" contributed much to create a crisis.⁴¹ At an October 1972 meeting of the FAO's Committee on Commodity Problems, some of its functionaries suggested maintaining reserves for use in the case of famines or excessive price hikes, but a U.S. representative objected: "For the first time, we are earning some income from grain exports because we have been subsidizing them all the time. And you people want to put a lid on these low prices", to which the head of the FAO's Commodities Division, Sartaj Aziz, claims to have retorted: "Ultimately, you have to calculate how many billions of dollars are worth how many lives".⁴² Only sustained high grain prices in the world market would help to accomplish U.S. government's domestic policy goals. By late July 1972, likewise, the Canadian and Australian Wheat Boards saw the chance to drive international prices higher and urged the USA to do so.⁴³ In 1976, the USDA in turn pressed the Canadians to help keeping international wheat prices high.⁴⁴ In

CO115 Pakistan 1971–74; Nixon to Bandaranaike, 3 August 1973, Nixon, CF, SF, FO, Box 36, EX FO 3–2, 7/1/73–5/11/73 (Sri Lanka). For Indonesia, see Chapter 3.

36 Schertz 1975, p. 201; Sheets and Morris 1974, p. 23.

37 For example, see "Uncovered Import Requirements of Most Seriously Affected (MSA) Countries in 1974/75", 21 February 1975, FAO, RG 12, Comm. Div., FA 4/25, vol. I.

38 Colby to Butz, 2 November 1974 concerning USDA comments on the CIA study of potential implications of climate change, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5847, Food 2, Oct 1–Nov 26, 1974, 2.

39 Frundt 1975, p. 274 and 290, note 32, also stated this but gave no evidence.

40 For example, the rice acreage planned for 1973 was below the 1969 level: USDA, Agricultural Statistics and Conservation Service, Farm Marketing Quotas and Acreage Allotments, Rice 1973–74 Marketing Year, 27 December 1972 and further material, *ibid.*, Box 5473, Rice 1. Cf. Broehl 1998, p. 182.

41 William P. Bundy, "Introduction", in Bundy 1975, p. 15.

42 Interview with Sartaj Aziz, 30 August 2001, p. 41, in: United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007. The committee did not act.

43 Broehl 1998, p. 160.

44 Morgan 1980, p. 331.

other words, despite the U.S. government's flowery language of humanitarianism, the world food crisis was crafted, though some side effects were not anticipated.

The U.S. government's policy drew international criticism.⁴⁵ According to various calculations, the remaining food stocks shrank to between 6 and 8 percent of annual global consumption, the lowest level in two decades. The U.S. and Canadian governments, which had both long maintained large stocks, argued that importing nations should build up their own reserves and, so, bear the costs. The FAO expected this to happen, too. As early as February 1972, the Nixon administration sought an agreement with the EEC to enlarge their carryover stocks when the USA planned to take more acreage out of production. During the crisis, the USA and Canada rejected reserves under international control.⁴⁶

However, if the USA and Canada did no longer hold a large part of the world's grain reserves, which was left to other nations around the world, this implied the end of U.S. control of the market. In addition to the end of the dollar-based Bretton Woods currency system in August 1971, this step indicated that the U.S. economic hegemony was in decline.

By March 1973, domestic shortages caused by relentless exports had triggered such grave inflation in food prices within the USA (especially for meat) that President Nixon had to deal with the issue almost daily. Opinion surveys that year showed that food prices were the public's issue of greatest concern despite the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal; they remained important in 1974.⁴⁷ While the Soviets maintained their herds, the number of hogs in the USA fell 40 percent from 1972 to 1974 because rising grain prices in part caused by Soviet purchases had made raising them unprofitable.⁴⁸ The Bakers Association had begun to protest because they needed authorization by a governmental pricing board for raising bread prices, which was denied at times. It cited a White House advisor's estimation that the increase in grain prices caused by the export offensive had cost domestic consumers \$7 billion.⁴⁹ As in other countries, retail food prices rose more

45 See UN World Food Conference, *World Food Problem*, p. 1–2; Report of the U.S. Delegation to the FAO-Conference, November 10–29, 1973, NARA, RG 59, SNF 1970–73, Box 461, 5/1/73.

46 Statement of U.S. Representative to the World Food Conference at the 17th FAO Conference (n.d. [November 1973]) and undated U.S. Delegation Information Bulletin (excerpt, December 1973), FAO 12, Comm. Div., UN-43/5 USA; Leeks to Aziz, 28 February 1972, *ibid.*, CO 1/4; Address of Canadian Minister of Agriculture Wheelan at the 17th FAO Conference, 14 November 1973, in: *Agriculture Abroad XXVIII*, no. 6, December 1973, pp. 34–35.

47 “The President's Meetings and Phone Calls Relating to Foreign Affairs + Major International and Domestic Events of Concern to President Nixon” (16 March–11 April 1973), NARA, Nixon, CF, Box 52, PR 7–1, 1974, 2; cf. *ibid.*, Box 53, PR 15 Public Opinion Polls, 1971–74, 2; NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1973, Box 5719, Grain 6, Jan 1–25 and Jan 1–Aug 10, 1973; Nixon, Staff Member and Office Files, Herbert Stein, Box 95, Meeting on Agriculture 3–13–73; CLC Committee on Food Meeting 3–16–73; und Food Prices 3–20–73.

48 Address by G. Bishop, first draft, 15 April 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 13, Booker McConnell II.

49 “Meat, Heat and Now the Wheat Crunch: An Analysis of the Wheat Supply Situation by the American Bakers Association”, 15 February 1974, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1974, Box 5909,

steeply than other costs of living.⁵⁰ The year 1973 was a watershed in U.S. social history, after which average wages (adjusted for inflation) declined, and meat consumption per capita fell in that year by over 7 percent.⁵¹

The situation of the grain export strategists became even more precarious. Domestic fertilizer and transportation bottlenecks added to the mess. In June 1973, Nixon was forced to halt soybean exports, which shook Japanese and Western European confidence in the reliability of the USA, “not just as a source of agricultural imports but also as a partner with which they are closely associated”. The EEC’s Commissioner for Agriculture, Pierre Lardinois, saw the entire system of free world trade called into question. The soybean embargo led to a lot of fraudulent business practices in pursuit of extraordinary profits. Brazil, Argentina and Thailand resorted to similar export controls. The EEC banned exports of rice and wheat in July and August 1973, and Canada halted wheat exports in the fall of 1974.⁵² The U.S. government restricted grain exports and again cut food aid; domestic and foreign policy goals collided progressively, as did interests between different social groups in the USA.⁵³ Institutionally, these struggles were reflected in the fact that there were at least ten different U.S. authorities running interagency studies on the food situation in November 1973.⁵⁴

Private grains traders, too, were as much in business as they were in trouble. Of Cargill’s 1972 fiscal year, Barney Saunders remarked: “It was a year of record profits, record dollar sales, record tonnage, record margins, record problems, record expense, record traffic jams, record prices and controls, record aspirin pills, and many record performances by a record number of people”.⁵⁵

Wheat 3. The expert cited was Gary L. Seevers. See *ibid.*, 1972, Box 5626, Wheat 6 (Sept 21–Oct 5, 1972).

50 See also “Monthly Bulletin of Agricultural Economics and Statistics” 23 (6), 1974, pp. 11–12, FAO CL 64/2, FAO, RG 7, film 517.

51 Earl Butz admitted the latter in a speech titled “We Will Always Be a Nation of Good Eaters” before the Pacific Northwest Restaurant Convention and Exposition, Seattle, 30 April 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5909, Wheat 4.

52 Brunthaver to U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy, 27 June 1973, *ibid.*, 1973, Box 5720, Grain 3 (Jan–Aug 10, 1973); NARA, Nixon, Staff Member and Office Files, Herbert Stein, Box 98, Meeting with Mr. Lardinois, 7–20–73; Alfred C. Toepfer, “Marktbericht”, 13 July 1973, Alfred-Toepfer-Archiv; Warman 2003, p. 210; quote: “International Cooperation in Agriculture: NSSM 187”, ca. October 1973, NARA, Nixon papers, SF, AG, Box 2, EX AG, September–December 1974 [i.e., 1973], p. 5 of the document. Firms: Broehl 1998, pp. 243–250. “[B]iggest shock to date in contemporary U.S.–Japanese relations”: Gilmore 1982, p. 150, see 146–153. EEC: US Agricultural Attaché Paris, “Grain & Feed – Annual Report”, 13 August 1973, NARA, RG 166, US Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 10, FR France 1973DR. Only wheat for food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa was exempted. Canada: U.S. Agricultural Attaché, 13 November 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 37, CN Canada 1974 DR. For the embargo, see also Zosso 2015, pp. 78–80, 113–116.

53 Destler 1978 is fundamental.

54 Flanigan memo to Haig, 16 October 1973, NARA, Nixon papers, SF, AG, Box 2, EX AG Sept–Dec 1974 (i.e., 1973).

55 Quoted in Broehl 1998, p. 224.

Internationally, the view was widespread that a new age had dawned. The era of food surpluses was over, the *Pakistan Times* argued. The FAO believed that a “fundamental change” had taken place in the world food system. The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture expected a long period of instability in global grain markets. It was precisely because of the prospect of a protracted world food shortage that the French Minister of Agriculture Jacques Chirac predicted golden years for the country’s family farmers.⁵⁶

The world saw a record grain harvest in 1973, but mostly in Europe, the Soviet Union and much of Asia. But as most of the bumper crop refilled reserves, little of it entered the international market, which would have eased prices. Grain production fell again in Africa and West Asia. August 1973 saw a new peak in public concern after the International Wheat Council announced that it anticipated that the global demand for imports in 1973–1974 would exceed available exports by 9 million tons.⁵⁷

In this situation, initiatives multiplied. On 20 September, FAO’s Director-General Boerma gathered high-ranking officials from the major exporting countries at a meeting in Rome, which was inconclusive. Four days later, Henry Kissinger, in his first official address at the UN General Assembly as the U.S. Secretary of State, proposed to hold a World Food Conference (similar to the Group of 77 two weeks before) to deal with weather-induced shortages. On the same day, the president of the ‘World Bank’, Robert McNamara, declared at the annual meeting of the institution’s Board of Governors in Nairobi that conventional development policy had failed. The trickle-down theory⁵⁸ hadn’t worked, and development agencies needed to center their efforts on agriculture, in particular, the rural poor in non-industrialized countries.⁵⁹ Circumstances deteriorated further several weeks later with the Arab oil embargo and the start of the energy crisis,⁶⁰ which led to shortages of and price hikes for mineral fertilizers, pesticides and fuel for machinery and transportation. In early 1974, prices reached their peak.

56 *Pakistan Times*, 25 February 1974, FAO 22/1; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, The State of Japan’s Agriculture 1973, n.d., NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 41, JP Japan 1974; US Agricultural Attaché Paris, report FR-2083, 21 November 1972, *ibid.*, Box 10, FR France 1972; “The Current World Food Situation”, FAO 9, Subject Files, III, FAO/IBRD Round Table.

57 Address of Howard Cottam to the American School of International Service, 4 February 1974, FAO 9, ICP, UN-43/1 I.

58 According to the trickle-down theory, development support for the wealthy would eventually lead to gains and “development” also for poor masses.

59 See Gerlach 2002a, pp. 58–63. Five days before, the FAO’s Director-General explicitly, though timidly, refused to call for such a conference. “Urgent Consultation on World Food Cereals Situation: Opening Statement by Director-General”, 19 September 1973, FAO, RG 13, ADG, R. Aubrac Files, World Food Conference, vol. I.

60 For the perspectives of industrialized countries, see Bohi and Darmstadter 1996; Hohensee 1996. It should be noted that many in the USA saw “our nation . . . in the midst of a serious energy crisis”, especially in agriculture, already months earlier: Statement of Farmers Cooperative Officials to Butz and Fairbanks, 9 February 1973, NARA, Nixon papers, SF, AG, Box 2, EX AG January–April 1973; see various correspondences, April–May 1973, Nixon papers, Butz, Box 1, Counselor Butz – Correspondence [file 1].

Table 2.1 International grain prices from 1972 to 1974 (in U.S. dollars per ton)⁶¹

	January 1972	June 1972	December 1972	January 1973	June 1973	December 1973	January 1974	February 1974	March 1974	April 1974	May 1974	June 1974	July 1974
Wheat	60	60	104	108	106	199	214	220	191	162	142	156	169
Rice	131	136	186	179	205	521	538	575	603	630	625	596	517
Corn	51	53	69	79	102	113	122	131	126	114	114	117	135
Soybeans	125	138	174	214	470	254	261	271	265	235	227	?	?

Non-industrialized states’ subsidies of fertilizer to ensure that their farmers had adequate access often burdened their trade balances, and the shortages they nonetheless faced pitted poor producers against the better-off in a struggle over distribution. Situated in a cyclical trough, the fertilizer industry needed years to add new capacities (see Chapter 6).

Betraying hopes for better, bad weather in South Asia, the USSR and North America and the consequences of the energy crisis resulted in another wave of price hikes, and new U.S. export restrictions, in the fall of 1974, and the atmosphere at the World Food Conference in November was gloomy. In his inaugural address, the UN’s Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, called the food emergency one of the world’s “gravest crises in its history”.⁶² At their summit in September 1973, the non-aligned nations described it as “a matter of life and death for two thirds of mankind”.⁶³

In August 1975, FAO’s Director-General still sent a pessimistic assessment to the ministers of agriculture of the exporting nations, which tried to reassure him. Again, Boerma avoided public admonitions. Once more, the USDA urged the grain traders to restraint with their export deals, but West Germany’s Minister for Agriculture already recommended to gather reserves as a means to counter what he saw as the menace of global surpluses. In fact, the situation in Asia eased in 1975 because of a record rice harvest, but Europe faced stagnation and the Soviet Union a disastrous setback in their grain production.⁶⁴ The world record grain harvest of 1976, of which the USSR accounted for 70 percent of the increase or 79 million tons, was the result of good weather, the incentive of high prices to increase

61 Data from Almeida et al. 1975a, p. 98 (wheat and corn prices f.o.b. Gulf of Mexico, Rice f.o.b. Bangkok, soybeans in Rotterdam).

62 Quoted from Vicker 1975, p. 100. Export restrictions: Sobel 1975, pp. 80–81. Corn was then sold in the USA for \$175 and wheat for \$220 per ton. Address of Rudolf Stöhr before the Austrian Mills Cartel, 16 October 1974.

63 Quoted in Walton draft, “Proposal for a Special World Food Conference under United Nations Auspices”, 31 October 1973, FAO, RG 22/2.

64 Circular letter with “FAO Assessment of the World Grains Situation as of 31 July 1975” and responses, FAO 12, ES, FA 4/21.1; USDA, ERS, “Rice Situation”, October 1975, Ford Library, Paul Leach files, Box 6, Rice; UPI/AP report, 11 August 1975, *ibid.*, “Grain Sales to the U.S.S.R.”; Boerma to Butz, 6 August 1975, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1975, Box 5980, Grain 3, Sept–Oct 1975; U.S. Agricultural Attaché, report GY 5056, 6 June 1975, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 49, GY Germany 1975 DR; UN World Food Council, Assessment of the World Food Situation and Outlook, WFC/17/Rev.1, 7 June 1976, FAO Library.

production, improved supplies of fertilizer and greater investment in agriculture in general.⁶⁵

Unusually large Soviet grain purchases from the USA had marked the beginning of the crisis. An agreement, on 20 October 1975, for long-term deliveries of U.S. grain to the USSR marked its end. The Soviet Union agreed to buy between 6 million and 8 million tons annually until 1981,⁶⁶ which symbolizes the changes that the world food crisis brought about in the international food system. Soviet leaders had indicated their interest in such a treaty since at least 1973, and the U.S. had signed a five-year contract with Poland for the purchase of 7.5 million tons of grain in late 1972.⁶⁷ Trade between capitalist and socialist industrialized nations grew during the world economic crisis by 49 percent in 1973 and 43 percent in 1974.⁶⁸ However, in opening the Eastern European, West Asian and Chinese markets for industrial goods and capital, the Western Europeans (and the Japanese, who penetrated the Chinese market) had moved far ahead.⁶⁹ The USA was left with little more than its predominance in grain exports. “This is a lesson for our various technical experts who are inclined to consider agriculture a marginal activity”, snapped Radboud Beukenkamp, U.S. agricultural attaché in Rome, “the greatest industrial power in the world is relying on agriculture to cure its economic and monetary troubles”.⁷⁰ “Agriculture is our largest single export industry”, noted the USDA proudly, adding that three quarters of the country’s wheat, two-thirds of its rice, half of its soybean and more than one quarter of its feed grain production were grown for export.⁷¹

Long-term causes of the crisis

Contemporary analyses identified numerous roots of the food crisis, including the growth in Western Europe’s meat consumption, which had boosted the demand for feeds. Japan and the socialist industrialized nations displayed a similar trend. The international increase in the consumption of red meat from 66 to 82 million tons in the period from 1962 to 1970 required 75 million tons of grain annually. The grain-trading firm Cargill hoped for a “decade of the ‘Meat Revolution’”.⁷² In about 40 non-industrialized countries, increases in food production

65 Ditto, WFC/34, 30 March 1977, FAO Library.

66 Ford Library, Paul Leach files, Box 4, Grain Sales to the U.S.S.R.; Gilmore, Poor Harvest, pp. 98–101; Porter 1984.

67 See Brezhnev’s remarks according to minutes about his meeting with members of the U.S. Congress, 23 April 1973, Nixon, CF, Box 34, FO-8, International Travel 1973–74; Memo Whitaker for Ehrlichman, “U.S.-Polish Agricultural Trade Deal”, 7 November 1972, *ibid.*, Box 62, TA 3-CO # (Exports).

68 Growth was down to 12 percent in 1975 and 2.3 percent in 1976: Mandel 1987, p. 134.

69 See Mandel 1987, pp. 157–178, esp. pp. 157, 162.

70 “World Grain Production and the U.S. – A View from the Left”, 25 September 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 18, IT Italy 1973.

71 USDA draft reply to J. Ross, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5851, Sept–Dec 1974; see also Sloane 1979, p. 21 with data for 1973–1976.

72 Middents to Butz, 9 June 1972 (see note 2/30); for the increase, see Hopper 1975, p. 183.

consistently lagged behind population growth or economic plans. Rates of self-sufficiency declined, especially in Africa, due in part to rapid urbanization. In Asia, the ‘green revolution’ was limited largely to wheat, and rice yields had even fallen in some areas since the 1960s; according to some, the ‘green revolution’ had lost “momentum”. For a long time, the terms of trade for non-industrialized countries had deteriorated, making their grain imports more expensive.⁷³ In a relatively good year like 1975, the estimated caloric consumption *per capita* was no higher than it had been in the years from 1934 to 1938 on average.⁷⁴ But in 1940, non-industrialized countries had net exports of 10 million tons, they became net importers only after the Second World War.⁷⁵ In the early 1970s, analyses centered more and more on poverty in non-industrialized countries, the concentration of land ownership, unemployment, technical stagnation and the social effects of the ‘green revolution’.

There were speculations about fundamental climate change and fears that intense bursts of solar energy could trigger a long-term drought in the crucial U.S. Midwest and new high-pressure systems would deflect the Asian monsoon southwards.⁷⁶ The drought in the Sahel from 1967 to 1973 was the beginning of two decades of low rainfall.

Pictures of exhausted, emaciated refugees fleeing hunger shocked consumers of world media. (In the next chapter, I discuss the relation of the world market to famines in different regions.) Hunger crises and protests against the resulting corruption contributed to bringing down several governments.

Policies for expanding the world market: the USA and beyond

In the 1940s, the USA had built an enormous capacity to produce grain. After the end of the war-related export boom, the famines in the immediate aftermath of World War II and the boom from the Korean War, the U.S. government responded to chronic domestic surpluses with partly public-financed exports – in other words, food aid, transactions paid for in foreign currencies or on concessional terms. This multi-purpose dumping mechanism served to relieve surpluses, develop commercial export markets, stabilize friendly capitalist countries economically and politically against communism, provide humanitarian aid in emergencies and exert

73 Rochebrune et al. 1975, pp. 21 ff.; statement of Sayed Marei, Secretary-General of the World Food Conference, 28 March 1974, FAO 12, Comm. Div., UN-43/3A Regional meetings; UN World Food Conference 1974b, p. 112, and UN World Food Conference 1974a, pp. 2–3. Quote: Cochrane 1974, p. 6.

74 “Recommendations from the Asian Development Bank Consultative Committee on a strategy for investment in support of agricultural and rural development in Asia”, 6 December 1975, FAO 15, RAFE, Rural Development 1972–1976.

75 “Bericht über die Weltlandreform-Konferenz in Rom, 20. Juni-2. Juli 1965”, PA AA III A3, Nr. 10, with reference to FAO Director-General Sen; UN World Food Council, WFC/42, 30 March 1977, p. 9 of the document, FAO Library; Wallenstein 1978, p. 58.

76 See Rochebrune et al. 1975, pp. 28–29; USDA, ERS, World Food Situation, pp. 72–74; and Chapter 12 of this study.

influence on development, for example, through food-for-work projects and the use of related local currency funds.⁷⁷

The increasing costs of this food aid program led to gradual cutbacks beginning in the mid-1960s. The Indian famine from 1965 to 1967 was of crucial importance for this development.⁷⁸ In late 1965, India's shortfall of grain was 10 million tons, which equaled the peak of U.S. deliveries to Europe after the Second World War. "The Indian food crisis became the laboratory in which the policies advocated by Secretary Freeman and his staff would be tested", an internal history of the USDA stated.⁷⁹ The USA linked food aid to a development policy that sought to strengthen food production, research, technology and what would soon be presented as the 'green revolution'. During the Indian food crisis (when Japan, Indonesia and Vietnam also bought large amounts of rice), U.S., and international, reserves dwindled, which sent world market prices, and U.S. farmers' incomes, to new highs. For the first time, the world hunger problem dominated public opinion, and gloomy prognoses proliferated, including the book *Famine – 1975! America's Decision: Who Will Survive?*⁸⁰

The USA saw new export prospects. The USDA and Democratic senators intensified their calls for a shift from food aid to commercial exports in view of the rising demand of non-industrialized countries. Congress rejected bills for massive strategic reserves. Agriculture Secretary Orville Freeman, advocating a "gradual shift from aid to trade", took a similar position, though others in the USDA contested his view. Given strong demand, wheat hectareage was enlarged from 20.5 million in 1965 to 27.2 million in 1967 (though 24 million hectares had earlier been taken out of production). When the expected further increase of international demand failed to materialize, prices collapsed under the huge surpluses.⁸¹ In March 1973, the USDA's chief public relations officer warned of an imminent parallel: "Farmers have memories of the 1966–67 period when the World Food Crisis dissolved along with farm prices [. . .]". A U.S. researcher at the FAO's Washington liaison office called this "'67 experience" a "misfortune".⁸²

Following the Indian food crisis, the U.S. government took similar anti-cyclical measures as before, and more. It increased subsidies to farmers to taking land out

77 Wallerstein 1980.

78 See Singh 1975; Bearth 1990, pp. 225–266; BA B 213/6759 and PA AA III B1, Nr. 592; and especially *The Department of Agriculture During the Administration of Lyndon B. Johnson*, November 1963–January 1969, NARA, RG 16, Records of John A. Schnitker, Box 8, pp. 1/22–23 and IV/30–58.

79 *Ibid.*, p. IV/34.

80 Paddock and Paddock 1967; report of West German Embassy in Bangkok, "10. Tagung der FAO-Studiengruppe Reis in Bangkok", 25 November 1966, PA AA III A 3, Nr. 10.

81 *The Department of Agriculture . . .*, pp. IV/17, 78–79, 85–86, 89, 92 and 103, as well as pp. III/1 ff. and 11. Acreage out of production: statement by U.S. President Johnson, 12 November 1966, PA AA III B1, Nr. 592. Cf. Freeman's statement before the House of Representatives' Committee for Agriculture, 23 February 1966, FAO 12, ES FA 8/6 I.

82 First quote: circular letter by Swegle, 2 March 1973, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. Box 5635, List Letters; second quote: Robert C. Tetro, "World Food Situation – some FAO perspectives", October 1973, FAO 15, Reg. Files FA 6.7 Tetro 1973.

of grain production. The four biggest grain exporting nations – the USA, Canada, Argentina and Australia – reduced their grain acreage by up to one-third between 1968 and 1970, which caused a drop in production of 90 million tons from 1969 to 1971.⁸³ Canada intensified the policy in 1970–1973 under the promising name Lower Inventory for Tomorrow, with the telling acronym LIFT.⁸⁴ Other countries, such as Japan, where costly rice support payments were financial burdens on the government, followed suit. Stocks slowly decreased.⁸⁵ The year 1971 saw a brief reversal of the trend for corn, sorghum, rice and soybeans⁸⁶ due to the asynchronic cycle of meat production, where shortages and rising prices already returned in 1971, triggered by the strong increase in demand in many countries in what West Germans called the ‘*Freßwelle*’ (‘gorging spate’). Strong economic growth in 1971–1972 fueled this trend with calamitous consequences because of its pressure on reserves. At the end of June 1972, President Nixon ended all restrictions on meat imports.⁸⁷ But under the pressure of lobbyists and Members of Congress, among them Senator Hubert Humphrey, who was committed to providing food aid, in February 1972, the USDA took millions more hectares out of production in part because enormous surpluses loomed that would cause prices to plummet.⁸⁸ Consequently, 20 percent of the hectarage (24 million hectares) was withdrawn from production in 1972 at a cost of US\$4 billion. The President of the U.S. National Farmers Union commented: “This contributed in a major degree to wiping out the world food reserves and creating the present exposure of millions of human beings to grave risk of suffering and death by starvation”.⁸⁹

Simultaneously, pressure intensified for a major expansion of U.S. agricultural exports. Among the many reasons were growing imbalances and signs of crisis in the economy and the state apparatus partly related to the Vietnam War: industry losing markets to the new competitors from Western Europe and Japan, a growing problem with the balance of payments, international currency turbulences and the falling U.S. dollar, budget deficits, and inflation. In 1971, the USA recorded its first negative trade balance since 1888.⁹⁰ The situation was so serious that *Playboy* magazine devoted ten

83 USDA, ERS, *The World Food Situation . . .*, p. 22; Alfred C. Toepfer, “Marktbericht”, 17 April, 19 August, 18 December 1969, 16 January, 16 April, 16 July, 17 September, 16 October, 20 November 1970, Alfred-Toepfer-Archiv; Cochrane 1974, p. 2; Luttrell 1973, p. 6 (data for 1956–1972); Johnson 1975, p. 32.

84 See Carter et al. 1989, p. 32; quote: Cohn 1979, pp. 25–26.

85 Siehe C73/LIM/3 bzw./4, International Agricultural Adjustment: A Case Study of Japan bzw. of the USA, November 1973, FAO, RG 6, film 537.

86 Alfred C. Toepfer, “Marktbericht”, 11 February and 11 March 1971 (for Argentina, USA, Canada und France), Alfred-Toepfer-Archiv.

87 Cook, Deputy Assistant to the President, to M. Dawson, Member of the House of Representatives, 26 June 1972 und further material, NARA, Nixon, SF AG, Box 2, EX AG, Nov 1971–72.

88 Correspondence in NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1971, Box 5485, Wheat 1, and Box 5571, Grain 1.

89 Such radical policy turns had equally done harm to U.S. farmers, cattle raisers, and consumers: Tony T. Dechant, National Farmers Union, to Butz, 19 June 1974, ditto, 1974, Box 5909, Wheat 7.

90 U.S. News Article, by Richard Nixon: “A New Foreign Policy for a New World”, final draft, 10 June 1972, NARA, Nixon, NSC, Box 329; Altwater 1973; James 1997, pp. 131–160.

pages to it.⁹¹ Internationally, the crisis of the lead currency aggravated the existing volatility in the currency system, leading to nationalist policies to strengthen the own currency.⁹² The countless resources and industries that had been nationalized around the world since the late 1960s highlighted the interrelation between tighter global integration and intensifying economic nationalism. The new competition for export markets led to many fierce conflicts from the Cod Wars to calls for the New International Economic Order. In this situation, agricultural products became a prime instrument in the international economic contest and a tool for achieving financial stability.

The economic boom and currency fluctuations of 1971–1972 also generated an in part speculative boom in raw materials. Grain speculation was especially widespread in 1973 and 1974 both in certain nations (e.g., Bangladesh; see Chapter 3) and globally, especially on the U.S. future exchanges. Housewives and doctors gambled on wheat and corn futures. “Cargoes were changing hands twenty or thirty times before they actually were ready for delivery”.⁹³ According to some, currency and financial turbulence explain the price hike as much as shortages.⁹⁴ Prices surged when major trade agreements, bans or restrictions on exports, or predictions of poor harvests were made public (see Table 2.1). The low elasticity of demand and speculation in the face of expected shortages meant that small fluctuations in the availability of grain could trigger exponential price rises, as Wilhelm Abel had observed much earlier.⁹⁵ However, because of heavy government regulation of the food sector in most states, the mechanisms that operated in the grain market differed from those in the markets for other agricultural and mining products. Indirect repercussions of the commodity boom (fueled by the U.S. dollar losing value) on the food situation were also the result of the initial carelessness of some non-industrialized countries’ governments in expanding their grain imports on the basis of the boom in their export products, such as coffee, sugar or raw materials, which affected domestic grain prices.⁹⁶

In its first two years, the Nixon administration had focused on domestic problems, like rural poverty, that Johnson’s government had already worked on ameliorating. Eventually, food stamps and the like accounted for most of the USDA’s budget. The department wanted to increase agricultural exports but not with the ultimate thrust.⁹⁷ And yet, by the time of his resignation in 1971 Secretary of

91 According to Advisory Council on Japan-U.S. Economic Relations, “Summary of Meeting [. . .]”, 17 and 18 March 1972, NARA, Nixon papers, IT Box 3, EX IT 6–3 EEC 1971–72.

92 See Altwater 1973, pp. 31, 72.

93 See the criticism in various addresses by Rudolf Stöhr of the Alfred C. Toepfer company, 1973 to 1975 (copies in my possession); Wessel and Hantman 1987, particularly pp. 85–90. Quote: Morgan 1980, p. 278; see also Labys 1978, p. 540. See also Engel 2021.

94 Garcia 1981, pp. 37–38.

95 In his *Agrarkrisen und Agrarkonjunkturen*, a work about the middle ages first published in 1935 (and again, not accidentally, in 1966 and 1978), pp. 23–24.

96 Johnson 1975, pp. 33–34; Garcia 1981, p. 37; Fitt et al. 1980, p. 53; for sugar: George n.y. (1978), p. 18.

97 Address by Barbara Huddleston Sharkey, Acting Director, Trade Negotiations, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, 23 September 1974, FAO 15, LNOR, IL-2.57; USDA, Alternative Farm Program Proposals (Official Use Only), n.d. (received 6 September 1969), NARA, Nixon, SF AG, Box 1, EX AG 1, 1969.

Agriculture Clifford Hardin, whom Nixon had chastised as too hesitant about exports, could tell him: “Export sales of farm commodities are at the highest level in all history”.⁹⁸ Nixon’s announcement of the new economic policy in 1971, the abandonment of the gold standard and dollar depreciations, the initiation of trade relations with the Soviet Union, and efforts to liberalize global trade radically can all be understood in a context with agricultural exports.⁹⁹ Those grain sales abroad became an important part of an effort of the U.S. administration for a general export offensive, which some corporations enthusiastically supported.¹⁰⁰ In 1973, the White House organized a meeting with more than 200 business executives with the objective of boosting exports by 20 percent within a year to rectify the balance of payments.¹⁰¹ The administration took the same aggressive approach to international trade negotiations as in the Tokyo Round of the GATT.

The strained budget no longer seemed to have room for costly agricultural price supports. \$3.8 billion went to farm programs in 1969 but only \$500 million in 1974, according to unofficial figures.¹⁰² The agricultural export offensive enjoyed broad support because it served so many interconnected purposes: officials wanted to get rid of costly support programs for agricultural surpluses and yet boost production, strived for full employment and higher incomes in U.S. agriculture, to improve the balance of payments and to make progress with détente.¹⁰³ All of this, in turn, would solve the crisis in state, economy and society, ensure the Republicans’ hold on power and strengthen international relations. The USDA was willing to put up with the foreseeable rise in domestic food prices, which would shift wealth from the urban to the rural population. However, this generated tensions within the administration.

In 1970, the Williams Commission’s investigation into international trade and investment policy had already identified raising agricultural exports as a core aim.¹⁰⁴ It was still Secretary Hardin who had been commissioned by Nixon to raise

98 Hardin’s letter of resignation, 25 October 1971, NARA, Nixon, FG 20, Box 3, EX FG 20/A, 1969–74.

99 NACLA 1976, p. 19.

100 Invitation by D.F. McMillan, General Chairman, Sunkist, to Petersen, Chairman of the Council for International Economic Policy, 22 June 1971, for the Third Western International Agricultural Trade Conference, NARA, Nixon, SF AG, Box 3, GEN AG 4.

101 Task Force on Export Expansion 1971, NARA, Nixon, Staff Member and Office Files, Herbert Stein, Box 30, CIEP, 2 of 2; Box 31, CIEP #2, 2 of 2, particularly CIEP, Action Proposal for Export Promotion, 9 July 1973; meeting: Nixon, CF, Box 40, CF MC 3–7, WH Conference on Export Expansion 11/11/73.

102 Richard Bell, Remarks before the annual meeting convention of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Columbus, OH, 2 December 1975, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1975, Box 5980, Nov–Dec 1975.

103 Butz to Bill Mead, 11 January 1974, FAO 12, Comm. Div., UN 43/5 USA; Butz to Charles Irvin, 8 July 1974, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1974, Box 5850, Foreign Relations 3 (Foreign Trade); Memo Butz for Nixon, 9 August 1972, NARA, *ibid.* 1972, Box 5372, Grain 3, Aug 1–Oct 15, 1972. In retrospect, Assistant Secretary Brunthaver said many goals had been accomplished: news clippings, *Wall Street Journal* (?), 17 and 21 January 1974, FAO 12, Comm. Div., UN 43/5 USA.

104 NACLA 1976, pp. 11, 13.

agricultural exports to \$10 billion annually. Hardin also intended to put all food aid on a dollar basis.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, the most important U.S. farmers' association set an export goal of \$10 billion, and Cargill Inc. hoped that this goal would be reached "within a few years".¹⁰⁶

A new sense of urgency soon animated efforts to reach it. In 1971, the White House identified Nixon's lack of popularity as one of the administration's gravest problems and believed that larger agricultural exports would remedy it.¹⁰⁷ When Hardin was replaced as Secretary in December 1971, his successor Butz explicitly got the task of winning the farm vote and hence the Midwest in the next year's Presidential election. (Butz should "go high profile with lots of speeches . . . and bring home the farm belt in '72".¹⁰⁸) According to many, he succeeded. Butz, who later stated that Nixon had told him to improve farmer incomes,¹⁰⁹ radicalized export expansion. The initial schedule was to expand exports from \$8 billion (in 1971) to \$10 billion by 1980.¹¹⁰ In one of his spurring letters, Butz congratulated his high-level departmental collaborators for achieving the figure ahead of time: "Dear 'Super Scoopers' in the World Grain Trade, [. . .] I knew you could make it – and long before 1976!" This suggests that Butz had shortened the time frame before, and the goal was reached even earlier. But not even Butz anticipated the avalanche of exports to come. He merely set \$11 billion as the new target; in reality, exports in the agricultural year of 1973–1974 were \$21 billion,¹¹¹ about half of which was grain. Butz's slogan for the next year was "25 in 75!"¹¹²

105 Palmy by Don G. Smith, 21 May 1971 ("recently"), NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1971, Box 5402, Foreign Relations 3 (Foreign Trade), January–April 1971; Roderick Turnbull, Director of Public Affairs, Kansas City Board of Trade, circular of 14 July 1971, *ibid.*, Foreign Relations 3–1 Exports 1971.

106 "Statement of the American Farm Bureau Federation to the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Foreign Economic Policy on Implications of the Enlargement of the European Common Market", by Marvin L. McCain, Legislative Director, 22 July 1971, NARA, Nixon, EX FG 20, Box 1, file 6 (January–May 1972); Middents (Cargill) to Butz, 9 June 1972 (see note 2/30).

107 Memos by Brock to Whitaker, 18 May, Ehrlichman to Hardin, 17 September, Khachigian to Whitaker, 10 November, and Whitaker to Nixon, 24 November 1971, NARA, Nixon, SF AG, Box 2, EX AG Aug–Oct 1971, and Nov 1971–1972, respectively; see *ibid.*, Box 1, EX AG, May–July 1970 (1971 documents).

108 Memo by John Whitaker for Nixon, signed by the letter, 10 November, in preparation for Nixon's meeting with Butz on 11 November 1971, NARA, Nixon, EX FG 20, Box 1, file 5. For Butz, see also Franczak 2022, pp. 23–25

109 Butz to Thad M. Sandstrom, 10 November 1972 (immediately after the Presidential elections), NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1972, Box 5571, Grain 3, Oct 16, 1972–; Butz to Brunthaver, Ioannes, Meade, 12 February 1972, ditto, Box 5570, Foreign Relations 3–1 (Exports); see also Broehl 1998, p. 110.

110 Remark by Brunthaver, in: USDA, International Organizations Staff, Report of the January 1973 Meeting of the U.S. FAO Interagency Committees, 22 January 1973, FAO 15, Reg. Files IL 2.57, USDA, 1972–76; circular by Turnbull, 14 July 1971, see note 2/105.

111 Butz to Brunthaver, Ioannes and Meade, 8 November 1972, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1972, Box 5571, Grain 3, Oct 1972. In 1973, Nixon's advisor for international economic policy, Flanigan, envisioned agricultural exports of \$18 billion in 1980: Frundt 1975, p. 278.

112 Butz to Bell, 6 March 1974, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1974, Box 5851, Foreign Relations 3–1 (Exports), January–August 1974.

The entire apparatus of the Department of Agriculture was mobilized for a truly global effort. For the first time, the USDA assembled all of its approximately 80 agricultural attachés placed on all continents home for a weeklong conference in July 1973. Secretary of Treasury George Shultz and the U.S. Trade Representative William Eberle, among other speakers, explained the importance of agricultural exports for righting the balance of trade. Whether President Nixon addressed the group as intended is not clear. Concerns for “global food security” were not much discussed.¹¹³ The network of agricultural attachés had been founded in 1954 in connection with Public Law 480 to develop markets through food aid. In 1975, the network served to facilitate record exports on a commercial basis.¹¹⁴ In 1973, the USDA’s foreign agricultural service also organized 220 food and agricultural exhibitions in 40 countries.¹¹⁵ The USA were not alone; Canada’s expenditures on agricultural market development more than doubled from \$12 million in 1972 to \$25 million in 1973. In the agricultural year 1973–1974, the Canadian Wheat Board’s trade managers visited no less than 44 countries, most in Eastern and Western Europe, Asia and Latin America.¹¹⁶

New markets

Who was going to buy all that grain? The question seemed pressing as demand in traditional importing countries was about to ebb. Problems loomed especially in Western Europe, above all Great Britain, which joined the EEC on 1 January 1973, and adopted a policy to increase its self-sufficiency even during the previous transitional period that the EEC imposed.¹¹⁷ The USDA had sensed such a tendency

113 In the short run, the meeting, just after Nixon announced the embargo on soybean exports, also collected information in order to avoid further export controls. Butz to Flanigan and to Kissinger, 29 June 1973, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1973, Box 5635, White House, May–Aug. 1973; exchange Butz–Brunthaver, 8–21 August 1973, Box 5720, Grain 3, Aug 1, 1973; critical comments by Howard Cottam, “How the US became involved in world food problems”, address before the U.S. Arms Reserve Civil Affairs Officers, 27 August 1973, FAO 15, Reg. Files IN-7.2. According to Cottam to Jackson, 2 August 1973, FAO, RG 9, SF, II, LNOR 1972/73, the conference lasted for two weeks.

114 Bell (USDA) to Putman, Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation, 22 May 1975, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1975, Box 5978, Foreign Relations 3–1 (Exports), January–June 1975; Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, “Executive Summary of Staff Report: Commercial and Economic Representation Abroad”, January 1973, NARA, Nixon, FO, Box 49, Int. Investment, Sept–Dec 1973.

115 Frundt 1975, p. 265.

116 Yeutter to Tidball, 23 October 1974, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1974, Box 5850, Foreign Relations 3 (Foreign Trade), Sept–Dec 1974; U.S. Agricultural Attaché, “Canada: Annual Report of Agricultural Marketing Development Activities”, 16 March 1976, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 57, CN Canada 1976 DR. For the U.S. equivalent, see Revel and Riboud 1986, p. 172.

117 Palmby, Assistant Secretary for International Affairs and Commodities Program, to Pier Talenti, 16 March 1971, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1971, Box 5402, Foreign Relations, January–March 1971; Palmby to Representative Paul Findley, 17 February 1971, Box 5405, Grains 3 (Foreign Trade), 1971; Agricultural Steering Committee, Atlantic Council of the US, “US Agriculture in a World Context: Policies and Approaches for the Next Decade”, with cover letter of 19

as early as 1969 and stated in this context that the USSR and China had made a stronger appearance than before as buyers in the grain markets in 1966–1967, adding, “It is the developing countries of the world that promise the greatest potential for long term growth in U.S. markets for farm products”. The OECD, too, anticipated that the EEC would be self-sufficient in foodgrains by 1975 and import only limited quantities of feed grain. Grain traders and experts agreed.¹¹⁸ In fact, Britain began to export substantial amounts of barley and even wheat in the late 1970s though increasing their feed grain imports. Yet while British imports from the USA and Australia quickly declined, Canada held its share of that market.¹¹⁹ The White House pressed the EEC to modify its Common Agricultural Policy but in vain. The year 1973, which Nixon’s staff declared the “Year of Europe”, with an emphasis on economic issues,¹²⁰ was dominated by entirely different issues.

All the more important was it to open up new markets, above all in non-industrialized and socialist countries. The former had absorbed 37 percent of all grain imports from 1969 to 1971, slightly more than the classical importers Japan, Great Britain, Italy and West Germany.¹²¹ The U.S. government paid special attention to trade with non-industrialized countries beyond agriculture, for they had purchased one-third of U.S. exports in 1972–1973, more than the EEC and Japan combined.¹²² In 1972, before the big Soviet grain deals, Western Europe accounted for half of Cargill’s export business and Asia for close to one-third, but the firm anticipated that within five years, only one-third of its exports would go to Western Europe, one-third to Asia, and socialist countries would purchase “perhaps 20% or more”.¹²³ The proportion of Canada’s grain exports that went to non-industrialized countries also increased markedly from 1972 to 1974.¹²⁴ Other U.S. and Australian officials were skeptical about Eastern Europe and China, regarding Asia’s industrialized and newly industrializing nations as more promising areas for expansion.¹²⁵

July 1973, Box 5715, Foreign Relations 3 (Foreign Trade), Aug–Dec 1973; and the file Nixon, CF, Box 64, TA5, Trade Agreements 1971–74.

118 1960s: *The Department of Agriculture . . .*, pp. III/61–62; U.S. Agricultural Attaché London, UK-2178, 6 November 1972, NARA, RG 166, 170/73/17/2-, Box 33, UK 1972; Bergmann 1978, p. 411; “An Examination of the European Economic Community and its Effect on the International Grain Trade”, address by Rudolf Stöhr (Alfred C. Toepfer company), Winnipeg, 7 June 1974.

119 Rees 1984, here pp. 98, 105–106; U.S. Agricultural Attaché London UK 5119, 30 October 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 55, UK United Kingdom 1975 DR; Nadeau 1985.

120 NACLA 1976, p. 24 (study by CIEP Chairman Flanigan); “Year of Europe”: Memo Hinton for Shultz, 23 May 1973, NARA, Nixon, FG 11, Box 12, EX IT 53 OECD, 1973–8/9/1974; Franczak 2022, pp. 37–38.

121 UN World Food Conference 1974a, p. 47.

122 “International Economic Report to the President. Together with the Annual Report of CIEP. Transmitted to Congress March 1973”, NARA, Nixon, Staff Member and Office Files, Herbert Stein, Box 31, CIEP #2, 2 of 2; Thomas S. Sedlar, Vice President, OPIC, draft for Nixon’s letter to Mayr with cover letter, 21 August 1973, Nixon, FG 264, Box 1, EX FG 264/A, EX FG, 1/1/73.

123 Middents, to Butz, 9 June 1972 (see note 2/30).

124 Nadeau 1985, p. 89.

125 USDA, ERS, Anthony S. Rojko, “Future Aspects for Agricultural Exports”, for Midwest Agricultural Outlook Conference, Purdue University, 15 and 16 August 1973, FAO 12, Comm. Div.,

In 1974, Nixon congratulated Butz for having made Asia the most important destination for U.S. agricultural exports that year (as in 1968).¹²⁶

The international organization in charge noted non-industrialized countries' growing food imports with growing concern. The FAO had predicted during works for its "Indicative World Plan" of 1970 that their demand would rise to US\$26 billion by 1985. According to an earlier USDA projection, the non-industrialized world would import 62 million tons of grain in 1980.¹²⁷ The team preparing the World Food Conference of 1974 forecasted net imports of 85 million tons by non-industrialized countries in 1985 (their grain exports were already deducted). If prices remained high, this quantity could neither be financed nor met through food aid.¹²⁸ Contemporary U.S. studies anticipated a similar pattern. The Alfred C. Toepfer grain-trading company estimated that the international trade would double to 200 million tons from 1971 to 1985.¹²⁹ Actually, non-industrialized countries' grain imports grew from 30 million tons in the early 1970s to 90 million tons in 1979–1980.¹³⁰ This included growing rice imports, which became also more commercial and less concessional in character.¹³¹ Financing their food imports required 10 percent of these countries' export earnings in 1980–1982; their grain imports alone amounted to US\$20 billion in 1982.¹³²

Thus, experts saw the enormous potential future demand from these countries. But, to their surprise, many of them bought immense amounts of food right away. From 1970 to 1975, the grain imports of non-industrialized countries increased from US\$2.9 billion to \$10.8 billion. Even the poorest countries bought at market prices, as the International Monetary Fund warned. In 1976–1977, a group of about 40 so-called 'Most Seriously Affected Countries' purchased 8.2 million tons of their 15.3 million tons of imported food on commercial terms.¹³³ In 1974, it was

UN 43/5 – USA; D.C. Sprott and S.E. Hearn, [Australian] Bureau of Agricultural Economics, "Agricultural Developments and the Prospects for Trade with the Comecon Countries", Canberra 1974, p. 2, NARA, RG 166, 170/73/18/6–7, Agr. Attaché and Couns. Reports, 1974, Box 36, AL Australia 1974.

126 *The Department of Agriculture* . . . , pp. III/12 ff.; Nixon to Butz 5 June 1974, NARA, Nixon, EX FG 20, Box 2, file 9.

127 FAO, World Plan of Action for the Application of Science and Technology to Development, 16 March 1970, p. 11, FAO 9, Subject Files, FAO/UNDP/IBRD, Agricultural Research I; Freeman's statement before the House Committee on Agriculture, 23 February 1966, FAO 12, ES, FA 8/6 I.

128 UN World Food Conference 1974a, pp. 88–95; World Food Council, WFC/20, "Increasing Food Production in the Developing Countries", 14 April 1976, p. 5, FAO Library.

129 Address by Toepfer's chief economist, Rudolf Stöhr, before the Austrian Mills Cartel, 16 October 1974; study by Iowa State University, "Magnitude of Future Food Gap", draft, 16 July 1975, FAO 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. II.

130 Sartaj Aziz, "Integrated Planning for Food and Energy", in: Dil 2000, p. 113.

131 FAO, Committee on Commodity Problems, Intergovernmental Group on Rice, 24th session, Rome 16–20 March 1981: "Expanding Trade in Rice Among Developing Countries", FAO, RG 12, ES, UN 29/12.

132 FAO 1985, p. 58; Schumann 1986, p. 70.

133 Imports 1970–1975 by annual sequence: US\$2.9/3.1/3.0/6.0/10.5/10.8 billion: UN World Food Council, WFC/42, 30 March 1977, p. 11; und WFC/34/Add. 1, "Recent Developments in the World Food Sector", 1 June 1977, p. 5, FAO Library. See Duncan Riddler, IMF, to Aziz (FAO), 21

similar but much of their demand was unmet: they covered only 9.5 million tons of the 17 million tons they required with 2.5 million tons received in food aid and 7 million tons in commercial imports.¹³⁴ As Don Paarlberg, a leading agricultural economist and high official at the USDA, expressed it in retrospect: “The food-deficit countries have scraped up a surprising amount of foreign exchange, have gone into the world market and have bought cereal grain”.¹³⁵ In doing so, they were ahead of the boldest predictions.

India is a telling example. During a training course for agricultural ‘development helpers’ in Bangalore in 1971, the U.S. agricultural attaché announced that the future of food aid for the country was uncertain because of the U.S. interest in expanding commercial exports. U.S. experts believed that their country would profit in the long run from a stronger agricultural production in non-industrialized countries because that would increase their wealth and, therefore, their receptiveness for goods from the USA.¹³⁶ In 1969, Washington cited Japan, Italy and Spain as countries that had turned from food aid recipients into major commercial customers and expected Taiwan, South Korea and Israel to follow in their footsteps. Five years later, the latter three had become commercial importers but also Yugoslavia, Poland, Brazil and India, which in that year bought, for the first time, more U.S. grain than it received in food aid, at market prices and in hard currency.¹³⁷

For some time, a number of representatives of U.S. farmers continued to caution their government against an overly ambitious export policy that would glut the world’s grain markets. Markets could not absorb such giant deliveries nor could they be transported. As one member of Congress cursed at Secretary of Agriculture, Butz: “This fall, 1973, you’re going to have corn running out of your G.D. ears!!!”¹³⁸ But these critics were wrong. “Every one of the top 12 foreign destinations for American wheat took more grain [in 1973–74] than the previous year”, noted the American Bakers Association.¹³⁹ Annual U.S. agricultural exports rose from between \$3 billion and \$4 billion in the 1950s to between \$4.5 billion and

June 1974, FAO 12, Comm. Div., UN-43/4 IMF; Gilmore 1982, p. 93; Perelman 1977, pp. 107–108. Garcia 1981, p. 20 argues that non-industrialized countries were not yet importing greater amounts of grain in 1972–1973. This is partially supported in “Government Program Export Years, Calendar Year 1972”, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5635, Foreign Relations 3 (Foreign Trade), May–July 1972 (i.e., 1973): the increase of U.S. agricultural export earnings in 1972 was entirely based on the growth of European, Japanese and Soviet imports.

134 Memorandum of the (British) Minister for Overseas Development, 19 February 1975, in: *The World Food Crisis 1976*, p. 2.

135 Don Paarlberg, “The World Food Situation: A Commodities View”, address at the second General Assembly of the World Future Society, 3 June 1975, NARA, RG 354, 350/8/23–26/0, Box 1, B.

136 “Remarks by James H. Boulware, Agricultural Attaché, American Embassy, New Delhi on Annual Aid Agricultural Officers Conference, Bangalore, August 23–27, 1971”, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, 170/73/17/2, Box 16, IN India 1971.

137 *The Department of Agriculture . . .*, p. III/63; USDA, Office of Communication, “What Our Farm Exports Mean to the World”, Washington, 1974, Ford Library, Paul Leach files, Box 3, Export and Import of Agr. Products.

138 John Scott, Master, National Grange, to Hardin, 16 August 1971, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1971, Box 5485, Wheat 6; quote: Scherle to Butz, 12 January 1973, *ibid.* 1973, Box 5719, Grain 3 (Jan–Aug, 1973).

139 “Meat, Heat and Now the Wheat Crunch” (see note 2/49).

\$6.7 billion in the 1960s; in 1972, they climbed to \$8.0 billion, in 1973 to \$12.9 billion, in 1974 to \$20.9 billion and in 1975 to \$22 billion, surpassing agricultural imports by \$5.6 billion in 1973 and \$11.4 billion in 1974 and returning the trade balance to the black. Excluding oil seeds, grain and feeds accounted for half of agricultural exports.¹⁴⁰ Farmers' incomes in 1973 rose spectacularly in the USA, Canada and Australia.¹⁴¹

Expansion of world trade

It was the expanding grain trade and its unstable conditions that constituted the world food crisis. In the agricultural year 1971–1972, 109 million tons of grain were traded internationally, rising to 132 million tons and 142 million tons in the following two years, respectively. After a drop to 135 million, the figure rose to 151 million tons in 1975–1976. The USDA attributed almost all of the increase in 1972–1973 to U.S. exports and Soviet imports. Though some countries reduced their imports, increases by Japan, the People's Republic of China and a number of non-industrialized nations more than made up for it. In 1972–1973, South and East Asia purchased 34.2 million tons of wheat, the USSR and other countries in Eastern Europe bought 24.9 million tons, Western Europe imported 19.8 million tons and Africa and the Near East took in 3 million tons each. The rise in 1973–1974 was due largely to stronger demand by China and some non-industrialized countries.¹⁴² Among exporting countries, only the USA significantly expanded grain sales between 1971 and 1973 (except for rice) but for Canada, the EEC, Australia and Argentina, sales stagnated. From 32.5 million tons per year from 1960 to 1963, U.S. grain exports increased to 67.4 million tons in 1972–1973 and 73.5 million tons in 1973–1974.¹⁴³

International trade of feed grains (some of which, like sorghum, are used for human consumption) showed strong, consistent growth. But wheat exports/imports were the greatest variable with the biggest regional changes during the crisis. The FAO estimated import requirements for 1975–1976 at 60 million tons: 26.5 million tons for Asia, 14.4 million tons for Eastern Europe, 7.4 million tons for Africa, 5.8 million tons for Latin America, 4.8 million tons for the EEC and 1.1 million tons for the rest of Western Europe.¹⁴⁴ Table 2.2 shows the changes.

140 USDA, Office of Communication, "How US Farm Exports Have Grown", September 1974, Ford Library, Paul Leach Files, Box 3, Export and Import of Agr. Products; USDA, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, 14 May 1974, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1974, Box 5850, Foreign Relations 4 (Immigration).

141 Economic Research Service 1975, p. 7.

142 Figures were slightly contradictory. FAO, Draft Report of the 16th Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Grains to the Committee of Commodity Problems, October 1973, NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73, Box 460, 5/1/73; Rochebrune et al. 1975, p. 65; McLin 1976, p. 2; USDA, FAS, "World Grain Situation: Review and Outlook", 20 August 1974, NARA, RG 59, Ex Secretariat, Briefing Books 1958–76, Box 207, Committee on Food, 28 Aug 1974; Hopkins and Puchala 1980, p. 35.

143 Rochebrune et al. 1975, p. 62.

144 The major importing nations were the USSR (8 million tons), Japan (5.6 million tons), India (5.5 million tons), Egypt (3.3 million tons), China (3 million tons), Great Britain (2.6 million

Table 2.2 Grain production, international trade and reserves (in millions of tons)¹⁴⁵

	1971–1972	1972–1973	1973–1974
Wheat, production	353.6	346.2	377.9
- imports	52.1	67.6	64.7
- by industrialized countries	22.8	33.7	22.7
- by others	29.3	33.9	42.0
Carryover (at the end of the year)	48.8	29.0	20.7
Feed grains, production	651.4	633.5	674.9
- imports	47.4	55.4	62.7
- by industrialized countries	40.9	45.4	48.4
- by others	6.5	10.0	14.3
- Carryover	55.6	39.6	31.8

After the crisis years, the grain trade contracted a little (1976–1977: 147 million tons), for wheat in particular, but it then expanded greatly. In 1980–1981, exports reached 215.6 million tons. However, the sum was stagnant over much of the 1980s.¹⁴⁶ Between 1972–1973 and 1982–1983, the international trade in wheat grew 5.3 percent in volume and feed grains grew 6.1 percent, while production increased by only 2.8 percent and 2.2 percent, respectively. The rise in demand was greatest for wheat, rice and corn; it was less for sorghum (3 percent); and demand for millet declined. The proportion of wheat traded internationally rose from 17 to 21 percent of global production, back to early 1960s levels; and for feed grains from 9 to 13 percent. Rice exports grew by almost half from 1972 to 1980 (particularly strongly in 1975–1979), but the proportion of exports sold on concessional terms declined from one-third to one-tenth of the total. The biggest grain exporters (the USA, Canada and the EEC) boosted their combined share of global grain exports from 68 percent to 75 percent. The U.S. provided 45 percent of the wheat and 62 percent of the feed grains exports, but it lost its dominance in the soybean trade. (In the wake of Nixon's halt to soybean exports, Brazil expanded its market share with the help of Japanese investment.)¹⁴⁷ From 1955 to 1973, world trade in total expanded by 8 percent annually, 4 percent for agricultural products; between 1973 and 1980, by contrast, the respective figures were 4.7 percent and 4.8 percent.¹⁴⁸

tons), Poland (2 million tons), Bangladesh, Brazil, East Germany, Iran, Pakistan, Morocco and Czechoslovakia. "World Wheat (Durums excluded), July 1975/June 1976", FAO 12, Comm. Div., FA 4/25, M.S.A. General, vol. I.

145 Data from Almeida et al. 1975a, p. 97 (figures for 1973–1974 were preliminary, based on FAO data, but still overstated production).

146 Hopkins and Puchala 1980, p. 35 (for 1976–1977); Atkin 1992, pp. 26 ff. and 71; Uvin 1994, p. 94; Marchisio and di Biase 1986, p. 189; Madaule 1990, p. 21.

147 Josling and Barichello 1984, p. 318; FAO 1985, p. 138; Paarlberg 1979, pp. 47–48. See also FAO, "How Many Shall Die or A Strategy for Food?", FAO 12, UN-43/2B Information; FAO, Committee on Commodity Problems, Intergovernmental Group on Rice, 24th session, 16–20 March 1981, "Expanding trade in rice among developing countries", FAO 12, ES, UN-29/12; Warman 2003, p. 212; for rice, see also Goletti 1994, p. 63.

148 Thompson 1983, p. 241.

On the importers' side, the situation changed dramatically. As predicted, non-industrialized countries' gross imports of grain rose from 42 million tons to 100 million tons between 1970 and 1980 and increased in value 20 percent annually from US\$2.9 billion to \$16.4 billion (excluding oil-exporting nations, and not adjusted for inflation). In the same period, food aid fell from 12.6 million tons to 8.7 million tons, 60–70 percent still coming from the USA. The volume of grain imports surged by 5.4 percent in capitalist industrialized nations, 5.7 percent in Asia, 9.7 percent in the Near East, 11.3 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa and 13 percent in Latin America. On the one hand, so-called 'medium-income' countries experienced the highest growth rates. On the other hand, and contrary to expectations, Africa's imports more than doubled while South Asia's were halved. Much of the grain bought on international markets was fed to cattle primarily in Latin America that ended up on North American and Western European plates, and West Asia was an even bigger importer. In most of the world's regions, though not all, the cost of grain imports as a percentage of export earnings declined.¹⁴⁹ But other figures show that the US\$10 billion grain import bill in 1978 equaled 80 percent of the 'development aid' to non-industrialized, non-oil exporting countries. The FAO reported that non-industrialized countries imported 117 million tons in 1988–1989.¹⁵⁰ But their net imports increased only slightly in the following decade.¹⁵¹ In addition, China became a major grain importer. Thus, one sees that the world food crisis induced long-term change; it was a breakthrough crisis on the way to the accelerated expansion of international grain markets combined with a shift to non-industrialized countries (especially 'newly industrializing' states) and socialist countries, that is, the Soviet Union, other Eastern European states and China, as buyers.

On the exporters' side, U.S. agriculture in particular became more dependent on grain and other agricultural exports, which grew from 18 percent of production in 1970 to 37 percent in 1980, with a major increase in the period 1971–1974. This compares to between 2 percent and 15 percent in the first half of the 20th century.¹⁵² This change made farmers more vulnerable to international market swings and more dependent on big agribusiness.¹⁵³

International containment measures

The worldwide turbulences in the grain markets led to inter-governmental negotiations and UN efforts at containment and institutional reform. They reached their

149 Morrison 1984; see FAO, SOFA 1984, p. 58. Between 1971–1973 and 1980–1982, the cost of non-industrialized countries' food imports as a proportion of export earnings fell from 13 percent to 10 percent, but in Africa, it increased to 16 percent. For importers, see also Helmuth 1989, p. 5; UN World Food Council, WFC/1990/7, 12 April 1990, p. 13, FAO Library.

150 "Agenda Item IV.2: International Trade", 14 November 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Agenda and Comments – II; Helmuth 1989, p. 5; UN World Food Council, WFC/1990/7, 12 April 1990, p. 13, FAO Library.

151 Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, p. 206.

152 Wessel and Hantman 1987, p. 113; Berlan 1989, pp. 208, 210; Revel and Riboud 1986, pp. 58, 61.

153 Berlan 1989, p. 206; see also Frundt 1975; McDonald 2017, pp. 162–189.

climax with the World Food Conference in November 1974, but representatives of capitalist industrialized nations prevented any short-term measures – substantially increased food aid and fertilizer aid, or measures to stabilize prices to overcome the crisis. They also blocked changes in the world trade system.¹⁵⁴ Instead, the conference agreed to create three new international organizations, one of which, the World Food Council, was designed for crisis prevention and management. Its members were cabinet ministers from 36 countries chosen by the UN General Assembly who monitored the world food situation and discussed long-term food security and development.¹⁵⁵

The introduction of an effective early warning system was a crucial point for prevention. Under a system in place since early 1968, the FAO's country representatives filed monthly forms with brief information about planting, harvests and natural disasters, and in mid-1972, they had actually given proper reports, but FAO had failed to take political steps.¹⁵⁶ At the World Food Conference and in preparation for it, technological innovations, such as the use of satellites and computers, cooperation with grain traders, and strengthening the International Wheat Council were discussed. NASA had concluded agreements with several African and Asian states to monitor their territory with satellites (it covered other countries without their consent). Many found it especially important that the USSR and China provided crop data, among them the FAO, exporting countries such as the USA (seeking a better commercial and political negotiating position) and importers, like Japan, which wanted to prevent large fluctuations in prices.¹⁵⁷ But both countries refused because of security concerns related to the Cold War, although the People's Republic of China joined FAO in 1973. In the USA, a "Food Deputies Group" tried to coordinate the national response to the international food situation since November 1974, and the USDA began to issue "early price warnings" one month later.¹⁵⁸

The result was the FAO's modified Global Information and Early Warning System, which rested more than before on official and unofficial data from national governments and aggregated data about 40 Most Seriously Affected Countries. The older system did not compile data from the monthly reports into a global picture. But the FAO did still not make the new system's reports public.¹⁵⁹ By 1978, 93

154 See Gerlach 2002a, esp. pp. 70–73.

155 Talbot 1990, pp. 75–98; Talbot 1994, pp. 129–150.

156 FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. I und II (brown files); RG 12, Comm. Div., FA 4/15, vol. II.

157 UN/World Food Conference, DDI:G/74/89, "Consultation with Agro-Industrial Leaders, 10–11 September 1974, Toronto, Canada", FAO 12, Comm. Div., UN-43/2B ICP-General; cf. the file UN-43/5 Japan; Roberts, Vice President, IBM, to Simons (UNDP/FAO Industry Cooperative Program), 21 October 1974, FAO 9, Misc., DDI/WFC. NASA: PAN no. 8, 13 November 1974, p. 3; George 1978, pp. 63–65.

158 See Ford Library, Paul Leach files, Box 2, Committee on Food, November 1974; *ibid.*, December 1974–February 1975; and L. William Seidman files, Box 199, Paarlberg, Don.

159 FAO 12, Comm. Div., FA 4/15, vol. II; RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. I (yellow file).

countries had joined the Global Information and Early Warning System but not the Soviet Union, the European members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, or China, all of them major importers.¹⁶⁰ Consequently, FAO data on the USSR were even poorer than those collected by the USA.¹⁶¹ U.S. negotiations with the Soviets about providing information failed.

The earlier system's most blatant weakness was political: the FAO's leaders lacked influence in international affairs. The new international bodies enabled closer monitoring and coordination among members and permitted the high-level involvement of national governments in the World Food Council (which was dissolved in 1996) and its competitor, the FAO's Committee on World Food Security (which, like the World Food Council, was established in 1974 and still operates). The latter had 80 actively participating member countries in 1976.¹⁶² High on the Council's agenda in the late 1970s and early 1980s was to create food security plans, which included food reserves, for individual countries. The Committee on World Food Security had the more narrowly defined task of assessing the world food situation. At its semi-annual meetings, members discussed minimum quantities for global reserves; nations' reserve policies; the latest information from the Early Warning System; and the Food Security Assistance Scheme, the FAO's program, begun in April 1976, to assist non-industrialized countries in building grain reserves with the modest funds that 'donor' nations provided. The Committee was also responsible for developing marketing systems and advised countries on their food production programs.¹⁶³ In the longer run, it emphasized free trade (and production) more than reserves.¹⁶⁴ Generally, raising food production in non-industrialized countries soon became viewed as key to solving the world food problem.

At the World Food Conference, the conference secretariat and numerous countries wanted three things to stabilize the situation: raise food aid back to 10 million tons per year at least, create an international emergency reserve of 500,000 tons and raise worldwide grain reserves to between 17 and 18 percent of annual global consumption.

From 1964 to 1973, the USA, the largest food 'donor', had lowered its food aid from 16 million tons of grain to about million tons, of which the biggest part went covertly to support the Vietnam War. After the Arab–Israeli War of 1973, Egypt, Israel and neighboring states were also made priorities.¹⁶⁵ Countries in need were treated pitilessly. Between 1970 and 1974, less than half of global food aid reached

160 Comptroller General 1980, II, pp. 36–37.

161 See FAO 12, Comm. Div., FA 4/21.1, and FA 4/16 USSR.

162 Excerpt of FAO Council session of 13 April 1976, FAO 15, LUNO, FA 13/2, Committee on WFS.

163 Report of the Second Session of the Committee for World Food Security, 13–19 April 1977, and further reports, FAO 12, ES, FA 13/2, vol. I; FAO, Director-General's Bulletin 76/15, 9 April 1976, *ibid.*, FA 13/1.

164 See Cornilleau 2019, pp. 28–32.

165 Wallerstein 1980; see also Destler 1978, p. 635, note 45; Hopkins and Puchala 1980, p. 12.

countries that the UN listed as the poorest.¹⁶⁶ One member of the U.S. administration, appalled by a budget-cutting session, lamented:

The manner in which the budget cuts took place was quite disturbing to this uninitiated government servant. [. . .] Programs were halved, thrown out or, most frequently, postponed until the third quarter (though one suspects their fate will be the same the next time around) with absolutely no consideration for the human consequences.¹⁶⁷

When John Hannah (of USAID) said that he was unhappy about cuts in food aid, Butz reported, “I told him we were prepared to take a little unhappiness on their part”.¹⁶⁸ A member of the National Security Council staff was quoted as having said in December 1976, “to give food aid to countries just because people are starving is a pretty weak reason”.¹⁶⁹ Canada, too, turned from aid to trade during the world food crisis.¹⁷⁰ Multilateral food aid, which made up only a small portion of total, also sharply declined in 1972–1974 and grew slowly afterwards.

In the USA, Congress members from grain-producing states demanded that food aid continue in order to open new markets.¹⁷¹ “We cannot be humanitarian only in times of surplus”, argued Republican senator Bob Dole.¹⁷² Such pressure helped prevent the elimination of the food aid program but was not enough to fully restore it. In the end, the USA increased food aid from 3.2 million tons in 1973–1974 to 4.7 million tons the following agricultural year and to 6.1 million tons in 1978–1979. Other countries’ contributions remained static at around 3.5 million tons combined, including the members of the EEC, who had growing surpluses. But most U.S. food aid now called for payment in dollars, not recipients’ national currencies.¹⁷³ In the 34 years after 1974, the World Food Conference’s target of 10 million tons of food aid was only met in the periods 1983–1995 and 1999–2001.¹⁷⁴

In September 1975, the UN General Assembly voted to create an emergency food reserve of 500,000 tons, which the World Food Programme was to hold at

166 Comptroller General 1980, part 2, p. 32.

167 Bob Stillman for G. Edward Schuh, “Report on Meeting of Interagency Committee on PL 480, September 23”, 24 September 1974, Ford Library, Council of Economic Advisors, Box 173, Stillman Subject, Food Aid.

168 Butz memo to Brunthaver, 6 December 1972, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5569, Foreign Relations 3, Aug–Dec 1972.

169 Quoted in Destler 1978, p. 638.

170 Cohn 1979, pp. 46–48.

171 Joseph Halow, Executive Vice President, Great Plains Wheat, Inc. to Butz, 18 December 1972, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1972, Wheat 3 (Foreign Trade).

172 Congressional Record – Senate, 2 October 1973, S18378, NARA, CIA database. A year before, Dole had warned of domestic shortages: Dole to Butz, 11 September 1972, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5625, Wheat.

173 Comptroller General 1980, part 2, p. 31, with reference to figures from FAO; Morrison 1984, p. 17.

174 Madaule 1990, p. 101; Moyes 1988, p. 84; Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, p. 207; Ross 2011, p. 227.

strategic locations. However, the target was not met until 1981.¹⁷⁵ There was no formal resolution to raise global reserves to between 17 percent and 18 percent of annual world consumption, but stocks reached 19 percent in mid-1977 and continued growing.¹⁷⁶ This indicates again where the UN's and governments' emphasis was – on production.

Butz and his USDA blocked Democratic senators' initiatives in 1972 and 1974 to establish public grain reserves,¹⁷⁷ arguing that the USA could not hold reserves for the entire world. Butz also argued that such reserves would under political pressures inevitably serve for price stabilization. What some saw as most urgent was a horror to him, and to some farmers' associations as well.¹⁷⁸ But the U.S. government modified its position gradually. It proposed an internationally coordinated system of national reserves and decided to institute a domestic network of privately held stocks under public rules in 1976. In 1979, that network held 33 million tons of grain. Its objectives included stabilizing prices to protect consumers, which would in the short term also serve producers' interests "to insulate current excess wheat and rice stocks from the market".¹⁷⁹ The U.S. government also wanted to prevent inflation in food prices in "lean years".¹⁸⁰

By contrast, the EEC put its trust in the Common Agricultural Policy's production incentives and price support mechanisms to protect members against price fluctuations in the global market. Thus, it was unmotivated to support internationally coordinated grain reserves. Due in part to Western European obstruction, negotiations for a new International Wheat Agreement and a system of international reserves ended in failure in February 1979. An international system of reserves never materialized. But an international Food Aid Convention was adopted in 1980.¹⁸¹ Still, global food aid was never restored to early-1960s levels or raised as much as the world's grain trade grew. Nations' commercial interests prevailed in times of economic crisis and budget deficits.

Conclusion: crisis and global integration

The world food crisis can be regarded as a contraction at a time when a new pattern in grain trading was emerging and was forged. New directions of flows of goods resulted in a period of steeply rising trade volumes, which the FAO had in fact

175 See material from 1980 in FAO 12, ES, FP 3/8, vol. I; Talbot 1994, pp. xxiv, 21, 39, 57; Matzke 1981–82, p. 178.

176 Prices for internationally traded cereals, adjusted for inflation, dropped 1976–1980 below 1960s levels: Paulino 1988b, p. 29.

177 See NARA, RG 16, USDA, Gen. Corr. 1974, Box 5846, Food 2, Sept 1, 1974.

178 Press conference by Butz, 18 November 1974, FAO 12, Comm. Div., UN-43/5 USA; PAN no. 4, 8 November 1974, p. 7 (interview with two representatives of the Illinois Farmers Bureau, one of them Butz's brother Dale).

179 Report of the Second Session of the Committee for World Food Security, 13–19 April 1977, p. 7, FAO 12, ES, FA 13/2, vol. I. Volume: Comptroller General 1980, part 1, p. 5.

180 Manuscript of a speech by Kissinger, "The industrial democracies and the future", ca. November 1975, Ford Library, L. William Seidman files, Box 189, Kissinger, Henry A. (1).

181 Text in FAO 12, Social and Ec. Policy Dept., FP 3/8, vol. I; termination: Comptroller General 1980, p. ii; see Gerlach 2009; reserves: Heady and Fan 2010, p. 3.

called for in the context of plans for an “international agricultural adjustment”.¹⁸² Moreover, socialist and non-industrialized countries became principal grain trade destinations, which increased their national debt. To maintain levels of consumption or further raise them proved a crucial national political goal, be it addressing Soviet citizens or the urban population in Africa or India that was so important in domestic politics. In the new global grain trade system, trade was expanded, commercialized, and the major importing destinations were diversified. In such a transition period, the global food system was not sufficiently capable of coping with destructive weather events.¹⁸³

In non-industrialized countries, high food prices made investment in land and food production more profitable, which exacerbated the social differentiation in the countryside as wealthy landowners tended to expand their holdings, legally or illegally, or to get rid of tenants and sharecroppers, worsening rural poverty. The ‘green revolution’ had already begun to deepen these problems in parts of Asia since the second half of the 1960s. The rest of this study deals in part with the former process.

In the aftermath of the crisis, the international grain trade was mostly commercial and food aid stagnated. 30 percent of the U.S. grain exports were commercial in 1961–1965, 45 percent in 1966–1970, but over 80 percent in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁸⁴ In the 1970s, there was much debate about U.S. ‘food power’ policy – the attempt to use the country’s dominant position as grain exporter to exert political pressure on importers. Most such attempts failed.¹⁸⁵ But for exporting industrialized countries themselves, their growing export orientation had far-reaching consequences. Two of the “unalterable changes” due to the “so-called ‘world food crisis’ period” were stronger international interdependence and a greater influence for transnational agribusiness.¹⁸⁶ Recurring budget crises tended to at least limit export subsidies. In the USA, the world food crisis first slowed the rate of farm bankruptcies but led then to overwhelming debts, as prices for inputs rose faster than for farm products, and the disastrous crisis for small farmers in the 1980s, which further concentrated land ownership. Farm machinery firms, such as Massey Ferguson and International Harvester, were sucked into the debt maelstrom.¹⁸⁷

182 “International Agricultural Adjustment – Report to Conference”, draft, 9 April 1975, FAO 12, ES, UN-44/1.

183 In the early 21st century, there have been further modifications to the world grain trade system: Brazil became a major exporter, and so did Russia and Ukraine, reversing their region’s function as big importers from the 1970s to the 1990s and returning to a centuries-old status from before the First World War.

184 Becker 1989, pp. 84–85.

185 See NACLA 1976; Wallerstein 1980; Fraenkel 1979; Revel and Riboud 1986.

186 Proposal for a conference to the Ford Foundation, “American Agricultural Policy after 1973: The Return of Food Surpluses” (n.d., ca. November 1977), NARA, RG 354, 350/8/23–26/0, Box 5, H (quote with reference to the USA).

187 See Wessel and Hantman 1987, pp. 61–69; Mandel 1987, pp. 210, 308; Chapter 6 in this volume.

Industrialized nations further industrialized their agricultural sectors and exported the social problems on their countryside via export subsidies.¹⁸⁸

In Australia, too, agricultural prices could not keep pace with input costs and general inflation. The Agriculture Department told farmers in 1973 that the time of massive government support for the rural population was over.¹⁸⁹ Australia did retain, for decades, its public marketing boards for grain. So did Canada, but it switched from price to income guarantees and abandoned for the most part the state monopoly for domestic trade, namely for barley.¹⁹⁰ When Juan Perón won back the Argentine Presidency in 1973, his administration established the National Grain Board for the domestic and international marketing of wheat, corn and sorghum (similar to measures under his rule in the 1950s). After the military coup in 1976, the junta under General Jorge Rafael Videla abolished the grain board's monopoly, which had insulated farmers from the vicissitudes of the world market. Producers' euphoric response was short lived as world prices soon plummeted.¹⁹¹ But in the long run, Argentina expanded its grain exports.

The world food crisis from 1972 to 1975 was a truly global phenomenon. In 1974, the team preparing the World Food Conference stated: "History records more acute shortages in individual countries, but it is doubtful whether such a critical food situation ever has been so worldwide".¹⁹² An NGO stated: "The world is confronted by a food crisis of an unprecedented and long-term character".¹⁹³ But there had been earlier global waves of famines in the 19th and 20th centuries (see Chapter 14 for their similarities with the early 1970s). Adjusted for inflation, international prices for wheat and corn had been as high or higher than in the early 1970s several times after 1870, including during the World Wars.¹⁹⁴

After 1975, there was no lack of warnings of another global food crisis. The FAO's Director-General Edouard Saouma, for example, cautioned in 1979 that another sudden shortage would hit the world as unprepared as it had in 1972.¹⁹⁵ In 1982, FAO experts warned that many countries either lacked adequate reserve

188 For the EC and the USA in the 1980s, see Libby 1992.

189 Report of U.S. Agricultural Attaché Canberra AL 7010 and AL 7034 of 14 February and 21 April 1977, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 64, AL Australia 1977 DR; address by Minister Ken Wriedt, 10 March 1973 and report of 29 March 1973, *ibid.*, Box 1, AL Australia 1973.

190 Josling and Barichello 1984, pp. 321–322; Morgan 1980, pp. 332–33; for the marketing structures, see Gilmore 1982, pp. 202–215.

191 Morgan 1980, p. 325; Reports by U.S. Agricultural Attaché Buenos Aires AR 6030, AR 7018 and AR 7090 of 18 August 1976, 15 February and 14 September 1977, NARA, RG 166, Agr. Attaché and Counselor Reports, Box 56, AR Argentina 76 DR, und Box 64, AR Argentina 1977 DR; A. J. Stanton, "Changes in Argentine's Grains Policy", in: *Agriculture Abroad* XXXI, 4, August 1976, pp. 49–51.

192 UN World Food Conference, Assessment, p. 2.

193 World Hunger Action Coalition, Working Document, n.d. [1974], NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5848, Food 2, January–May 1974, 2.

194 See Atkin 1992, p. 80.

195 "Statement by the Director-General at Meeting with Permanent Representatives to FAO", 19 March 1979, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 5, FAO Representatives.

policies or had failed to fill their reserves to the recommended levels.¹⁹⁶ However, there was no world food crisis, at least not until the late 2000s, although the weather was increasingly unstable¹⁹⁷ and there were several strong el niño events, the first one in 1982–1983. Grain production was sluggish in the 1980s and saw an unprecedented, three-year fall from 1986 to 1988.¹⁹⁸ World market prices were high in 1977 and 1981. But famines in 1983–1985, 1987–1988, 1990–1994, 1997–1998 and later were largely confined to Sub-Saharan Africa. Other countries, such as India and Bangladesh, managed to avert disaster, or so it seemed.

In addition to changes in the world grain trade, the world food crisis from 1972 to 1975 can be linked with the monetarization and capitalization of agriculture in non-industrialized countries. The crisis catalyzed the international ‘development’ policy of ‘modernizing’ the food production and integrating supposedly self-sufficient peasants, tenants and sharecroppers into market relations (see Chapters 4 and 5). The policy also presented itself as an appropriate response to the over-accumulation of capital and lack of investment opportunities that had caused the economic crisis in capitalist industrialized countries. As usual, geographical expansion was seen as the way out of economic trouble. This book describes what came out of such dreams.

The world economic crisis that started in 1973 (before the oil shock) seemed to call into question the role of industrialized societies and the traditional structures of the world economy. It was a crisis of overproduction that heralded profound structural changes and relocations in the industries that had been the products of the first and second waves of industrialization (coal, steel, shipbuilding, electric and chemical industries).¹⁹⁹ Some argue that the economic upheaval of the 1970s morphed into a long-term state of crisis, the B-phase of a Kondratiev cycle. Others called this a “globalization crisis”.²⁰⁰ In either case, stagflation, mass unemployment, and increasing social tensions changed the face of industrialized societies after the 1970s. Moreover, some argue that the modern state reached the limit of its growth around 1970. Since then, budgetary constraints and manifestations of economic crisis have undermined the accomplishments of the welfare state in industrialized nations and brought about the disintegration of state structures in several countries of Asia and Africa, such as Lebanon, Somalia, Afghanistan and Congo.²⁰¹ Some of the debt crises that non-industrialized countries faced in the 1980s and 1990s (that can be viewed as part of this broader crisis of the state) were caused not only by high energy costs but also by food imports and ambitious plans for rural development described in this book. Food and agriculture were traditionally a field of strong government intervention, particularly in the 1970s. But many states lost some of their steering capability in this field in the past 50 years. From this perspective, the world food crisis and its effects confirm that the 1970s were a watershed in, and beyond, economic history.

196 See the file FAO 15, LUNO, UN 44/10.

197 Davis 2001, pp. 235, 244, 262–276.

198 See UN World Food Council, WFC/1990/7, 12 April 1990, FAO Library.

199 Bundy 1975; Fitt et al. 1980; Itoh 1990; Mandel 1987; Le Van-Lemesle 2004.

200 See the summary in Shannon 1996; quote: Feldbauer et al. 1999.

201 Reinhard 1999; Jean and Rufin 1999.

3 A global wave of famines

The previous chapter provided a macroscopic view of the world food crisis. But global history sometimes overstates its case by exaggerating the impact of transnational connections and simplifying what on a closer look is complex or contradictory. Far more things were important than global links. Moreover, Chapter 2 focused selectively on international trade and politics. By contrast, this chapter examines famines and does so on a national level. This is not at all to say that the developments in the global grain markets were the cause and these famines were the result, or simply how things played out on the ground.

From details in brief case studies, which cover the worst affected countries and those whose development policies this book analyzes, I try to derive general patterns in what amounted to a global wave of famines and offer some comparative thoughts in the end. The questions guiding my analysis are: Where did famines in the world food crisis occur and why? How were they connected with the global level through prices and other developments in international markets, weather phenomena, etc.? And how were they not? What social groups did they affect, and were there common social patterns? How did people respond? What conflicts did arise? And what political measures were taken? Thus, in my discussion, I combine the three major approaches of explaining famines – general food supply, social interaction and political action.

This chapter is long, but a length of 40 pages means that each is devoted, on average, to 75,000 famine victims. Its longest case study deals with Bangladesh, the country where famine had the gravest consequences.

Geographically, the famines that occurred during the world food crisis were concentrated in South Asia and Africa. Those that got the most publicity were in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and West Africa's Sahel region (particularly in Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Upper Volta, today's Burkina Faso). Neighboring countries, such as India, Nigeria and Somalia, also suffered deep distress.¹

For lack of space, I do not study in detail other states and colonies hit during the world food crisis. The south of Portuguese Mozambique and Madagascar

¹ Devereux n.y. (2000), p. 6, estimates 20,000 deaths because of political conflict and drought in Somalia in 1974–1975. Shepherd 1975, p. 80 speaks of 4,000 deaths.

were drought stricken in 1973.² Drought also affected Kenya's arid north, where 60,000 lived in refugee camps and deaths were reported in Marsabit in early 1974,³ and the densely populated central districts of Meru and Embu, where famine was declared in 1975–1976. A serious famine was also reported from Uganda in 1974–1975.⁴

The Afghan government unofficially acknowledged that close to 80,000 people died from starvation in 1971–1972. Most of the victims were nomads in the western part of the country, where many livestock starved and the wheat crop also failed. Many children were abandoned and reduced to begging. The government, which taxed nomads heavily, showed concern only when refugees appeared in towns.⁵ Despite an above-average rice harvest in Sri Lanka in 1974, about 160,000 excess deaths were caused by cuts in food imports because of high international prices, which resulted in less food in the rationing system. This caused domestic market prices to rise and many poor families to go hungry.⁶ The People's Republic of China reportedly experienced 200,000–300,000 excess deaths due to hunger in 1972.⁷ In the same year, a long drought in the Australian colony of New Guinea brought forth a massive relief operation.⁸

A nutritionist also listed (with occasional exaggeration) famines in Portuguese Angola (during the war of independence), Dahomey (today's Benin), Togo, Ghana and the Central African Republic in 1971–1974; Burundi in 1972 (during a year of mass murders); Sudan in 1973; Egypt in 1974; Pakistan in 1971–1973; the Philippines in 1972; Cambodia and Vietnam in 1975; and Nicaragua in 1972 (after an earthquake).⁹ In Brazil, the Northeast only slowly recovered from the drought in 1970, despite the country's phenomenal rate of economic growth, when more drought drove up the prices for staple foods and looting occurred until 1973.¹⁰ Most affected countries were independent states with authoritarian political systems, some were bourgeois democracies, and some were colonies.

2 See reports by the US Embassy in Tananarivo, April and July 1973, NARA, RG 59, Economic, 1970–73, Box 471, AGR M, and telegram from Macdougall to State Department, 24 August 1973, *ibid.*, Box 472, AGR MOZ. For Somalia, see Oxfam, Field Committee for Africa, Field Secretaries' Report, 29 January 1975, Oxfam, Box Africa Field Committee, January 1974–October 1976.

3 Oxfam, Box Africa Field Committee, January 1977–January 1979, Field Secretary's Report (June 1978); John Worrell, "Kenya drought fears", in: *Financial Times*, 10 January 1974, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. IV.

4 Snow 1984, p. 171; report ter Kuile, 19 March 1974, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. V.

5 See Cleaver 1977, pp. 32–33; Sterba 1975 (a reprint of a *New York Times* article of 16 June 1972).

6 See Isenman 1980, p. 241. I have calculated the figure of 160,000 on the basis of Sri Lanka's population and the rise of the mortality rate that Isenman mentioned.

7 Dyson 1996, p. 73.

8 Kent 1987, pp. 5, 138.

9 Map in Mayer 1975, p. 572. For Somalia, Mozambique, and South Africa, see also Tony Hall, "They can't eat your words", *PAN, Now Where Were We?*, January 1975, FAO, RG 22 WFC PAN. For Portuguese Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, see Wisner 1975; for Angola, see Devereux n.y. (2000), p. 7.

10 See NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports 1971–84, Box 3, files BB Brazil (Brasilia) [1972], ditto 1973 DR and ditto 1973; Garcia and Spitz 1986, pp. 110–114.

The last two paragraphs indicate that famine was unusually widespread in Asia and Africa from 1972 to 1975, with high death figures recorded for Asia. The subjects of two of the case studies in this book – Bangladesh and Mali – were among the worst affected countries. This was not the case in the other two – Indonesia and, arguably, Tanzania – in part because their governments relatively successfully managed the food shortages.

Two famines in Bangladesh

It is typical for the hunger crises covered in this chapter that several different regions or different population groups with their own livelihoods were affected. But for Bangladesh, I speak of two distinct famines because of their different time frames and contrasting backgrounds.

The country, most of which is a fertile subtropical river delta with abundant rainfall that strongly depends on rice cultivation, experienced a natural and a political disaster in 1970–1971. First, a cyclone struck what was then the province of East Pakistan on 12 November 1970, killing approximately 250,000 people in coastal areas.¹¹ As a result, many foreign ‘aid’ agencies started activities in those areas, but the two ensuing famines were centered elsewhere. Second, Pakistan’s government started an extremely violent attempt to suppress a regional autonomy movement in March 1971. It resulted in an uprising, a guerrilla war, mass violence against multiple groups, ten million fleeing abroad and approximately 15 million within the province (out of a population of 70 million), and finally India’s military intervention on the side of the insurgents, which led to Bangladesh’s independence from Pakistan in December 1971.¹² In 1971–1972, many asserted that famine had been averted by India’s feeding of ten million East Pakistani refugees, the fact that the decrease in population (and thus demand) in 1971 paralleled the year’s fall in rice production, and the UN’s relief efforts in 1972.¹³

However, according to data from a long-term demographic study of the rural area of Matlab (in the district of Chittagong), the death rate in 1971–1972 rose by 6.4 per 1,000 for all ages, but most additional deaths were infants, children under ten and people over 65.¹⁴ That is, most of the increase was not the result of direct

11 See Blood 2002, pp. 73–121.

12 See Gerlach 2010, pp. 123–176.

13 For India, see Oxfam, Field Committee for Asia, “India – Pakistan – Bangladesh, October–December 1971”, 8 January 1972, Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1970. For the production-demand thesis, see Bose 1972. For the UN, see Toni Hagen, “Blunt Facts on Relief and Rehabilitation in Bangladesh”, UNROD Information Paper No. 3, 18 February 1972, p. 4 of the report, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh UNROD/UNROB, Information Papers I, file Information Paper Nr. 3, No. 11; Oliver 1978, esp. pp. xiii, 51–52, 120–122, 148, 152. U.S. deliveries in 1971 were also praised for having prevented a disaster for the time being. See Nixon to Williams, 3 November 1971, NARA, Nixon, FG 11, Box 11 EX AG 11–4 AID, 1971–72. For the UN Relief Operation in Dacca (UNROD), see AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, boxes Bangladesh UNROD/UNROB; Oliver 1978; and Mascarenhas 1986, pp. 20–21.

14 Chowdhury and Chen 1977a, pp. 49, 52. For some age groups (notably including children 1–9 years old and people over 65), Chowdhury and Chen mixed up the years of their data and claimed a large

killings in the independence conflict (which concentrated on male adults). Another study, involving over 38,000 people from all of East Pakistan's/Bangladesh's districts, also showed an annualized rise in deaths in the period from March 1971 to May 1972 of five to six per 1,000 over recent years, with particularly high levels in the districts of Dinajpur and Faridpur and then a decline of 6.0 per 1,000 *per annum* for May to October 1972.¹⁵ This implied an excess mortality of 400,000–500,000.¹⁶ It matters when exactly in 1971/1972 deaths went up. Based on one projection, most of the increase occurred from August 1971 to January 1972.¹⁷ But in May 1972, children's state of nutrition was extremely bad (especially in the northwest).¹⁸ By October, it was largely back to normal.¹⁹ In Sylhet district, aside from malnutrition being given as cause of death, mortality increased in 1972 especially for dysentery, but also anemia, tuberculosis and pneumonia.²⁰ The center of this famine was in the north.

What had happened? The price of rice rose in the first half of 1972 though how steeply is unclear.²¹ According to one report, the price in March and April was elevated across all districts, whether surplus or deficit areas.²² Drought added to problems of destruction in the war and displaced people and economic disruption. What Bangladeshis relied on for their food supply was primarily their own current production, secondarily purchases, while own stocks and relief distribution played smaller roles.²³ Many people suffered from unemployment, which caused one author to call this a "severe money famine".²⁴ According to observers, "Children showed conspicuous signs of malnutrition almost universally especially in the

increase in 1972–1973 instead (*ibid.*, p. 52; cf. Dyson 1991, p. 290, note 66). The correct data are in Curlin et al. 1976, p. 97.

15 James Sprague and Stanley Foster, "Second Bangladesh Nutritional Assessment", October 1972, UNROD, Information paper No. 21, table 4, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh UNROD/UNROB, Information Papers I, file Information Paper Nr. 2; Chowdhury and Chen 1977, p. 49.

16 500,000 for 1971–1973, according to Curlin et al. 1976, p. 103.

17 See Dyson 1991, pp. 286–287; for the projection, see Curlin et al. 1976, pp. 91–92. See also Alamgir 1980, p. 141; Chowdhury and Chen 1977a, p. 56.

18 Curlin et al. 1976, p. 88.

19 James Sprague and Stanley Foster, "Second Bangladesh Nutritional Assessment", October 1972, UNROD, Information paper No. 21, p. 6 of the report, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh UNROD/UNROB, Information Papers I, file Information Paper Nr. 21.

20 Currey 1979, p. 105.

21 It was 50 percent on average, according to M. Syeduzzaman, Secretary, Bangladesh Planning Commission, 14 May 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974. According to Islam 2005b, the consumer price index rose by 52 percent in 1972 (Islam 2005, pp. 221–238 includes the same text). See also Chowdhury and Chen 1977a, p. 50; Mascarenhas 1986, p. 22; World Bank, Bangladesh: The Current Economic Situation and Short Term Outlook, 2 May 1975, pp. 21–24, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht.

22 "Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh", March–April 1972, vol. II, p. 3, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh UNROD/UNROB Reports, List of UNROD Papers/Ambassador Sailer's Report.

23 James Sprague and Stanley Foster, "Second Bangladesh Nutritional Assessment", October 1972, UNROD, Information paper No. 21, table 7, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh UNROD/UNROB, Information Papers I, file Information Paper Nr. 21.

24 Mascarenhas 1986, p. 22.

families of weavers, fishermen, the landless and the small landholders”.²⁵ This distribution was largely in line with somewhat questionable data on the 1971 refugees to India.²⁶ Kalyan Chaudhuri found that “large-scale starvation” began in 1972, especially among landless laborers and displaced people, many of whom gradually sold all of their belongings to buy food.²⁷ However, returnees from India often had little to sell; for in their absence, their homes had been looted and stripped of roofs, doors and windows and their fruit trees cut down.²⁸ One Bangladeshi government minister stated in January 1972 that 1.8 million families – 1.4 million farmers, 200,000 artisans and fishermen, and 200,000 traders – had lost all of their equipment in the war.²⁹ Many weavers, fishermen and artisans were Hindus³⁰ who had fled to India during the conflict and returned in early 1972.

However, recent impoverishment due to mass flight and pillage which led to small children in returnee families dying *en masse* was only part of the explanation for mass death. Data from Matlab show that children’s chances of survival, if they were severely malnourished in December 1970, *before* the war had begun, to July 1972 were significantly lower (86 percent) than those that were adequately nourished in late 1970 (97 percent) and even moderately malnourished (96 percent).³¹ That is, disproportionately many children died in families that had long been very poor and were therefore vulnerable to rising prices and economic disruption.

The situation in 1972 was characterized by the failure of new government structures, inadequate taxation, the misutilization of foreign funds, damaged transportation infrastructure, price rises for imported goods, declining real wages, and a drought.³² In the first days of Bangladesh’s independence, government ministers saw no serious risk of famine. In January 1972, a government survey concluded, probably too conservatively, that only 8,000 people had died from starvation from July to November 1971.³³ This attitude continued. In mid-March 1972, Prime Minister Mujibur Rahman stated (as did India’s Prime Minister Indira Gandhi) that the “peak of the food crisis” was over.³⁴ Only in the summer of 1972 did public protests over high food prices begin to spread, also to cities.³⁵

25 S. Dey, “Bangladesh Today and Tomorrow?”, UNROD Information Paper No. 11, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh UNROD/UNROB, Information Papers I, file Information Paper Nr. 3, No. 11.

26 Among the refugees were 5.7 million peasants, 2.5 million landless rural workers, 0.4 million rural artisans and 1.5 million urban workers and other urbanites, according to UNROD; see Chaudhuri 1972, pp. 6, 77.

27 Chaudhuri 1972, pp. 138–139.

28 Gerlach 2010, pp. 164–165; Chowdhury and Chen 1977a, pp. 54–55.

29 Chaudhuri 1972, pp. 101–102.

30 Islam 1978, p. 11.

31 Chowdhury and Chen 1977b, p. 15.

32 Alamgir 1980, p. 118.

33 “Visit to Calcutta and Dacca on 17th/22nd December 1971”, Oxfam, Box Bangladesh Consortium of British Charities, file IBRD-FAO ODM; see also Chaudhuri 1972, p. 100.

34 Tetro to Boerma, 2 April 1972, FAO, RG 15, Reg. Files, FA 6.7 Tetro 1971–72.

35 See cablegrams by Australian Embassy in Washington, 3 June 1972, Australian High Commission in Dacca, 4 July 1972 and 28 August 1972, ANA 855/2, part 1, pp. 164, 189, 234; Mascarenhas 1986, p. 19.

Foreign representatives began to monitor the situation with concern in mid-1971, which led to the creation of the United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca (UNROD, later UNROB). UNROD first judged that conditions were bad but manageable, but it found that they had degenerated in May 1972, when it issued a call for more international help.³⁶ The speedy delivery of 900,000 tons of Indian grain (supposedly) limited the disaster.³⁷

Among those worst affected, besides poor Hindu villagers, were ‘Biharis’, a non-Bengali-speaking minority suspected of past collaboration and continued sympathies with Pakistan. They lived confined in urban and suburban ghettos and suffered discrimination by the government and the rest of the population. Their daily intake of food reportedly fell to 500 calories.³⁸ In 1974, a foreign journalist reported that Biharis were committing suicide because of hunger in camps in Saidpur.³⁹ In 1975, British charities still assumed that many Biharis in camps were starving to death.⁴⁰ Severe malnutrition among Bihari children was widespread in August 1975, and a British team, finding no twins in the camps, concluded that the smaller babies always died early. Things improved in 1976.⁴¹

The situation remained dire, and not only for Biharis, from 1972 to 1975. There were some reports of a drought and others of “near perfect” weather in 1973. But prices rose again in the first half of the year. One UN official remarked already then: “I have visited markets throughout the year and have always found substantial available stocks, IF ONE IS PREPARED TO PAY”.⁴² This made 1973 another difficult year for the poor. In March 1974, public foodgrain reserves were down to 133,000 tons; they were not much higher in the third quarter of the year and almost back down to the earlier level in November.⁴³ Despite a serious flood in mid-1974,⁴⁴ rice output increased considerably in 1974.⁴⁵ But prices rose already

36 See U.S. Mission to the UN, 4 May and 28 June 1972, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 477, AID B, 1/1/70; and the file AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Box Bangladesh, UNROD/UNROB Information Papers II, UNROD II. Oliver 1978, pp. 120–122 dates the call for help to March 1972.

37 Victor Umbricht, “UNROD in Bangladesh”, April 1973, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Box Bangladesh UNROD/UNROB Reports, file Report SG/Future Assistance/Planning Commission/Various.

38 Whitaker et al. 1977, p. 13; for the context, see Gerlach 2010, pp. 148–153.

39 Lifschultz 1979, p. 45.

40 See Oxfam, Project files, Box 1012, file Concern – demra + bashan tek-feeding program (BD55A).

41 “Report on Concern Survey on Bashan Tek (Mirpur) and Demra Bustee Camps”, January 1976, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh Aid Group/World Bank, Various, file Bangladesh Aid Group, World Bank. See also Tony Hall, “Bangladesh: A touch of quiet and peace”, n.d. (early 1976), Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976.

42 Peter Wheeler, Senior Food Advisor to Robert Jackson [. . .], “Survey of in-country rice crop and general food situation in Bangladesh, as of 31 July 1973”, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Box Bangladesh UNROD/UNROB, UNROB (emphasis in the original). For price trends, see also Chowdhury and Chen 1977a, p. 50.

43 Ministry of Food & C. S., “Review of Food Situation as on 1.11.1974” (Secret) and Ministry of Food & C. S., “Review of Food Situation as on 1.7.1974”, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974; Sobhan 1979, p. 1976.

44 According to Mooney, the new short-stemmed, high-yielding variety of rice that farmers cultivated contributed to the crop’s vulnerability to drought: Mooney 1981, p. 54.

45 Islam 2005b. For the flood, see various reports in AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Box Bangladesh General I, file General, Newspaper Clippings 1972–1974.

in the spring and soared from September to November⁴⁶ and hit another high in March to May 1975.⁴⁷

A survey in May to June 1975 found that over 500 out of 790 households in the district of Rangpur did not even have one rice meal per day.⁴⁸ Rural wages kept pace until mid-1974 but then lagged behind until the first quarter of 1975. The demand for labor fell, and people began to ignore customary forms of solidarity.⁴⁹ In famine areas, wages provided less than 14 percent of household income.⁵⁰ The ratio of daily wages to the price of rice was most unfavorable in October 1974, having dropped by over 40 percent since June and close to 60 percent in the districts of Mymensingh, Rangpur and Sylhet. It was again very low in March 1975. In addition, the number of job opportunities continued to drop.⁵¹ A recent shift from payment in kind to money wages left many workers disastrously vulnerable.⁵²

Neither the rise in the country's money supply nor the rise in the international market price for rice explains fully why rice prices more than doubled in 1974. Rather, publicly available alarming information about the damage caused by the flood, the dearth of food aid and other imports, and low public procurement told traders and farmers with surpluses to expect shortages and high future profits; consequently, they hoarded large amounts of grain, which drove prices up and, so, blocked certain groups' access to food.⁵³ From early 1974 to the second half of 1975, rice prices and deaths increased in parallel in Matlab.⁵⁴ Prices in the northern districts of Mymensingh, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Sylhet were particularly high.⁵⁵ The majority of people forced to eat in *langarkhanas*, charitable rice and gruel kitchens, in the fall of 1974 were in these districts, not counting refugees fleeing from there to other areas.⁵⁶ The average amount that people received – 677 calories per day in Mymensingh, 226 in Rangpur and 188 in Sylhet – was not enough to survive.⁵⁷ A *langarkhana* outside of Rangpur reported exhaustion, moaning, families quarreling over food, emaciated people and dying babies.⁵⁸

However, national food production had actually risen in 1973, surpassing the 1970 level.⁵⁹ The important *aman* harvest in late 1973 and of the *boro* crop in the

46 Islam 2005b.

47 Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 189; Arens and van Beurden 1977, p. 101.

48 Seaman and Holt 1980, p. 294.

49 Sen 1981, p. 145; Ravallion 1982, pp. 76, 86; Ravallion 1987, pp. 126–127; Muqtada 1981, p. 23.

50 Muqtada 1981, p. 16.

51 Sen 1981, pp. 146–148; Khondker 1985, p. 88.

52 Sen 1981, p. 150.

53 See Ravallion 1985; Quddus and Becker 2000, pp. 159–161; Devereux 1993, p. 93. Government procurement was traditionally low; the authorities lacked the funds and a useful organization to buy major amounts of rice. See Rashidul Hasan Khan, “The food procurement debate”, *Bangladesh Times*, 24 November 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 135.

54 Ravallion 1987, p. 38.

55 Ravallion 1987, p. 112.

56 Sen 1981, p. 132; Alamgir 1980, pp. 131–133.

57 Alamgir 1980, pp. 170–172; Hossain 1988, pp. 106–107.

58 See Alamgir 1980, p. 173.

59 *Monthly Bulletin of Agricultural Economics and Statistics* 23 (6), 1974, p. 29, FAO, RG 7, film 517.

spring of 1974 were excellent.⁶⁰ The same was true for the summer *aus* harvest in 1974, despite the flood.⁶¹ Amartya Sen has argued that both the quantity of food produced and the quantity available in Bangladesh in 1974 and 1975, and the quantity available *per capita* in 1974, were the highest in years, and the districts whose populations were hit the hardest by the famine (Mymensingh, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Sylhet) saw especially large increases in production and *per capita* availability.⁶² According to Sen, the grain was there, but many people had no access to it either because their own harvests had failed or their wages declined in comparison to food prices. But according to a 'World Bank' study, foodgrain availability in 1974–1975 was the lowest in the period from 1973–1974 to 1976–1977, about 6 percent less than in 1973–1974.⁶³ Another study found that domestic production *per capita* was lower in only four out of the 12 years from 1965 to 1976 than in 1974–1975, and overall supply was lower in three of those years.⁶⁴ The flood damaged above all the rice crops in the districts of Sylhet, Mymensingh and Comilla but hardly those in Rangpur and Dinajpur, both hit by the famine.⁶⁵ Bangladesh's government exaggerated the flood's impact in order to cover its own negligence.

Among the problems was that the lack of hard currency severely constrained Bangladesh's grain purchases. In fiscal year 1973–1974, Bangladesh paid US\$340 million for 875,000 tons of commercial grain, which was about three quarters of its foreign exchange earnings. In the previous year, it had purchased 1.2 million tons at world market prices.⁶⁶ But in 1974, hard currency reserves were at a low, financial problems aggravated which forced it to defer payments to trading companies, who postponed deliveries and meanwhile sold grain that had been earmarked for Bangladesh elsewhere as prices had meanwhile risen. Bangladesh was not able to purchase anywhere near the 800,000 tons of grain on commercial terms it had planned on, and in addition, the USA and Australia cut their food aid shipments.⁶⁷ Food arrivals from abroad, which reached 2.29 million tons in

60 U.S. Agricultural Attaché Dacca, 1 May 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974 DR.

61 Islam 2005b.

62 Sen 1981, pp. 137–140; see also Alamgir 1980, pp. 203–204, 230, 244. For one criticism of Sen's account, see Dowlah 2006. For famine districts, see also Alamgir 1980, p. 103.

63 World Bank, "Bangladesh: Current Economic Performance and Short-Term Prospects", 22 March 1976, p. 11. Similar data in Dowlah 2006, p. 247.

64 Ahmed 1979, p. 18. Cf. Sobhan 1979, p. 1976.

65 "Estimate of flood damages, 1974", PA AA MfAA C 1047/77, p. 33; Alamgir 1980, pp. 124–125.

66 M. Syedazzamen, Secretary, Bangladesh Planning Commission, to the U.S. Ambassador, 14 May 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Rep., Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974. Fifty percent of foreign exchange earnings according to Foreign Minister Kamal Hussein, see notes of conversation by Victor Umbricht, 2 August 1974, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Box Bangladesh General I, file General VI. This file contains much information on plans for imports; see also AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Box Bangladesh Aid Group UN, file UN III. For 1972–1973, see Winberg report, 29 June 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Rep., Box 3, BD Bangladesh DR.

67 Ministry of Food & C. S., "Review of Food Situation as on 1.7.1974" and Winberg to USDA, 26 June and 1 August 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh

1974–1975, were precisely down in the critical months of September and October 1974, remaining low until April 1975.⁶⁸

The number of deaths grew, though figures vary. Amirul Islam, Bangladesh's former food minister, claimed in November 1974 that 100,000 had died in the district of Rangpur alone.⁶⁹ Rowmari was a hotspot, where, according to one field worker, 7,000 starving people crowded into government offices and ten died each night.⁷⁰ An Oxfam observer found "middle and lower level cultivators plus labourers" affected; apparently, the authorities herded rural refugees into a camp at Rowmari.⁷¹ Wealthy landowners headed by the chairman of the Thana Cooperative Association sabotaged a relief operation by the local organization BRAC and Oxfam in this area.⁷² Around November, deaths were reported from around the country, with allegedly 24 starvation deaths in Dacca per day – 1,200 weekly, according to a foreign missionary – and 10,000 refugees gathered in the railway station.⁷³ Thousands more lacked the money for the ferry across a river to get to Dacca.⁷⁴ The number of unclaimed bodies in the city rose to 14 times the usual, reaching 600 in October and 700 in December 1974, and remained high until the next fall. Most were found in city areas where there was much begging.⁷⁵ Most poor who fled to Dacca were from rural areas in central Bangladesh, plus Comilla and Noakhali.⁷⁶ In the country's northwest, there were also many unclaimed corpses on streets and in railway stations.⁷⁷ A newspaper article in November spoke of

1974; Memorandum of Conversation Winberg – Abdul Momen Khan, 17 April 1974, *ibid.*; see Sobhan 1979, p. 1977, for foreign exchange reserves.

68 World Food Programme, Bangladesh, Food Grain Forecast, 1 July–31 October 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Rep., Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975. Arrival amounts, beginning in July 1974, were listed as follows (in thousands of tons, figures rounded): 292, 229, 28, 76, 182, 165, 196, 78, 169, 176, 296 and 416. Slightly different data are in Sen 1981, p. 135, who lists for the first half of 1974: 38, 90, 99, 147, 224 and 135. See also Ministry of Food & C. S., "Review of Food Situation as on 1.11.1974" (Secret), NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974.

69 Tony Loftas, "'Save us' plea by Bangladesh", *PAN*, 12 November 1974, p. 1. See also Wahidul Haque et al. (UN Asian Development Institute), "Toward a Theory of Rural Development", December 1975, FAO, RG 15 RAFF, Rural Development 1972–76.

70 Report in *PAN*, 15 November 1974, p. 7. The aid worker may have been Colin Dodge, Oxfam's Field Director in Bangladesh, see "Bangladesh Floods", 27 October 1974, Oxfam, Box Bangladesh – Food Shortage, file Bangladesh floods – 1976. For conditions in Rowmari, including a discussion of rice prices, see also Currey 1979, pp. 31, 129–130, 214, 218.

71 Colin Dodge, "Annual Report – Bangladesh", March 1976, Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976.

72 Ahmed 1980a, pp. 447–448.

73 Winter (FAO Country Representative) to Binder, 1 November 1974, FAO, RG 15, RAFF, Bangladesh 1972–1976; *Religious News Service* (Toronto), 30 December 1974, Oxfam, Box Bangladesh – Food Shortage, file Bangladesh general II 1975. For the figure of 1,200, see Joiner 1993, p. 65.

74 Kasturi Rangan, "Dacca: Famine Follows the Flood" (ca. October 1974), in: *Give Us 1975*, p. 30.

75 Currey 1979, pp. 7, 9, 13–14; Hugo 1984, p. 15; Khondker 1985, pp. 5, 90–91. According to Stepanek 1978, p. 74 note 23 the number of unclaimed corpses was 3,328 in 1974 and 7,274 in 1975.

76 Currey 1979, p. 210.

77 Stepanek 1978, p. 65.

“hundreds of thousands” of deaths.⁷⁸ In one rural area, a team of U.S. researchers estimated that 12 percent of the children would not survive.⁷⁹

Normally, deaths in Bangladesh peaked in September and October, when income from wages was lowest and household food stocks were depleted, but this time, the number of deaths peaked in the first quarter of 1975. And it remained high for longer than in 1971–1972, especially for the elderly, returning to normal only in late 1976.⁸⁰ In the Matlab area, children between 1 and 4 years, and older children in the poorest families, experienced their highest mortality in 1975–1976.⁸¹ According to Mohiuddin Alamgir’s authoritative calculation, the famine caused 1.5 million excess deaths from 1974 to 1976, primarily among hunger refugees and villagers in famine areas.⁸² The Matlab demographic study recorded an excess mortality of about 8.0 per 1,000 in 1974–1975 and 4.2 per 1,000 in 1975–1976, which would translate into about 840,000 excess deaths if projected onto Bangladesh’s population of 70 million.⁸³ But a local study of the region of Companiganj seems to confirm Alamgir’s data.⁸⁴ Regionally, the infant mortality was highest in the north, the areas of Rajshahi and Faridpur, three coastal districts and areas northeast of Chittagong.⁸⁵

The population responded to the famine in different ways. Smallholders and sharecroppers sold or ate their seed grain.⁸⁶ In many areas, the poor sold their utensils *en masse* in order to purchase food – and there were buyers to take over their possessions.⁸⁷ As early as March 1974, people began to eat tree bark, saplings and other famine foods.⁸⁸ Bruce Currey found that two-thirds of the people he studied – primarily landless – had less than one rice meal per week as late as in May and June 1976, still eating substitute foods.⁸⁹ The journalist Lawrence Lifschultz reported that poor peasants and landless laborers started to flee their villages in mid-August 1974, and better-off peasants sold their bullocks in panic in September.⁹⁰ There were many refugees.⁹¹ Many parents sold or abandoned their

78 Akhlaqur Rahman, “The implications of compulsory food procurement”, *Holiday*, 17 November 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974.

79 William Robbins, “Food Supplies up as Hard-Hid Land Finds Some Relief”, in: *New York Times*, 2 February 1975, in: *Food and Population 1975*, p. 34.

80 Dyson 1991, p. 287; see also Razzaque 1985, p. 32; Chowdhury and Chen 1977a, p. 52. For the normal seasonal variation in deaths, see Becker and Sardar 1981, pp. 152, 164; Chowdhury et al. 1981, pp. 55, 60.

81 Razzaque 1985, p. 65.

82 Alamgir 1980, pp. 142–143. See also Hugo 1984, pp. 16–17.

83 See Chowdhury and Chen 1977a, p. 49. I compared the adjusted death rate to 16.6 per 1,000 as a baseline; “several hundred thousand excess deaths”: Dyson 1996, p. 73. Alamgir 1980, p. 141 cites different data.

84 See McCord 1977, p. 94.

85 Chowdhury 1988, p. 268.

86 Report in *PAN*, 15 November 1974, p. 7.

87 Alamgir 1980, p. 135.

88 Longhurst 1987, p. 3.

89 See Currey 1979, pp. 225, 235.

90 Harris 1983, p. 200. According to Alamgir 1980, p. 119, this had started in March.

91 Hugo 1984, pp. 13, 26.

children, and some despairing mothers killed their babies.⁹² As is often the case in famines, women fared better than men, especially among the elderly. Unlike in most other countries, Bangladeshi women with their low social standing had a lower life expectancy than men, but the difference more or less disappeared in 1972 and 1975–1976.⁹³ But many women were left by their husbands; in the Matlab study area, the number of separations and divorces doubled in 1974–1975.⁹⁴ Prostitution was on the rise.⁹⁵ That is not unusual in times of famine, but conditions in Bangladesh meant that fewer families were able to reunite than in previous famines.⁹⁶

The middle class was reputedly hoarding rice. This was to some degree acknowledged by Prime Minister Mujibur Rahman.⁹⁷ Villagers were squeezed by merchants,⁹⁸ who, along with moneylenders and large landowners, were among the famine's winners.⁹⁹ Reports that poor peasants sold their holdings in droves indicated the redistribution of wealth that took place. Land registration offices stayed open longer into the evening to deal with the rush, people stood in line overnight, and a crowd of people eager to get their deeds stamped stormed the treasury building in Rangpur on 24 October.¹⁰⁰ Land became cheap.¹⁰¹ A close analysis of a village in the district of Mymensingh showed a rise of land sales in 1970–1974 (far above the level during the Great Bengal Famine in 1943–1944), of which the majority were distress sales by the poor to the better-off, and another increase of distress sales in 1975 and 1976. Of these transactions, Mead Cain found “a high proportion occurring between brothers, close cousins, and nephew and uncle”; they were final in character and “instances of a stronger brother benefiting from the distress of a disadvantaged brother”.¹⁰² Thus, the famine increased rural landlessness.¹⁰³ Sales totaled 181,200 hectares in 1974 and 151,500 hectares in 1976, that is, 2.3 and 1.9 percent of the country's cropped area, respectively (and much higher than in 1971).¹⁰⁴ However, another study found that only 18.4 percent of the people

92 Khondker 1985, p. 85; Alamgir 1980, pp. 128, 135.

93 Menken and Phillips 1990, p. 95; Dyson 1996, pp. 284, 291.

94 See Hugo 1984, p. 21; Razzaque 1985, pp. 32, 50.

95 Alamgir 1980, pp. 119, 128.

96 Alamgir 1980, p. 135.

97 Winter to Binder, 1 November 1974, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Bangladesh 1972–76; Ravallion 1985, p. 15.

98 Hartmann and Boyce 1983, pp. 179–193.

99 Hartmann and Boyce 1989, p. 30.

100 Lifschultz 1979, p. 46 (based on his article “A Death Trap Called Rangpur”, 15 November 1974, from the *Far Eastern Economic Review*); Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 189; Hartmann and Boyce 1989, p. 30; Collins and Moore Lappé 1980, p. 33 (citing René Dumont); Stepanek 1978, p. 64.

101 Alamgir 1980, p. 280.

102 Cain 1981, pp. 450–452, 454–456, 465 (quotes). See also Sen 1981, p. 151; Alamgir 1980, p. 137. Graphic descriptions of these intimate conflicts and this squeezing of the poor are in Huq 1976.

103 Eger 1982, p. 38.

104 Harrison 1980, p. 89; see also Torry 1984, p. 228 with slightly lower data, and Alamgir 1980, pp. 161–162, 184. For high levels of land sales out of distress, see also Currey 1979, pp. 224, 227, 231, 233–234.

eating in gruel kitchens had sold some of their land while over 65 percent had sold other assets.¹⁰⁵

The death rate rose for all social groups,¹⁰⁶ but especially for children of the poor. And, 38.7 percent of those fed in *langarkhanas* were farmers, 24.1 percent were agricultural laborers and 20.4 percent were other laborers. Laborers and in particular transportation workers were strongly over-represented among the starving.¹⁰⁷ However, though the death rate for the children of small traders and fishermen was high, it was below average in those families who owned as little as 0.2–0.4 hectares of land.¹⁰⁸ Still, one survey found that “every member of every family” owning less than 1.2 hectares was deficient in calories, vitamins and minerals.¹⁰⁹ Children of landless agricultural laborers between 1 and 4 years old died almost four times more often than better-off landowners’ children of the same age in 1975, and two times more often in 1974 and 1976.¹¹⁰ According to the Matlab study, the difference in mortality between the poorest and the wealthiest was high for children from 1 to 9 years old and adults between 15 and 64; it was lower for infants and people over 65.¹¹¹ The crude death rate for landless families in Matlab in 1975 was three times higher than for those who owned over 1.2 hectares. The difference in Companiganj and Noakhali was similar. Beggars’ and servants’ families were particularly affected.¹¹² Children of parents, in particular mothers, with a higher education had much lower mortality rates than among the uneducated. Larger houses, owning cattle and the use of latrines were less correlated with child survival.¹¹³ Mohiuddin Alamgir described the events of 1974–1976 as a “class famine”.¹¹⁴ Poor families underwent a process of attrition and impoverishment from 1971 to 1975 that often claimed the lives of members.¹¹⁵ But in about 60 villages in Rangpur district, a self-reliance movement in 1974 prevented people from accepting outside relief or entering public relief centers and distributed the local rice surplus. Reportedly, the movement’s efforts prevented any death from hunger.¹¹⁶

The famine was also a time of violence. The number of murders and riots, which fell in 1973, rose again.¹¹⁷ Leftist groups broke into warehouses and distributed the

105 Muqtada 1981, p. 27. A relatively low local level of land sales is reported in Siddiqui 1980, p. 397.

106 Razzaque 1985, p. 63.

107 Sen 1981, pp. 141–143; Alamgir 1980, p. 137.

108 Sen 1981, pp. 144, 151; see also Alamgir 1980, p. 154.

109 Hossain 1988, p. 94.

110 D’Souza and Bhuiya 1982, p. 761; Chowdhury and Chen 1977b, pp. 11–12 with an even higher ratio. See also Razzaque 1985, p. 63. Similar data from Noakhali district in Stepanek 1978, p. 73 note 18.

111 Razzaque 1985, p. 60.

112 Chowdhury and Chen 1977b, pp. 11–12; McCord 1977, p. 94; Alamgir 1980, p. 192 note 9; Currey 1979, pp. 241–242.

113 D’Souza and Bhuiya 1982, pp. 755–759.

114 Alamgir 1980, p. 14.

115 One example is in Hartmann and Boyce 1983, pp. 171–176. See also Stepanek 1978, p. 98.

116 Wahidul Haque et al. (UN Asian Development Institute), “Toward a Theory of Rural Development”, December 1975, FAO, RG 15 RAFE, Rural Development 1972–76; Spitz 1978, p. 886.

117 Alamgir 1980, p. 139.

food to the poor.¹¹⁸ In March 1974, police in Dacca opened fire on a hunger march led by the JSD, a leftist party that organized rallies and gheraos (in which protesters encircled officials or buildings until their demands were met).¹¹⁹ Others turned to mass flight. In May and June 1975, many tens of thousands, mostly Hindus, tried to force their way across the border with India; 42,000 were forced back.¹²⁰

Governmental action had an impact. Bangladesh's system of food rationing served mostly urbanites, including the urban middle class. They and certain public servants, about four million people in total, received what was called statutory rationing, and other groups received modified rationing. By contrast, only very little grain was distributed through relief and food-for-work programs (which accounted for 4.2 percent and 8.4 percent, respectively, of the country's rations in 1973–1976). This rationing system depended almost entirely on imports, including food aid, which primarily supported urbanites (of all classes) and government employees. Ration-card fraud was widespread, which also tended to benefit the better-off.¹²¹ And well-fed guests at urban parties indulged in cynical talk about the hungry in the 1974 famine.¹²² The government undertook some relief measures. The most important was opening almost 6,000 *langarkhanas* (rice/gruel kitchens), which contributed to feeding over four million people. But they were located in every *union* instead of being concentrated in the worst affected areas and closed prematurely in December 1974.¹²³ The state moved some resources from modified rationing to relief in 1974–1975.¹²⁴ In October 1974, the government limited the amount of rice that producers could keep, but this was not enforced.¹²⁵ At the World Food Conference, several high functionaries from Bangladesh alerted the international public about the famine and lobbied for more grain deliveries.¹²⁶ At the same time, Food Minister Abdul Momen played down the number of hunger deaths, and government officials avoided the word 'famine'.¹²⁷

The cities filled up with poor refugees. The increasingly authoritarian regime began to deport 200,000 "destitutes and slum dwellers" from Dacca to Demra (and

118 Lifschultz 1979, p. 47.

119 Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 251; Hossain 2017, p. 125; Westergaard 1985, p. 84.

120 Franda 1982, pp. 128–129.

121 Ahmed 1988, p. 221; Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 140–141; World Bank, "The Current Situation and Short Term Outlook", 2 May 1975, table 7.5. See also Dowlah 2006, pp. 347–349.

122 Peter Kann, "Land of Despair", *Wall Street Journal*, 27 November 1974, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Box Bangladesh UNROD/UNROB, file Information paper No. 21, No. 25.

123 Khondker 1985, pp. 4, 91, 140–142; Sen 1981, pp. 131–132; Alamgir 1980, pp. 130–131; Hossain 1988, p. 106.

124 Ahmed 1979, p. 24. But Sobhan 1979, pp. 1976, 1980, argues that this also hurt the poor.

125 "Morning News", 6 October 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Rep, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974.

126 See Tony Loftas, "'Save us' plea by Bangladesh", *PAN*, 12 November 1974, p. 1; *ibid.*, p. 6, and 13 November, p. 1, and 15 November 1974, p. 6; Salauddin Ahmed to Umbricht, annex to letter of 8 January 1975, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Box Bangladesh, UNROD/UNROB, file UNROB.

127 See, for example, Kasturi Rangan, "Dacca: Famine Follows the Flood" (ca. October 1974), in: *Give Us* 1975, p. 30; Khondker 1985, p. 138. Cf. Hubert Humphrey's report in *Hunger and Diplomacy* 1975, p. 10.

revoke their ration cards) in early 1975. 50,000 were held behind barbed wire, which *The Guardian* called “Mujib’s man-made disaster area”.¹²⁸ In June 1975, the government planned to deport another 130,000 slum dwellers from Dacca, Khulna and Chittagong.¹²⁹ It also started a campaign, and made some arrests, against hoarding and smuggling rice to India, although the smugglers often worked in collusion with government officials. However, the quantities smuggled are controversial,¹³⁰ for alleged smuggle to India was an old Pakistani propaganda topos against Hindus. (For similar allegations in Tanzania, see Chapter 9.)¹³¹ Theft by corrupt local officials made villagers, and Oxfam activists, suspicious about the correct distribution of food aid.¹³²

A foreign move that had a large, though indirect, impact on the situation in Bangladesh was a food aid embargo by the USA in mid-1974 on the grounds that Bangladesh had trade relations with Cuba.¹³³ When becoming publicly known, this influenced Bangladeshi rice traders’ expectations and contributed to driving prices up. Despite domestic political pressure, the U.S. government had delayed its shipments and new commitments of food aid to Bangladesh in the second half of 1973, prioritizing commercial exports.¹³⁴ Bangladesh was also hurt by the U.S. ban on soybean exports in the same year, which reduced the availability of edible oils.¹³⁵ Some food shipments were delayed. In late May 1974, the U.S. ambassador told Bangladeshi authorities that his country would provide no further food aid if their country did not end its trade with Cuba. All objections (e.g., that such rules did not apply to Egypt) were to no avail. The Bangladeshi government declared in writing that it would cease its Cuban trade, but the USA did not find that sufficient.¹³⁶ Aware of the floods in 1974, the U.S. agricultural attaché in

128 Mascarenhas 1986, pp. 43–44 (quotes on p. 43); for ration cards, see McHenry and Bird 1977, p. 74.

129 “Nutrition Surveillance of Project 22260 for feeding of vulnerable groups in distressed areas in Bangladesh”, Dacca, 23 June 1975, pp. 8–9 of the document, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975.

130 For sources emphasizing the importance of smuggling, see report by Peter Wheeler (UNROB), 2 August 1973, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Box Bangladesh, UNROB/UNROB, file UNROB; Maniruzzaman 1975, p. 118. For much lower estimates, see W. B. Reddaway and Md. Mizanur Rahman, “The Scale of Smuggling out of Bangladesh”, *EPW* 11 (23), 5 June 1976, pp. 843–849; Islam 2005b; Sen 1981, p. 138, note 13. For official measures, see Khondker 1985, pp. 139–140, and 144–146 for the anti-hoarding campaign.

131 See Elkington 1976, p. 81.

132 Huq 1976, pp. 134–135; Oxfam, Field Committee for Asia: India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Vietnam 29 December 1973 to 1 March 1974, 11 March 1974, Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976. However, foreign ‘donor’ representatives used local corruption as an excuse for slow ‘aid’ arrivals: Currey 1979, p. 113.

133 Interestingly, the USDA listed the start of U.S. rice exports to Cuba as one of its own successes: Bell to Senator Talmadge, 5 December 1975, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 6024, Rice.

134 See Islam 2005b; Sobhan 1979, p. 1978; Brunthaver to Butz, 25 July 1973, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5779, Wheat 3 (Foreign Trade). For the domestic pressure, see NARA, Nixon, WHCF, Box 40, EX FO 3–23, CO 165.1- [1973–1974].

135 Sobhan 1979, p. 1979; Parkinson 1981b, p. 99.

136 See Islam 2005b; Sobhan 1979, pp. 1977–1979; Bharat Dogra, “The Milk Muddle: Are national interests in dairying being sabotaged?”, New Delhi, 1980, Oxfam, Food aid Tony Jackson.

Bangladesh, Carl Winberg, advised Food Secretary A. M. Khan in July that Bangladesh should quickly complete its shipments of jute sacks to Cuba and then apply for U.S. food aid.¹³⁷ In September 1974, the U.S. embassy again called on Nurul Islam, the chairman of Bangladesh's Planning Commission, to stop shipments to Cuba.¹³⁸ Kissinger notified President Ford on 1 October that the "problem" was "resolved", and he had talks with Bangladesh's president in Dacca on 30 October, but it was only on 8 November that the USA and Bangladesh signed a food aid agreement for the delivery of 200,000 tons of grain, less than in previous years, before the end of 1974.¹³⁹

Overall, the disbursement rate of food aid to Bangladesh in 1974–1975 was lower than in the previous and following year.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, most 'donors' made low and only conditional pledges for 'aid' at their October 1974 meeting – amidst the famine – pressing for a strong devaluation of Bangladesh's currency that would have impeded commercial grain imports substantially (and cost more lives), given the country's dollar shortage.¹⁴¹ This international pressure was in line with the fact that the USA had made no new 'aid' commitments for Bangladesh (except for fertilizer) from early August 1973 to mid-September 1974, the 'World Bank' from November 1972 to February 1974 and West Germany from early January 1973 to early September 1974.¹⁴²

It also seems that the resident mission of the 'World Bank' worked to minimize other countries' food aid to Bangladesh.¹⁴³ Anne Armstrong, the presidential advisor on consumer affairs, justified the ban by arguing that the USA could not help Bangladesh because U.S. citizens were having "a hard time with their grocery bills".¹⁴⁴ Not only trade with Cuba was under fire, but also Bangladesh's leadership in general. In March 1975, William Saxbe, U.S. ambassador to India, found rumors about an impending coup in Bangladesh "too good to be true" and said of President Mujibur Rahman that the "logic of situation may require his death", five

137 Memorandum of Conversation, "Foodgrain Situation", 23 July 1974 (Official Use Only), NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974.

138 McHenry and Bird 1977, p. 82.

139 See Kissinger to Ford, 1 October 1974, Ford Library, NSA, Presidential Country Files for South Asia, Box 2 Bangladesh; Sobel 1975, p. 106; Islam 2005b. See also Hossain 1987, p. 16; Crow 1990, p. 35. Slightly different account in the script of a press conference with Butz and high USDA functionaries, 18 November 1974, FAO, RG 12 UN 43/5 USA; Kasturi Rangan, "Dacca: Famine Follows the Flood" (ca. October 1974), in: *Give Us* 1975, p. 30. Destler 1978, p. 639, note 56, also pointed to the fact that reduced amounts of U.S. food aid spurred the famine but writes that 68,000 tons did reach Bangladesh in the critical period August to October 1974 (see also *ibid.*, p. 635, note 45).

140 Parkinson 1981a, p. 32.

141 See Sobhan 1982, pp. 181–183; Faaland 1981a, pp. 121–122; Parkinson 1981d, pp. 168–176, esp. p. 172; Islam 2005, pp. 264–267. Bangladesh's government devalued the Taka only in April 1975: Sobhan 1982, p. 191.

142 Sobhan 1982, pp. 68–69, 195.

143 Bharat Dogra, "The Milk Muddle: Are national interests in dairying being sabotaged?", April 1980, Oxfam, Box Food Aid and Tony Jackson.

144 Dale Hathaway, Inter-Office Memorandum, "The World Food Conference: Impressions and Reality", 25 November 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5847, Food 2, December 6–31, 1974 1.

months before he and many members of his family were murdered in a coup.¹⁴⁵ U.S. food aid to Bangladesh picked up in 1975, eventually reaching 560,000 tons, with another 290,000 tons delayed to the next fiscal year 1976.¹⁴⁶ As a result of the oversized imports in 1976, the price of rice in Bangladesh fell, hurting surplus farmers.¹⁴⁷ But from November 1975 to March 1976, while Bangladeshis still starved to death *en masse*, the U.S. mission in Dacca again withheld food shipments to force Bangladesh's government, successfully, to raise the prices of rationed food.¹⁴⁸ In late 1977, U.S. food aid deliveries to Bangladesh, as well as Indonesia and nine other countries, were again halted for seven weeks for political reasons.¹⁴⁹ In summary, the USA repeatedly used political blackmail related to food aid against Bangladesh and in ways that were outright murderous in 1974.

The Bangladeshi famine of 1974–1975 has been convincingly explained as the result of a complex set of factors.¹⁵⁰ They included bad weather, political conditions and conflicts, international market developments, foreign political pressures and domestic social conflicts. Inequality was a fundamental cause, as poor, and especially landless, people were very vulnerable. General inflation also played a major role. The government increased the money supply to finance its administration and public enterprises, but it allowed it to rise much more than economic production.¹⁵¹ Arguably, the inflow of foreign 'aid' and 'aid workers' with their spending aggravated the inflation.¹⁵² But prices for food, especially rice, rose considerably faster than Dacca's consumer price index in 1972–1974,¹⁵³ which points to additional factors at work in the staple food sector.

India

Being one of the most populous and poorest states in the world, India was a country of contradictions in the early 1970s. Despite the added burden of providing for ten million refugees from East Pakistan in 1971–1972, the country had a positive trade balance in the early 1970s and phased out foreign food aid, given its positive

145 Saxbe to U.S. Embassy in Dacca, 21 March 1975 (secret), Ford Library, NSA, Presidential Country Files for the Middle East and South Asia, Box 12, India – State Dept. Telegrams from SEC-STATE-NODIS (2). For indications of U.S. involvement in the coup against Mujibur Rahman, see also Lifschultz 1979, pp. 98–149.

146 Winberg to USDA, 30 July 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Rep., Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975 DR.

147 McHenry and Bird 1977, p. 78; see also "Bangladesh report", 22 March 1976, Oxfam, Project files, Box 1009, C.f.e.t.p. (BD59).

148 McHenry and Bird 1977, p. 84, who seemed to condone this move.

149 Burbach and Flynn 1980, p. 77.

150 Alamgir 1980, pp. 30, 36–37, 40–46.

151 Lawrence Lifschultz, "A State of Siege", first in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 August 1974, in Lifschultz 1979, p. 44. The money supply rose 131 percent from December 1971 to March 1975, according to World Bank, "The Current Situation and Short Term Outlook", 2 May 1975, p. 24.

152 See data in Maniruzzaman 1975, p. 117, note 1. Data for Mali in Lecaillon and Morrisson 1986, p. 59, seem to indicate a similar process: money supply as percentage of Mali's GDP in the 1970s peaked in 1974, the year of the biggest 'aid' inflow following the famine.

153 World Bank, "The Current Situation and Short Term Outlook", 2 May 1975, p. 22 and table 9.1.

self-evaluations of its development policy. India, a leading member of the non-aligned movement, won a decisive military victory against Pakistan, dividing its rival's territory into two, in late 1971, and it announced on 19 May 1974 that it had the nuclear bomb.¹⁵⁴ But these signs of the strength and ambition of India's elites masked the vulnerability of its masses. Like neighboring Bangladesh, India was predominantly rural with many small peasants, sharecroppers and landless poor.

Food disasters shook India from 1971 to 1975.¹⁵⁵ There were repeated droughts, and floods struck the east in 1974–1975. Wheat production plummeted in 1972–1974; rice production plummeted in 1974–1975.¹⁵⁶ A lower food production than in 1970–1971 in the three following years coincided with local struggles over land, other resources and power. The dimensions of the crisis in 1972–1973 alone were enormous. Two-hundred million Indians lived in drought-affected districts; 112.4 million people more than in the previous year received statutory rationing; relief works employed 5.95 million people; and 1.87 million people received free relief. National food stocks dwindled from 8.9 million to 3.2 million tons from 1 July to 1 December 1972.¹⁵⁷ Public fair price shops served 210 million people, but supplied only 50 kilograms of food per person per year.¹⁵⁸ In 1974–1975, the quantity of foodgrain available *per capita* was the lowest since the crisis of 1965–1967 (though it was not much better in 1972–1973),¹⁵⁹ and *per capita* income declined by 3 percent from 1970–1971 to 1973–1974.¹⁶⁰ Peasants reportedly lacked seeds, fertilizers and pesticides.¹⁶¹

The state of Maharashtra, where several years of drought had destroyed seeds and killed off livestock, was in the worst situation. Half or more of the pearl millet, sorghum, rice, pulse and peanut crops were lost, affecting 20 million people in 25,000 villages.¹⁶² This crisis hit a state with a relatively high *per capita* income, influential well-off farmers, strong commercial sugar interests and agricultural cooperatives, and what was purported to be a well-functioning bureaucracy.¹⁶³ But in the crisis, the monthly ration of 8 kilograms of grain

154 Vicker 1975, p. 172.

155 See also the overview by Chopra 1981, pp. 134–161.

156 Alauddin and Tisdell 1991, p. 183.

157 Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Food, Annual Report 1972–73, pp. 22–23, 33, 35, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 15, IN India (Delhi) 1971; the latter figures in U.S. Agricultural Attaché New Delhi, 22 January 1973, *ibid.*, Box 14, IN India (Delhi) 1973 DR.

158 “Food situation grim”, *The Economic Times*, Bombay, 24 July 1973, FAO, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. III.

159 Agricultural Attaché New Delhi to USDA, 12 May 1978, Enclosure 1, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 78, ID-India (New Delhi) 1978.

160 Agricultural Attaché New Delhi to USDA, 21 January 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 50, ID-India (New Delhi) 1975 DR.

161 See various reports of 1973 and 1974 in FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. II and IV.

162 Van der Meulen to Leeks, 27 July 1973, FAO, RG 12 Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. III; Paralal Swana, “Maharashtra: Who Cares about the Drought?”, *EPW* 7 (46/47), 13 November 1972, p. 2269; Subramanian 1975, pp. 37–49; Brahme 1973, pp. 48–50.

163 Brahme 1973, pp. 47–48.

(930 calories per day) per needy person was often not available in Maharashtra; like in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the poor received only 2–6 kilograms.¹⁶⁴ Intending to prevent migration to the cities, Maharashtra's authorities concentrated on relief works for four million people in late April 1973, which fueled inflation and made life miserable for many rural poor.¹⁶⁵ Oxfam's representative John Staley saw people who had not eaten for several days. Others ate leaves.¹⁶⁶ In 1973, families of cultivators, laborers and craftsmen (whose incomes had declined drastically) were reportedly all affected, though laborers may have been worst off, but in 1974, refugees in Bombay were largely tribal people and Dalits.¹⁶⁷ In Andhra Pradesh, it was primarily agricultural workers who were hit by "famine".¹⁶⁸ Foreign observers found the situation in Gujarat for some time as bad as in Maharashtra, but the authorities were playing it down.¹⁶⁹ The drought in Gujarat affected 13.4 million, half of the population, with 800,000 employed in relief work (usually heavily underpaid construction work, like in Maharashtra) – aside from landless workers, many peasants and even larger farmers and shepherds were employed there.¹⁷⁰ Drought returned in late 1974, affecting more people than in 1972–1973. Monthly grain rations fell to 6.25 kilograms, people fled their homes, and conflicts arose between pastoralists heading south and agriculturalists in their way.¹⁷¹

In the state of West Bengal, the rice and wheat harvests seemed sufficient in 1974, but because of hoarding, price increases and grain speculation, 15–25 million people reportedly needed help. The state government prepared measures to assist only 600,000 and provided relief for only 100,000.¹⁷² Daily wages for landless laborers, whose numbers had grown steeply in the 1960s, dropped by half

164 US Embassy New Delhi, 4 May 1973, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, 1970–1973, Box 470, AGR I; "Attaché Contribution to Biweekly Economic Review – India", 14 February 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 14, IN India (Delhi) 1973 (second file); John Staley, "Maharashtra Drought, April 1973", Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976; Wolf Ladejinsky "Drought in Maharashtra (Not in a Hundred Years)", *EPW* 8 (7), 17 February 1973, p. 389.

165 Brahme 1973, pp. 51–52.

166 Oxfam, Minutes of the Field Committee for Asia, 30 May 1973, Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976; Brahme 1973, p. 52.

167 Wolf Ladejinsky, "Drought in Maharashtra (Not in a Hundred Years)", *EPW* 8 (7), 17 February 1973, p. 387; Sharad Patil, "Famine Conditions in Maharashtra: A Survey of Sakri Taluka", *EPW* 8 (30), 28 July 1973, pp. 1316–1317; Drèze and Sen 1989, pp. 130–131; Oughton 1982, pp. 184–185, 189–190; "Maharashtra: Flight from Famine", *EPW* 9 (45/46), 9 November 1974, p. 1894.

168 "Andhra: Starvation amidst Plenty", *EPW* 6 (48), 27 November 1971, pp. 2370–2371.

169 US Embassy New Delhi, situation report, 28 October 1972, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, 1970–73, Box 470, AGR I.

170 Father Michael Urrutia, "Drought conditions in Gujarat – February 1973", Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976. For Maharashtra, see Balmohan Limayo and Madhar Rahikar, "Drought Relief: A First-Hand Account", *EPW* 6 (41), 9 October 1971, pp. 2141–2143.

171 Tony Vaux, "The Politics of Hunger: a supplementary note on the drought in Gujarat", December 1974, Oxfam, file Reports on visits to areas affected by natural disasters.

172 "West Bengal: 1943 Being Re-enacted", *EPW* 9 (49), 5 October 1974, p. 1687; Ladejinsky 1976, p. 104; Harris 1983, p. 202.

while the price of rice rose.¹⁷³ It seems that sharecroppers and minifundists were the worst affected, and many landless lost their jobs.¹⁷⁴ The suffering in West Bengal continued until 1975. In that year, authorities again worried about the situation in Gujarat, Orissa (with one million in relief works) and Madhya Pradesh.¹⁷⁵

People responded as in previous famines. Finding only wild plants to eat, many villagers fled to Calcutta.¹⁷⁶ This had already started in 1973, but the state organized no relief works.¹⁷⁷ Desperate smallholders sold their land out of distress. Hoarding and black marketeering were widespread. In late 1974, many parents abandoned their children, people left their dead in the streets, some committed suicide and women turned to prostitution. The streets of Bankura were filled with cries of mourners and people begging for food or work. In Madhya Pradesh, parents sold their children or left them to eat grass, leaves, bark and roots.¹⁷⁸ About half of the afflicted middle and poor peasants in Maharashtra had to sell their livestock and household goods and mortgage or sell some land.¹⁷⁹ Dalit refugees in Poona sold brass objects, including their family idols, in the streets; they begged, stole and collected junk.¹⁸⁰ As people began to die in the state of Bihar in 1972, there were reports of refugees and violent demonstrations at markets and courthouses. In March 1973, a U.S. observer reported demonstrations and food riots in five states.¹⁸¹ Many distress sales of land, the value of which had halved, took place in West Bengal in 1974.¹⁸² By contrast, “The famine has been a godsend to many rich farmers who have managed to have ‘community’ wells dug on their land”, according to one report.¹⁸³

A demographer has estimated that starvation caused 0.5–1 million excess deaths in India in 1972–1975, and 600,000 deaths in 1972 alone.¹⁸⁴ Two studies undertaken

173 Ladejinsky 1976, p. 106; Harris 1983, p. 201.

174 “East India Annual Report 1976–77”, Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee November 1976–January 1980; Drèze 1990b, p. 80.

175 Oxfam, Field Committee for Asia, Minutes of Meeting, 28 May 1975, Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976.

176 “West Bengal: The Hungry Flock into Calcutta”, *EPW*, 8 (35), 1 September 1973, pp. 1594–1595; Ladejinsky 1976, p. 108.

177 “West Bengal: The Hungry Flock into Calcutta”, *EPW* 8 (35), 1 September 1973, p. 1594.

178 Bernard Weintraub, “Bankura: The Spread of Anguish”, in: *Give Us* 1975, pp. 13–17; Ladejinsky 1976, pp. 103, 107.

179 Sharad Patil, “Famine Conditions in Maharashtra: A Survey of Sakri Taluka”, *EPW* 8 (30), 28 July 1973, pp. 1316–1317; cf. Subramanian 1975, pp. 616–617.

180 Anil Awachat, “Poona: Unwanted Visitors from Famine Land”, *EPW* 9 (39), 28 September 1974, p. 1647.

181 “Bihar: Focus on drought: unprecedented misery”, Indian newspaper report, 8 September 1972, FAO, RG 12, Comm. Div., FA 4/16.1, vol. II; US Embassy New Delhi, telegram, 4 March 1973, NARA, RG 59, General Records, Economic, 1970–73, Box 471, AGR I; US Agricultural Attaché New Delhi, reports of 8 February and 7 March 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 40, IN India (New Delhi) 1974 DR.

182 Garcia and Spitz 1986, p. 28.

183 D. N., “Maharashtra: Not the End of the Peasantry’s Problems”, *EPW* 8 (26), 30 June 1973, p. 1143.

184 Dyson 1996, p. 71 and 73, note 14.

independently from each other estimated that Maharashtra saw 130,000 excess deaths in 1973 alone, with a minimum of 70,000. Mortality increased primarily in the east of the state, which was usually less drought-prone. The elderly and infants died disproportionately.¹⁸⁵ In Assam, state legislators spoke of up to 15,000 famine deaths in the fall of 1974, when the calamity, spurred by floods and refugees from Bangladesh, was not yet over.¹⁸⁶ The scarcity struck most of the state's inhabitants, and many sold their land, but most of those who died were Muslims.¹⁸⁷ According to one report, 5,000 may have died from starvation in West Bengal.¹⁸⁸

India had greatly expanded its production of food (especially wheat) since the late 1960s and seemed to be close to self-sufficiency. In early 1972, the U.S. agricultural attaché observed a “psychology of abundance [. . .] in the minds of [Indian] policy makers”.¹⁸⁹ Indian national and state authorities avoided the term ‘famine’,¹⁹⁰ which the FAO’s representative condoned: “Any suggestions on the part of the Government or its officials that the situation might be graver than that projected in the official reports would not be in the public interest”,¹⁹¹ probably because it would drive up food prices. Indira Gandhi ran in 1973 on the campaign slogan of “eradicating poverty”, which may have reinforced the refusal.¹⁹² Administrations held village chiefs responsible for starvation deaths, so “[d]eath due to malnutrition’ is the euphemism employed to avoid controversies”, a report on the famine in the state of Chhattisgarh noted in 1975.¹⁹³ At the World Food Conference, India’s Minister of Agriculture Jagjivan Ram admitted only “malnutrition” in the country, instead of famine or starvation, contrary to Bangladeshi officials.¹⁹⁴

The central and state governments responded with support programs for farmers that included agricultural inputs and notably also livestock feeds, the drilling of

185 Oughton 1982, p. 169 (general mortality was up by 20 percent from 13.0 to 15.6 per 1,000); Dyson and Maharatra 1992, pp. 1328, 1330.

186 Sobel 1975, p. 66; see also M. Prabhakar, “Death in Barpeta” and Prabir Baishya, “Assam: Man-Made Famine”, *EPW* 10 (10), 8 March 1975 and 10 (21), 24 May 1975, pp. 423–425 and 821–822, respectively.

187 M. Prabhakar, “The Famine: A Report from Dhubri”, *EPW* 9 (42), 15 October 1974, pp. 1768–1769.

188 Amrita Rangaswami, “West Bengal: A Generation Wiped Out”, *EPW* 9 (48), 30 November 1974, pp. 1973–1976. Ladejinsky 1976, p. 103, estimated “a few hundred and possibly a couple of thousand” starvation deaths.

189 Report of 8 May 1972, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports 1971–84, Box 14, IN India (Delhi) 1972 DR.

190 For example, Bernard Weintraub, “Calcutta: On the Precipice”, in: *Give Us* 1975, p. 22; telegram U.S. Consulate Bombay, 20 December 1972, NARA, RG 59, General Records, Economic, 1970–73, Box 470, AGR I and further documents in that file.

191 G. Hutton, Senior Agricultural Advisor/FAO Country Representative in India to Dutia, 2 March 1973, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. II. Chopra 1981, pp. 153–154, noted a “psychology of shortages [. . .], making people nervous”.

192 Siegel 2018, p. 226.

193 “Chattisgarh in grip of famine”, *Hindustan Times*, 5 May 1975, Oxfam, Box Staff Tours, India 1966–1987, South India 1976 Staff Tour.

194 Gail Omvedt, “South Asia and the Politics of Food”, *EPW* 9 (49), 7 December 1974, p. 2012. See also *PAN* no. 8, 13 November 1974, FAO, RG 22, WFC PAN.

wells, food aid and health measures.¹⁹⁵ They also restricted the movement of grain between states, took steps to prevent smuggling and hoarding, and instituted rural employment programs. The official takeover of wholesale trade in rice and wheat in 1973 was not considered a success.¹⁹⁶ However, the figures cited earlier for relief works and food aid show that these measures were utterly insufficient to end the misery. In the summer of 1973, the authorities also reduced the number of guests fed at parties and private festivities from 50 to 25.¹⁹⁷ But they sent away refugees in the cities to the countryside.¹⁹⁸

Foreign sources did little to alleviate the situation. In the early 1970s, India tried to become independent from foreign support. It financed 9 percent of its food imports with foreign ‘aid’ in 1972–1973, down from 40 percent in 1967–1968.¹⁹⁹

Following the propaganda line of officials, researchers have often denied that India suffered famines in the early 1970s and inaccurately described the crises as cases of successful state management.²⁰⁰ Amartya Sen, representative of parts of the Indian bourgeoisie, is a denier, too. He has gone so far as to claim that no famine occurred in India after independence because, as he holds, none has ever occurred in a ‘democratic’ country.²⁰¹ This has nothing to do with reality. The very press reports that, according to Sen, are safeguards against famine showed that it occurred and was covered up.²⁰² In 1976, Indian press censorship helped to conceal further “food disasters”.²⁰³

Indonesia

This tropical, populous archipelago, most of whose people lived on Java, was governed by a brutal right-wing military-technocratic regime 1966–1998. Most inhabitants were rural dwellers on tiny farms. The production of rice and corn was

195 Chopra 1981, p. 140; see also John Staley, “Maharashtra drought July–September 1973”, Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976.

196 Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Food, Annual Report 1972–73, pp. 23, 31–35, New Delhi, 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 15, IN India (Delhi) 1971; Chopra 1981, pp. 140, 142–143, 150.

197 Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Food, Annual Report 1972–1973, p. 24, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 15, IN India (Delhi) 1971.

198 Telegram U.S. Consulate Bombay, 23 January 1973, NARA, RG 59, General Records, Economic, 1970–73, Box 470, AGR I.

199 “India – the Background to Poverty”, 16 January 1979, Oxfam, Box Staff Tours, India, 1966–1987, South India 1976 Staff Tour.

200 Subramanian 1975, pp. 168–170; McAfrin 1986, pp. 79–80; de Waal 1997, pp. 15–16; Drèze in Drèze and Sen 1989, pp. 126–132; Drèze 1990b, pp. 65–97 (see especially p. 71, note to table 1.16). Little better are Torry 1984, p. 241, note 12, and Banik 2006, p. 291.

201 Sen 1996 (1983), p. 21; Sen 1999, pp. 43 (India), 180 (Maharashtra 1973); Banik 2006, p. 292; Drèze and Sen 1989, p. 122 (no “major famines”).

202 Drèze and Sen 1989, p. 69, accuse Oxfam of false alarmism in its reports on Maharashtra in 1972 and 1973, but, as I have demonstrated, other evidence corroborates them.

203 Oxfam, Minutes of Meeting of Field Committee for Asia, 16 July 1976, Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976.

reduced in Central and East Java, Sulawesi and some of the eastern islands in 1972 due to drought, which led to rising food prices and hardship for the population in the last three months of the year. Experts worried about a “replay” of 1967, when a bad rice harvest had coincided with high international prices.²⁰⁴ FAO had also warned that low official farm prices and low use of fertilizers might result in a lower harvest. In the second half of the year, “some reports of starvation deaths and hunger edema appeared in the press”,²⁰⁵ “Famine conditions” were reported in the Moluccas, Flores, West Timor,²⁰⁶ and, according to the USAID, Central Java.²⁰⁷ An Oxfam representative saw rice shortages “everywhere” in the country in 1973.²⁰⁸

That year saw a big increase in the production of cassava, a drought-resistant, high-calorie food to which many poor people had turned after the rice crop did not develop. The government imposed a ban on cassava exports but lifted it in November 1973.²⁰⁹ Some Indonesians later remembered hardship and the state’s inaction.²¹⁰ The number of victims is not known but the USAID’s figure of two is ridiculous.²¹¹ An FAO study that year found that 39 million people nationwide, 30 percent of the population, were severely malnourished.²¹² A local study about a village in Central Java noted that there were several food price peaks from September 1972 to late 1973, pawning spiked from September 1972 to January 1973 and real wages dropped by one-third.²¹³

The Indonesian government took two months to react to the drought and then frantically attempted to import rice and wheat in order to bring prices under control. The latter succeeded in December 1972. But since its urgent requests for food aid were rejected, it had to buy half of the wheat, and probably a higher percentage of the rice, on commercial terms.²¹⁴ Indonesia’s commercial grain imports in

204 US Agricultural Attaché Jakarta, “Grains and Feeds”, 6 October 1972, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 16, ID Indonesia 1972 DR.

205 US Agricultural Attaché Jakarta, “Agricultural Situation”, 24 January 1973, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 16, ID Indonesia 1973 DR; May 1978, p. 364.

206 U.S. Agricultural Attaché Jakarta, “Agricultural Situation”, 20 October 1972, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 16, ID Indonesia 1972.

207 AID n.y., p. 1.

208 Pauline Ecks, “Tour Report to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Maharashtra, September 13–October 16, 1973”, Oxfam, Box Tour Reports Asia (not India).

209 US Agricultural Attaché Jakarta, “Annual Grain and Feed Report”, 19 August 1974, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 40, ID Indonesia 1974 DR; Unnevehr 1984a, p. 155; Falcon et al. 1984b, p. 169. An export ban was also declared for rice and tapioca: Alfred Toepfer, “Marktbericht”, 13 July 1973, Alfred Toepfer-Archiv.

210 See account by Anwar Naba in Keller 2015, p. 190; for a general account of the rice shortages, see May 1978, pp. 361–368.

211 AID n.y., p. 1.

212 See Falcon et al. 1984b, p. 163.

213 White 1977, pp. 147–151.

214 See May 1978, p. 365; Bresnan 1993, pp. 118–119; Winters 1996, pp. 88–89, note 115; correspondence Butz-Brunthaver-Hannah, 12–19 October 1972, NARA, RG 16, USDA General Correspondence, Box 5615, Rice 3; Green to Sullivan, 21 November 1972, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 470, AGR Indon 15, 1/1/70; U.S. Agricultural Attaché Jakarta, 28 December 1973, and US Agricultural Attaché Jakarta, “Agricultural Situation”, 24 January 1973, both in RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports., Box 16, ID Indonesia 1973 DR; Brunthaver memo to Butz, 30 November 1972, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5615, Rice; Eliot, Jr. memo to

1973–1976 far exceeded the food aid it received.²¹⁵ Despite the USA’s refusal to provide Indonesia much food aid, the USAID later boasted of its help.²¹⁶ International prices were on a high level, and according to U.S. agricultural attaché Jerome Kuhl, “There doesn’t seem to be any rice for sale anywhere in the world”, so that for a brief period, the Indonesian government could not buy foreign rice at any price. Its efforts to procure domestic rice also failed because farmers could sell their grain more profitably to private traders (“farmers are holding back grain for speculative purposes”).²¹⁷ East Java’s authorities restricted the movement sale of rice out of the province.²¹⁸ After the military regime had taken pride in bringing down inflation (following the hyperinflation of 1966), the rice shortages set it off again in 1972; the price of rice settled down in 1974, but prices for other daily necessities continued to rise.²¹⁹ Thus, the food crisis had consequences nationwide, including in the cities, which contributed to the January 1974 “Malari” riots (see Chapter 8). Due to the official grain-selling policy, grain stocks were extremely low.²²⁰

Despite the shortcomings of its policy in 1972–1974, the government broke with its practice of denying famine and neglecting its victims, which had been applied as late as in 1970.²²¹ Observers found that for once the government’s efforts were sincere and effective. But a number of qualifications to this judgment are in order. For one, we know relatively little about conditions in the provinces,²²² locals’ responses to scarcity, and how they, rather than government action, impacted the situation. For another, there was neither an international nor a national relief campaign. And events and policies in Indonesia proper in 1972–1974 were, for all we know, in stark contrast to Indonesia’s murderous policies of hunger in East Timor in 1976–1982, which claimed more than 80,000 lives in a population of at most 700,000.²²³

Kissinger, 16 September 1972, Nixon papers, NSC, Box 330, Grain Shippings; Cooper memos to Kissinger, 10 June and 24 November 1973, NARA, Nixon paper, NSC, Box 329, Foreign Policy, and Box 324, unmarked file (Aid for 1974), respectively; Galbraith telegrams, 12 and 17 October 1973, https://wikileaks/plusd/cables/1973JAKART12162_b.html and https://wikileaks/plusd/cables/1973JAKART12296_b.html; Middendorf to USAID, 8 May 1973, https://wikileaks/plusd/cables/1973THEHA0233_b.html (all accessed 23 January 2017). In a failure of foresight, the Indonesian government had reduced its request in early 1972 for food aid for 1972–1973: Posthumus 1972, p. 61.

215 Mears and Moeljono 1981a, pp. 60–61.

216 AID n.y.

217 First quote: Kuhl to USDA, 18 May 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports., Box 16, ID Indonesia 1973 DR. Second quote: Middendorf to AID, 8 May 1973, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1973THEHA02110_b.html (accessed 23 January 2017); Pearson et al. 1991b, p. 14.

218 Mears 1981, p. 10.

219 U.S. Agricultural Attaché Jakarta, “Annual Grain and Feed Report”, 19 August 1974, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 40, ID Indonesia 1974 DR; Prawiro 1998, p. 138.

220 List of stocks, FAO, RG 15, Regional Offices, Asia and Far East, World Food Situation-Fertilizer 1973–76; see a September 1973 report, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. IV.

221 See van der Eng 2012; May 1978, pp. 404–405.

222 But whereas many anthropological, sociological and economic studies from villages in Bangladesh with fieldwork undertaken at the time accounted for famine, those about Indonesia did not.

223 See Gerlach (2023) and Chapter 8.

Mali and the Sahel

In the narrower sense of the word, the Sahel is a semi-arid area southwest of the Sahara stretching from Senegal to Chad where both small-scale farming and pastoralism are important. It cuts through Mali, whose climate zones run from desert in the north to subtropical in the south, like in some neighboring countries. Because of the character of the material available to me, I discuss Mali together with them.

A drought, which began in some areas in 1967, triggered the famine in West Africa. It peaked in 1973, but most foreign food deliveries arrived in 1974. The consequences of the drought were severest in Mauritania and the dry northern regions of Mali, Niger, Chad and Senegal, though it also hit their central areas. The water level of rivers in the region was exceptionally low. A large part of the livestock died, and grain production fell drastically. In many parts of Mali, farmers did not plant crops because they had eaten the seed.²²⁴ In 1973, six of the affected states – Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta, all ruled by authoritarian regimes – founded the Permanent Interstate Committee for the Fight against Drought in the Sahel (CILSS) to pursue development policy.²²⁵

The crisis hit the Sahel's pastoralists especially hard. Many foreign observers found that malnutrition among the sedentary population was no worse than usual but severe among nomads, especially those in refugee camps near cities and towns, where they also suffered from epidemics. The same was true in Mali. Children were the worst affected; many had hunger edema.²²⁶ In Mauritania, the FAO's estimate of food availability translated to 1,993 calories per day per person on average (114 below the requirement) and 73.4 grams of proteins (supposedly double the requirement).²²⁷ According to reports, food was available, but many could not afford it.²²⁸ In Mali, millet prices doubled or tripled, and the government issued a warning to grain traders not to speculate.²²⁹ In contrast, cattle prices in Mali (normally a livestock-exporting country) had fallen to one-sixth of their previous value by early 1973, and over half of the animals offered for sale were pregnant.²³⁰ Related to the crisis in livestock production, the price of local salt also dropped, and the situation for salt producers in the arid north was soon precarious.²³¹ By

224 Kessler (UNDP Bamako) to Dutia, 18 September 1973, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. IV. For Mali, see also "Supplementary Report on Food Shortages", March 1973, FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/16.1, vol. III; Messiant 1975, p. 68.

225 See CILSS, "Cadre d'Orientation de la Stratégie de lutte contre la Sécheresse et ses Conséquences", 25 June 1973, FAO, RG 9, Division of Technical Assistance Coordination 1973: Sahel.

226 Marcel Ganzin, "Summary Report on the Food and Nutrition Situation in the Drought-Stricken Sahelian Zone", 28 August 1973, FAO, RG 9, Division of Technical Assistance Coordination, Sahel: 1973; Sheets and Morris 1974, pp. 43–44, 85–86, 98, 110.

227 "Multi-Donor Mission to the Sahelian Zone: Report on Mauritania, Nouakchott, 8–11 October 1973", NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 471, AGR Mali.

228 See Iliffe 1987, p. 257 on Niger.

229 Jean-Pierre Sérén, "Afrique de l'Ouest: un famine aux portes?", *Jeune Afrique* 624, 23 December 1972, FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/21, vol. Ia. For speculation in Niger, Chad and Upper Volta, see Meunier 1975, p. 123.

230 Caldwell 1975, p. 50.

231 Gardi 1978, pp. 179–183 about Niger.

late 1974, things seemed to have improved in most countries, Mali included,²³² but consumer prices, official and on free markets, rose steeply.²³³

Some researchers have claimed that there was no discernible or only a small increase in mortality,²³⁴ but surveys in Chad and Niger in mid-1974 found twice the normal level (49 per 1,000).²³⁵ In Niger, the increase seems to have been concentrated in the north.²³⁶ One author speaks of 44,000 famine deaths among Mauritania's nomads.²³⁷ For Mali, no number is well established despite one source setting it below 10,000. The same study suggests that hunger may have been one principal cause of death among children in 1972.²³⁸ Mali's Ministry of Health spoke of "rising morbidity and mortality" in 1973, and locally the death rate among agriculturalists increased markedly, too, amid reports of low intakes of calories.²³⁹ Child mortality rose for all of Mali's ethnic groups, but the Bambara experienced only a slight increase, which peaked in 1972. Among the others, the Delta Tamasheq's increase peaked in 1969 and 1974, the Gourma Tamasheq's in 1970 and 1975, the Seno Fulani's in 1973 and the Delta Fulani's increase plateaued over the period 1973–1977.²⁴⁰

Refugee camps reported many deaths. In Niger's Lazaret camp near Niamey (many of whose inhabitants had fled from Mali), babies and children were buried in most of its 500–600 graves, and in a camp in Boutelimit, Mauritania, over 30 percent of the children under six years old were said to have died. For some time, the situation was similar in a camp near Timbuktu, Mali, where food rations were far from sufficient,²⁴¹ and a UN survey found that one-sixth of Malian refugees to Niger, or 8,000 people – primarily small children – died before arrival.²⁴² Others awaited their death in their villages or committed suicide, including some Malian Fulani.²⁴³ The often-cited figure of 101,000 famine victims in the Sahel has no sound methodological basis.²⁴⁴ Noting this, the demographer John Caldwell first argued that "no one knows" the death toll, then conceded that "the death rates must

232 Esseks 1975, p. 50.

233 Schmoch 1983, p. 110.

234 See references in Hugo 1984, p. 16; for Mauritania, southern and central Niger, see "Nutritional Surveillance in West Africa", in: Sheets and Morris 1974, pp. 144, 151; see also Hill 1989, p. 178.

235 Esseks 1975, p. 46. On the debate, see also Bonnacase 2010, pp. 38–41.

236 "Nutritional Surveillance in West Africa", in: Sheets and Morris 1974, p. 151.

237 Mortimer 1991, p. 25.

238 Imperato 1976, pp. 291, 295.

239 FAO, "Republic of Mali: Report of the Multi-Donor Mission to Evaluate Food Aid in 1973/74 for the Drought-Stricken Countries in the Sahel, Bamako, 7–12 October 1973", FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/21, vol. IB. For villagers, see Brun 1975, p. 80; Messiant 1975, p. 71.

240 Hill 1985c, p. 50.

241 Ian Mather, "Race to save Sahara's nomads", *The Observer*, 2 June 1974, and Martin Walker, "Famine, disease and death at the end of the African line", *The Guardian*, 2 April 1974, both in FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/21, vol. Ic; Sheets and Morris 1974, pp. 44, 110; Brun 1975, pp. 85, 87, 95. Caldwell's (1975, p. 25) dismissal of such evidence is unpersuasive.

242 Clarke 1978, p. 132; see also Bonnacase 2010, p. 40, and Brun 1975, p. 81.

243 Franke and Chasin 1980, pp. 8–9.

244 See "Nutritional Surveillance in West Africa", in: Sheets and Morris 1974, p. 136.

have gone up, especially among the nomads”, and finally thought it “doubtful” that excess mortality in the Sahel surpassed 250,000, which is quite high.²⁴⁵

Overstocking was cited as one of the famine’s causes. In the six countries that founded the CILSS, livestock herds had grown from 18 million to 25 million head from 1960 to 1974.²⁴⁶ By 1968, Mali had the region’s biggest herds of cattle, sheep and goats.²⁴⁷ Independence for the region’s countries had been a mixed blessing for herders because the new borders restricted their traditional north-south movements.²⁴⁸ And the social changes in Mauritania, for example, were substantial. In the years around 1970, traders and bureaucratic elites bought many animals cheaply from traditional herders, whose economic position deteriorated. From 1965 to 1976, the population’s proportion of nomads dropped sharply from 65 percent to 36 percent. Sedentary people relied much more on wage labor and trade than nomads did.²⁴⁹

Nomads’ traditional strategies for survival in times of crisis included bringing the herds to better pasturage, relying on food storage, sharing animals, hunting, gathering wild foods and raiding others’ herds.²⁵⁰ Some of these were meanwhile restricted, but turning to substitute foods was still an option. Studies reported that many “communities have a well-developed knowledge of available [wild] foods”.²⁵¹ And ethical factors were still important as well. Studying the moral economy of the Kel Ewey confederation of Niger’s Tuareg people in the mid-1980s, Gerd Spittler concluded: “What is needed in order to overcome a hunger crisis is not only a flexible economic system and appropriate social structures, but also specific norms, values and virtues”. Nonetheless, many caravaning men and children at home died.²⁵²

A popular explanation of the famine is that the production of staple foods like millet and sorghum in the Sahel fell or stagnated because of the steep rise in the cultivation of export crops such as cotton and peanuts, which took over land and absorbed labor.²⁵³ However, this argument does not stand up to scrutiny, because the acreage planted with export crops remained small.²⁵⁴ The same point can be made, with a bit more caution, about rural labor availability.²⁵⁵ Any serious explanation must be more complex and involve a crisis of herding, but also of the smallest farms. The crisis in the early 1970s changed the relationship between pastoralists

245 Caldwell 1975, pp. 24, 26 (quotes), 48.

246 Esseks 1975, p. 55.

247 CILSS, “Cadre d’Orientation de la Stratégie de lutte contre la Sécheresse et ses Consequences”, 25 June 1973, FAO, RG 9, Division of Technical Assistance Coordination 1973: Sahel.

248 Swift 1973, p. 76.

249 Ould Cheikh 1990, pp. 71, 84.

250 Swift 1973, pp. 73–76, on the Kel Adrar Tuareg.

251 Campbell 1990, p. 150.

252 Spittler 1989, pp. 90, note 8, 99, 124–127, 205 (quote; my translation from German).

253 For Mali, see Lofchie 1975, especially pp. 555, 559; see also George 1978, p. 27; Messiant 1975, pp. 70–71; Mandel 1987, p. 125; Collins and Moore Lappé 1980, pp. 27, 127. Some of their data is obviously, even absurdly, wrong. Cf. the data in Derrick 1977, pp. 559–560.

254 See Giri 1983, p. 111; Schmoch 1983, pp. 328–329; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985b, p. 50; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, p. 10.

255 See Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, pp. 89–92, 105; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985b, pp. 51, 55.

and agriculturalists in the region. It hit some farmers hard but benefitted others, who joined traders and civil servants in buying animals from herders at low prices. As sedentary keeping of animals increased, some herders became employees, and nomads' herds were no longer needed, or welcomed, to fertilize farmers' fields on moves to the south with their manure.²⁵⁶ Nonetheless, in retrospect, some non-nomadic Nigeriens associated the famine of 1972–1973 with slavery, dependence and powerlessness.²⁵⁷

Distress migration during the years of hunger was widespread and exceeded the usual seasonal migration of nomads and sedentary ruralites looking for labor in the dry season.²⁵⁸ Mali received refugees from Mauritania, and many Malians fled to Senegal, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Dahomey, Togo, Nigeria and Ghana, another 20,000 to Niger and 15,000 to Algeria. According to one author, 100,000 Kel Tamasheq left Mali, most of them apparently to Niger and Upper Volta.²⁵⁹ Within Mali, many were also on the move, and about 40 refugee camps existed,²⁶⁰ “but old people, children and disabled are being forsaken” as their fleeing relatives left them behind.²⁶¹ In Niger's Lazaret camp, the refugees (many of them Malians) dreamt at night of animals dying, the drought, the better times before, and what they would eat the next day. Ninety-six percent of the camp's inhabitants wanted their children to go to school and only 50 percent wanted them to become nomads.²⁶² Malian pastoralists in Nigeria fell into conflicts with farmers that became ethnic.²⁶³

Representatives of the Kel Tamasheq accused the region's governments, especially Mali's, of following a policy of systematic starvation or even to exterminate their ethnic group. Governments denied the charge, but a British press report quoted a CILSS functionary, Ibrahim Konaté, as saying: “We have to discipline these people, and to control their grazing and their movements. Their liberty is too expensive for us. This disaster is our opportunity”.²⁶⁴ And according to a USAID report, the Malian government “has decided to concentrate on saving human lives

256 Oxby 1989, pp. 3–4.

257 Gado 1993, p. 185.

258 The number of two million nomads in camps (Sheets and Morris 1974, p. 29) seems exaggerated.

259 Hugo 1984, p. 24; for Niger, see Clarke 1978, pp. 124, 150, 156 (also on the Kel Tamasheq), and “Nutritional Surveillance in West Africa”, in Sheets and Morris 1974, pp. 160–161; for Algeria, see Oxfam, [Africa] Field Secretaries' Report, 23 May 1974, Oxfam, Box Africa Field Committee, January 1974–October 1976. For Nigeria, see Caldwell 1975, p. 27. For the 100,000 figure, see also “Supplementary Report on Food Shortages, March 1974”, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. IV; see also Somerville 1986, p. 30.

260 USAID, “Report to the Congress on Famine in Sub-Sahara Africa”, September 1974, Annex I, part II, Ford Library, Stanley Scott Papers, Box 2, African Drought 1973–74 (4).

261 “Progress Report – Operation Animals: IDWG on Sahelian Drought Problems”, 4 May 1973, FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/21, vol. Ia. The same seems to have been true of spouses; see Brun 1975, pp. 88–89.

262 Clarke 1978, pp. 236, 240.

263 Watts 1983, p. 382.

264 Sar and Reyntjens, report on a CILSS meeting, 15–16 March 1974, FAO, RG 9, T. A. Coordination/Field Liaison Div., 1974, Sahelian Zone: OSRO. Quote: *Daily Telegraph* article, 16 (or 18?) August 1974, pp. 18–20, in: FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 13, Massey Ferguson II. See also Thomas Johnson, “Dori, Upper Volta: The Plight of the Tuaregs”, *Give Us* 1975, p. 41; Derrick 1977, pp. 560–561.

rather than livestock”, which could reduce the national inventory from five million to three million heads of cattle.²⁶⁵ In May 1974, Kel Tamasheq in Maradi, Niger, were rounded up and trucked back north.²⁶⁶ Even once they returned home around 1975, the returnees found it hard to rebuild their herds.²⁶⁷ It was symbolic of their disempowerment that famished Malian nomads sold not only their jewelry but also their weapons in heaps in the tourist market in Gao.²⁶⁸ The drought further eroded the social position of the Kel Tamasheq in Mali – once a dominant, slave-owning group – as had many processes after the country’s independence. Their two rebellions would plunge Mali later into civil war in the 1990s and 2010s.

Early on, national governments and some of the many foreign functionaries in the region expressed concern about the drought (although FAO’s Early Warning System missed the bad condition in which animal herds and crops in the Sahel were until mid-January 1973).²⁶⁹ Mali’s government soon ended the cattle tax and created a national commission, headed by the ministers for defense and interior affairs, to address the emergency.²⁷⁰ Neighboring countries acted similarly. But the Malian government also suppressed a tax strike by farmers in the region of Kayes.²⁷¹ Unable to overcome the crisis alone, the CILSS and individual governments issued spectacular calls for international help. On 9 October 1973, Upper Volta’s President Aboubakar Sangoulé Lamizana addressed the UN General Assembly.²⁷²

The response was slow. In 1972–1973, the foreign aid campaign for the Sahel amounted to about US\$150 million including 700,000 tons of food (of which the USA provided about one-third). About 1.1 million tons (including 287,000 tons of commercial deliveries) followed the next year,²⁷³ of which Mali’s share was disproportionately high. But only two-thirds of the aid commitments for 1972–1973 were honored in that period.²⁷⁴ In later years, food exports to the Sahel remained

265 USAID, “Disaster Memo, Central/West Africa – Sahelian Drought Zone”, 16 May 1973, FAO, RG 15, Reg. Files, FP 5.4.1 Misc. (Sahelian Zone).

266 Henry Kamm, “Dakar, Niger: The Rains Come”, *Give Us* 1975, p. 45.

267 John Darnton, “Drought”, *The Globe and Mail*, 7 January 1978, FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/21, vol. II.

268 Clarke 1978, p. 118.

269 U.S. Embassy Nouakchott, 1 October 1971, NARA, RG 59, SNF, Box 459, AGR 3 FAO 11/1/71; U.S. Embassy Niamey, 16 May 1972, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 465, AGR 1/1/72; FAO Regional Office for Africa (Thomas and des Bouriers), “Investigation into the Magnitude of the Drought Conditions in the Sahelian Zone”, 2 February 1973, FAO, RG 15, Reg. Files FP-5.4.1 Miscellaneous (Sahelian Zone), Aug–Dec 1973. See Sheets and Morris 1974, pp. 12–13.

270 Thomas and des Bourrie report, 2 February 1973, and “Visit to Bamako, Mali, 24–27 January 1973”, FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/21, vol. Ia.

271 Ormières 1975, pp. 138–139.

272 Undated memo from Kissinger to Nixon (October 1973), NARA, Nixon, WHCF, Box 9, CO 161 Upper Volta 1971–74.

273 Report from Williams to Nixon, 27 September 1973, Attachments A and B, “Sahel Drought Assistance”, NARA, Nixon, WHCF, Box 9, CO 161 Upper Volta 1971–74; “Sahelian Emergency Relief Operation of the UN System, November 1973–October 1974”, FAO, RG 7, film 517; El-Khoury 1976, pp. 83–84. Some figures in Shaw 2011, p. 54, seem exaggerated.

274 For example, see the file in the Ford Library, Stanley Scott Papers, Box 2, African Drought 1973–74 (4). For delays, see FAO, “Republic of Mali: Report of the Multi-Donor Mission to Evaluate Food

on a higher level than until 1972.²⁷⁵ But it was difficult to transport food to the landlocked countries of Mali, Niger and Chad, because the capacity of the ports in Senegal and Ivory Coast and of the few railway lines was insufficient. As a result, deliveries were delayed, and an international airlift was organized in 1973. Six of its 16 foreign airplanes served Mali.²⁷⁶ There was little coordination of this aid, despite several bodies claiming to organize it like the UN Disaster Relief Organization, the FAO's Office for the Sahelian Relief Operation (OSRO), the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization.²⁷⁷ The region's governments were somewhat better organized.

They repeatedly complained about the inadequacy and slowness of foreign support.²⁷⁸ Though the amounts of grain the region needed were limited, cuts in food aid forced them to buy much of it at high world market prices.²⁷⁹ One reason for the reluctance was that the great powers, especially the USA, had little geopolitical interest in the region. As Kissinger wrote to Nixon: "Our political and economic interests there are minimal".²⁸⁰ The U.S. government regarded Africa as a zone of "European hegemony".²⁸¹ This attitude changed gradually during the 1970s. But given the Sahel's low priority for at the time of the crisis in 1972–1974, 'donor' countries and the international bodies under their influence conveniently used the excuse of transportation problems to explain their slow and limited effort.²⁸²

Aid in 1973/74 for the Drought-Stricken Countries in the Sahel, Bamako, 7–12 October 1973", FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/21, vol. IB. See also "Summary Report of the Multi-Donor Mission to assess the food aid necessary in 1973–1974 for the six drought-stricken Sahelian countries", 16 October 1973, FAO, RG 9, Division of Technical Assistance Coordination, 1973: Sahel.

275 See FAO/OSRO, 13 February 1978, FAO, RG 12, Commodities and Trade Division, FA 4/21, vol. II, Sahelian Zone, Oct 1977–Feb 1978.

276 FAO, OSRO, Report No. 5, 6 August 1973, FAO, RG 9, Division of Technical Assistance Coordination, 1973: Sahel. A similar problem with clogged ports arose in and around Ethiopia: Shepherd 1975, pp. 53–54.

277 Oxfam, Minutes of the Africa Field Committee, 16 July 1974, Oxfam, Box Africa Field Committee, January 1974–October 1976. See Kent 1987, pp. 56–58; Sheets and Morris 1974; Shaw 2011, p. 54; Meyer 2012.

278 Scott to Higgins, 18 September 1973, NARA, Nixon, WHCF, Box 55, [EX] CO 112 Niger 1/1/73; see the file FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/21, vol. Ia.

279 For example, Mali received 105,000 tons of food aid in 1973 and imported 77,500 commercially; Sar and Reyntjens, report on CILSS meeting 15–16 March 1974, FAO, RG 9, T.A. Coordination/Field Liaison Division, 1974, Sahelian Zone: OSRO; see also El-Khoury 1976, p. 84; Esseks 1975, p. 48.

280 See Oxfam, Report of the Field Director for West Africa, December 1969, Oxfam, Box Africa Field Committee, February 1970–November 1973; Laurence Legere, Institute for Defense Analysis, "The Significance of Africa in US Military Strategy", 15 April 1970, NARA, Nixon, WHCF, Box 4, Gen CO 1–1 Africa; memo Kissinger to Nixon, n.d. [October 1973], NARA, Nixon, WHCF, Box 9, CO 161 Upper Volta 1971–74 (quote).

281 U.S. Embassy Bonn, "German Economic Relations with Developing Countries in Africa", April 1970, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 476, AID A 1/1/70.

282 FAO, OSRO, Report No. 5, 6 August 1973, FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/21, vol. Ia; Sheets and Morris 1974, pp. 36–38.

Whether “millions would have died of starvation” without this campaign, as the coordinator of U.S. aid Maurice Williams claimed (“widespread starvation has been averted”), is unknown.²⁸³ The OSRO told a similar success story, despite “pockets of severe malnutrition”,²⁸⁴ and also praised the “remarkable food distribution job done by the stricken countries themselves”. So did the World Food Programme “though”, it acknowledged, “the death toll may be considerable particularly among children”, especially in Niger and Mali’s sixth region in the north.²⁸⁵ However, the foreign presence and capital inflow had another side:

New French restaurants and boutiques opened. In 1971 there were 39,927 passenger arrivals; in 1973, there were 65,937. Niamey had become a famine boomtown [. . .]. Hundreds of disaster tourists visited [. . .] the [. . .] Sahelian countries during the drought.²⁸⁶

A critic from Oxfam stated that few deliveries reached “those for whom the emergency aid is destined”.²⁸⁷ Against this background, a WHO official exclaimed in the summer of 1973: “Not again!!! God save the drought-stricken countries of the Sahel, now flooded with UN papers and reports. DOUBLE DISASTER”.²⁸⁸

Foreign ‘help’ fluidly transitioned from relief to ‘development’, which the CILSS also promoted.²⁸⁹ The World Food Programme funded the food for workers who dug wells; built dams, roads and food storage facilities; and, unlike in other world regions, planted trees for reforestation.²⁹⁰ Though many argued that overstocking and overgrazing had caused the calamity in the first place, and arguably capital inflows into animal production had led to herders’ vulnerability, in April 1973, the FAO and Sweden’s International Development Agency planned “to assist with the transition of the traditional pastoralists into modern livestock producers” for purposes of mass exports.²⁹¹ With this, they took up ideas by African governments and large companies from before the crisis.²⁹²

283 USAID (Williams) report of 27 September 1973, FAO, RG 15, Reg. Files FP-5.4.1 Miscellaneous (Sahelian Zone), Aug–Dec 1973.

284 FAO, OSRO, Report No. 6 for August, 4 September 1973, FAO, RG 9, Division of Technical Assistance Coordination, 1973: Sahel.

285 WPMA/WFP, Newsletter No. 7, “Status of Grain Shipments to Sahelian Countries (and Status of Rainfall)”, 27 August 1973, FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/21, vol. Ia.

286 Clarke 1978, pp. 184, 214.

287 Oxfam, West Africa Annual report 1976–1978, Oxfam, Box Field Committee for Africa, January 1977–January 1979.

288 Note by Soliman on a letter from Brad Morse to Soliman, 15 August 1973, quoted in Meyer 2012, p. 49 (emphasis and spelling in the original).

289 For the CILSS’s development ideas in September 1973, see Meunier 1975, pp. 124–125.

290 Lühe to Dutia, 14 May 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/2B WFP. See also Gerlach 2015, p. 933.

291 “Proposed FAO/SIDA Cooperative Meat Development Programme” (draft), 17 April 1973, FAO, RG 9, DDI, PR 4/44.

292 “The Proposal for an Inter-Divisional Working Group on Policy for Meat Development”, n.d. [1971], FAO, RG 9, DDI, PR 4/44.

Nigeria

Nigeria had some of the same natural, social and economic features as the countries of the Sahel further in the north but differed from them politically. Over several years, drought affected more people in the north of this populous country than in all of the Sahelian states combined, but the international media paid it much less attention. The drought decimated the herds and hurt the yam, sorghum and millet crops but affected the corn and cassava production less.²⁹³ The situation grew worse every year. In the Daura Emirate, two-thirds of farmers had no more self-produced grain to eat by June in 1971, August in 1972, March in 1973 and January in 1974.²⁹⁴ This situation wore people down and changed social relations. According to Jan van Apeldoorn, the “drought and famine years must [. . .] be seen as a low point in a process that had been under way for many years”.²⁹⁵

The famine struck pastoralists and agriculturalists alike. They responded in a variety of ways. Herders moved further south in search of pastures; there were more seasonal migrants, including some from Mali; and people moved to towns and cities.²⁹⁶ Lacking feed, people sold their animals, but prices soon collapsed.²⁹⁷ To buy staples, people sold their possessions; were looking for wage labor; made leather goods, wove, and decorated calabashes; cut firewood; engaged in the pot-ash trade; were hunting (though there was less game due to human population growth) and fishing; and cooked snacks, but the wage for unskilled laborers and the prices for all such goods fell. At least in some places, there were substantial distress sales of land at low prices.²⁹⁸ People also mobilized kinship ties and patronage networks, borrowed money and received gifts.²⁹⁹ Others just went hungry and prayed.³⁰⁰ Many men deserted their families, and children begged.³⁰¹ People ate the famine foods they knew: leaves, bark, roots, water lilies, insect larvae and grass seeds.³⁰² Prostitution in some cities increased.³⁰³

In this area of West Africa, the population names famines to distinguish them; in one area of Nigeria, the name for this one was “the era of refusing to recognise brotherhood”. It was said that the rich broke contractual obligations to the poor.³⁰⁴

Grain prices were up by early to mid-1973.³⁰⁵ According to reports, grain was abundant in the markets of the affected region, but few could afford it.³⁰⁶ Like in

293 Sano 1983, p. 24; van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 50, stresses millet losses; for animals, *ibid.*, p. 56; Mortimer 1991, p. 13; Watts 1983, pp. 380, 384–387.

294 Van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 41.

295 Van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 40; see also Watts 1991, p. 36.

296 Van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 63; Mortimer 1991, p. 18; Watts 1983, pp. 382–384, but see his p. 431.

297 Van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 46.

298 Van Apeldoorn 1981, pp. 46, 60–61; Watts 1983, pp. 431–432.

299 Mortimer 1991, p. 18; Watts 1983, pp. 431–432.

300 See Caldwell 1975, p. 48, who also stresses wage labor.

301 Van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 62.

302 Van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 48.

303 Watts 1983, p. 420.

304 Shipton 1990, p. 374; van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 58, *cf.* p. 62. In general, see Gado 1993.

305 Van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 48; Watts 1983, pp. 381, 383.

306 Watts 1983, p. 375; Van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 55.

the Sahel, the famine led to a redistribution of property of both pastoralists and herders.³⁰⁷ In addition to merchants and moneylenders, some mentioned tradesmen (such as butchers) among the profiteers.³⁰⁸

In another interpretation, ruralites were more resilient and overcame the calamity through traditional strategies, including social networks.³⁰⁹ But the famine in the north indirectly affected the entire country through shortages, rising prices, and a drop in economic growth (similar to Indonesia).³¹⁰

Unlike the countries in the Sahel, Nigeria did not request, or even allow, international aid, for its military government was suspicious of foreign involvement because of the foreign support insurgents had received in the 1967–1970 Nigerian Civil War and the international politicization of the Biafra famine in this context. Instead, the government mounted its own relief campaign, supported by the press and civil society, but its scope was too limited to have much impact and it was merely technical in nature with food aid and money for seeds distributed. Official food-for-work programs (some apparently for water supplies), at least, received some praise.³¹¹ The press reported many deaths, especially in the state of Kano, but there was no official count, and the true number is not known. Also, the government conducted no rehabilitation program.³¹²

Ethiopia

The mountainous East African nation of Ethiopia, in many parts of which peasants and tenants grew teff (a sort of millet) and other grains in fairly dry lands, was an old monarchy. In this country, drought and adverse social processes, in combination with the oppressive political system, resulted in a catastrophe in 1972–1974 and ultimately a revolution. Wollo province, particularly its Afar herders and Oromo tenant farmers, was worst affected.³¹³ Agricultural laborers, servants and beggars also suffered, as did tradespeople and those in the service sector because of falling demand.³¹⁴

Most Ethiopian farmers worked less than 2 hectares.³¹⁵ In Ethiopia, as in other countries mentioned earlier, the calamity took several years to develop. The governor of Wollo had warned Emperor Haile Selassie in 1970 that thousands of peasants

307 Van Apeldoorn 1981, pp. 68–69.

308 Watts 1983, pp. 431, 433.

309 See Mortimer 1991, especially pp. 14, 18, 20. This finds some support in Watts 1983, pp. 431–432.

310 Van Apeldoorn 1981, pp. 54, 67.

311 See Reddy 1988; van Apeldoorn 1981, pp. 44–45, 53, 65–66, 68; Mortimer 1991, p. 17; Watts 1983, pp. 389–391; “FMG gives 10m Naira to drought victims”, *New Nigerian Newspaper*, 16 January 1973, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. III.

312 “Many Lives Wiped Out”, *Daily Times*, 10 November 1973, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. IV. But see Mortimer 1991, p. 25; Iliffe 1987, pp. 255–256. See also van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 71.

313 De Waal 1997, p. 107.

314 Sen 1981, pp. 94, 100, 103.

315 Asefa 1995, p. 578; Markakis and Ayele 1986, p. 59.

were starving.³¹⁶ In the Awash valley in Wollo province, new estates for cash crops (cotton in particular), run with Dutch, British, Israeli, Italian and Ethiopian capital, displaced local agriculturalists and deprived Afar pastoralists of important grazing areas along the river. A Swedish development project to build a dam helped well-off farmers but this aggravated the situation for others.³¹⁷ Old land rights in Ethiopia's north were eroding and social conditions changing. Taxes had been forcing people into the cash economy since the 1960s.³¹⁸ In the southern provinces, where there was more tenancy, landlords evicted many tenant farmers; others suffered from the high rents.³¹⁹ Land and livestock prices fell, making livestock producers vulnerable.³²⁰ The available information about the markets for foodstuffs is contradictory, ranging from mention of widespread speculation to claims that prices did not rise much. In any case, food was available in most places, but many could not afford it.³²¹ Twenty percent of Ethiopia's arable land was owned by the church, which engaged in grain speculation rather than relief.³²²

Many reacted by turning to substitute foods. "We live just like the baboons", a village elder from Godabro, Mega district, complained because villagers were eating roots and edible weeds from the forest.³²³ Among the Afar, people broke with traditions of social support. Many old people were abandoned, and orphans were adopted by highland migrant workers of other ethnicities.³²⁴ Other deserted women and children succumbed to hunger.³²⁵ There were plenty of deaths in the feeding centers in Ethiopia placed along the roads, but in these centers, adults (and probably men) were clearly over-represented – a lot of children as well as elderly people had not even reached them.³²⁶ Deaths occurred primarily in these groups, especially among little girls and elderly men.³²⁷ Many peasants had to sell all of their land, leading to a government decree invalidating recent land transactions, but it is unclear how effective it was.³²⁸ According to one estimate, there were two million hunger migrants in the country and 175,000 in Wollo province.³²⁹ Many women from the countryside migrated to the cities, particularly in 1974.³³⁰ The social disruption was profound. Even in the less afflicted southwest, food raids

316 Wiseberg 1975, p. 300.

317 Kloos 1982, pp. 29, 32, 38–40; Markakis and Ayele 1986, pp. 56–60; Bondestam 1974, pp. 423–431.

318 Cliffe 1974, pp. 36–38.

319 Cliffe 1974, p. 36; Sen 1981, p. 101, note 29.

320 Sen 1981, pp. 101, 105. More cattle died than was sold: Wolde Mariam 1986, pp. 50, 59, 61–62.

321 Timberlake 1985, p. 23; Sen 1981, pp. 95–96; Iliffe 1987, p. 257.

322 Shepherd 1975, p. 22.

323 Shepherd 1975, p. 50.

324 Kloos 1982, pp. 39–40.

325 Sen 1981, p. 102.

326 Rivers 1988, p. 91; Gebre-Medhin and Vahlquist 1977, p. 198; Wolde Mariam 1986, pp. 50, 58.

327 Devereux n.y. (2000), p. 11; Wolde Mariam 1986, p. 62 with data from parts of Wollo.

328 Jansson et al. 1990, p. 97; Cliffe 1974, p. 38.

329 Wolde Mariam 1986, p. 58. Shepherd 1975, pp. 32–33 mentions at least 283,000 refugees in Wollo.

330 Berhanu and White 2000, pp. 100, 104.

and counterraidings including murders of travelers impeded trade and farming. Some Mursi took back the bride prices they had paid by force – a special sort of divorce. “It is difficult to think of a more telling indication than this of the severe strain imposed by the famine on social relations”,³³¹

The famine claimed many deaths, which varied by ethnicity. In 1975, the Ethiopian relief coordinator Kassa Kebede stated that 2.5 million people had been affected by the famine, primarily in the provinces of Wollo and Tigray, and 100,000 had died in Wollo alone in 1973. Others put the figure at 200,000, one scholar at 600,000 in Wollo and Tigray alone.³³² UNICEF reported at an early stage that about two-thirds of the early victims were farmers.³³³ But in relative terms, more pastoralists died. Up to one quarter of the Afar people perished. The Issa were also badly affected. On the other hand, 51 percent of Afar families experienced no deaths, and recent agricultural settlers among the Afar suffered few losses.³³⁴ It has been estimated that there were 28,000 excess deaths in the eastern province of Harerghe.³³⁵ One local study of the Mursi estimated a mortality of 20 percent among adults in 1970–1973; the rate was probably higher among children.³³⁶ Allegedly, local strongmen ordered police to kill the emaciated in some places.³³⁷

The government long denied the famine and cholera outbreaks.³³⁸ Its distribution of seeds and oxen to agriculturalists on credit was hampered by bureaucratic procedures that disadvantaged the poor.³³⁹ It stopped hungry peasants’ protest marches to the capital in the countryside; the emperor refused to meet with the hungry; and in parliament, deputies from Wollo were prevented from giving reports.³⁴⁰ The lowest echelons of the feudal system had disastrous effects, too: village heads were hesitant to report the presence of famine because this could result in tax exemptions for villagers and, so, reduce their own income.³⁴¹ The emperor had no concern for his starving subjects. In an infamous interview, he haughtily declared that the poor deserved their fate because they worked too little.³⁴² Only in the southern province

331 Turton 1985, p. 335.

332 Sobel 1975, p. 60; Keller 1992, p. 611; Jansson et al. 1990, p. 93; Rivers 1988, p. 99; Sen 1981, p. 86, note 3. According to Seaman and Holt 1980, p. 286, 40,000, or 4 percent of the population, died in Wollo. The high estimate is Wolde Mariam’s 1986, p. 57. It is supported by a warning of the Ethiopian Nutrition Institute in an April 1974 report: Shepherd 1975, p. 37.

333 Jansson et al. 1990, p. 93; Sen 1981, p. 111.

334 Kloos 1982, pp. 35–36; Iliffe 1987, p. 257; see also Africa Watch 1991, p. 59.

335 Africa Watch 1991, p. 73.

336 Turton 1985, p. 334; for the distribution of deaths among age groups, see Wolde Mariam 1986, p. 57.

337 Waller 1990, p. 22.

338 Wiseberg 1975, pp. 299–301; Shepherd 1975, pp. 25–30. According to Glucksmann and Wolton 1987, p. 309, the first Ethiopian television report on the famine was aired on 12 November 1973.

339 Jansson 1990, p. 99; cf. Hamersley report, 2 April 1974, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. V.

340 De Waal 1997, p. 107; Jansson et al. 1990, p. 98.

341 Jansson et al. 1990, p. 97.

342 “Journey into the private universe of Haile Selassie: Interview with Oriana Fallaci”, *Chicago Tribune*, 24 June 1973, NARA, Nixon files, White House Confidential Files, SF, CO Box 26 (Ex), CO 48 Ethiopia 1/1/73 (file 1 of 2).

of Sidamo was government relief reputed to have prevented disaster.³⁴³ Protesters against the inaction from a variety of social groups and political unrest in the cities did a great deal to generate publicity for the disaster.³⁴⁴

It was not only Ethiopia's Imperial Government that failed. Foreign agencies took part in the early cover-up.³⁴⁵ When the agriculture minister urgently asked the FAO to deliver 10,000 tons of emergency grain, though it needed much more, the organization responded with warm words but regretted that it could not help "due to lack of resources".³⁴⁶ After some further delay, the World Food Programme granted the request, but by the end of the year, FAO officials still wondered whether the grain had reached its destination.³⁴⁷ The Nixon administration delayed own aid measures substantially.³⁴⁸ So, the bulk of relief goods, which was substantial in the end, arrived only after November 1973 and thus after the peak of the famine and in Wollo possibly only in April 1974.³⁴⁹ The even less-accessible southern regions were neglected by relief missions.³⁵⁰ Because foreign helpers brought in relief foods that people were not used to (the same happened in Mali), many small children suffered from gastro-enteric diseases that were often fatal under the circumstances.³⁵¹

Before the coup/revolution in 1974 that swept away the monarchy, the government's response was limited. It finally asked for international help in 1973. The Imperial administration tried to move up to 100,000 nomads in the Ogaden into camps, but this led to political upheaval. The Soviet Union supported the project.³⁵² In the north, an uprising began among the Afar in 1975, and Afars and landlords opposed the army and settlers in bloody fighting.³⁵³ The measures of the Derg, the new leftist military junta, in 1974–1975 were more far reaching.

Scholars have portrayed these events in Ethiopia as the consequences of arrogant neglect and a sluggish and often incompetent international relief campaign. Mass starvation occurred in a variety of regions, in a variety of contexts, striking a variety of groups: pastoralists, small peasants, tenant farmers, servants, artisans and rural providers of small services. The famine did not strike all of the country's provinces; overall, food availability in Ethiopia was quite favorable in 1972

343 Jansson et al. 1990, p. 101.

344 Shepherd 1975, pp. 15–16; Semeneh Ayalew Asfaw, "The February taxi strike of 1974: inflation, oil crisis, and popular protest in Addis Ababa" during the conference "Third World Oil Crises", Edinburgh/online, 27 August 2021.

345 See Shepherd 1975, esp. pp. 16–17.

346 Yriart's note for the record, "Visit of the Minister of Agriculture, Ethiopia, H.E. Dejazmatch Kassa Woldemariam", Walton to Yriart, 21 September 1973 and Yriart to Ojala, 8 October 1973, FAO, RG 9, Country Files, Ethiopia. Also see this file for assessments of Ethiopia's need.

347 Same file, especially Nehemiah to Boerma, 21 December 1973.

348 See Shepherd 1975.

349 Sen 1981, p. 88; Seaman and Holt 1980, p. 286; Shepherd 1975, pp. 17, 41. For relief amounts, see "Progress Report on the Emergency Operations in Ethiopia", annex 3, state: 4 March 1974, FAO, RG 9, Division of Technical Assistance Coordination, Sahelian Zone: 1974.

350 Shepherd 1975, p. 51.

351 Kloos 1982, p. 36. For similar events in the (western) Sahel, see Somerville 1986, p. 33, and for Mali Twagira 2021, pp. 179, 181, 199, 203.

352 See Africa Watch 1991, pp. 72–73; Büttner 1985, p. 184.

353 Africa Watch 1991, pp. 62–64.

and 1973 but not in 1974.³⁵⁴ Amartya Sen distinguishes two famines: one in the north in 1972–1973 and one in the south in 1973–1974.³⁵⁵ In search for the roots of famine, one could also argue that Ethiopian society was highly fragmented by an urban–rural divide, conditions somewhere between feudal tenancy and wage labor, emerging capitalism’s effects on some peasants (and nomads) but not others, and the influence of high capitalism with land concentration under foreign investment in the Awash Valley. These conditions generated multiple forms of violence, also illuminated by the ethnic differentiation of suffering and, eventually, revolution and land reform in 1975 that was, however, preceded by a violent redistribution of land in some areas through the peasants reminiscent of Russia in 1917.³⁵⁶

Tanzania

This East African country, which had a long history of regional famines under colonial rule,³⁵⁷ included different climatic and soil conditions but many areas enjoyed little rainfall. Its government pursued what it called African socialism, but farms were private. In 1973, there were reports of drought and subsequent food shortages in the northern regions of Mwanza and Shinyanga and warnings of imminent famine among Burundian refugees,³⁵⁸ who had fled the mass murders in their country in 1972. The 1974 drought affected again primarily the north, but its impact is controversial. However, northern Massai herders were hard hit, and food shortages were reported from various regions. Both food stocks and domestic procurement were low. Foreign observers blamed the former on the government’s failure to arrange for timely imports, but emergency aid was very slow to arrive, too. U.S. embassy officials mentioned deaths from starvation, especially among children.³⁵⁹ Some researchers have explained lower staple food production by the

354 Sen 1981, p. 93.

355 Sen 1981, pp. 86–87.

356 Ottaway 1977, p. 88; Pausewang 1977, S. 26.

357 See Brooke 1967, esp. p. 352.

358 “Supplementary Report on Food Shortages”, March 1973, and fragment of a report from Tanzania, March or May 1973, FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/16.1, vol. III. For refugees, see also U.S. Embassy Dar es Salaam to State Department, “Drought in East Africa – Tanzania”, 25 March 1974, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1974DARES00956_b.html (accessed 23 January 2017).

359 “Future Planning for Sahel”, 30 July 1974, Annex III, Ford Library, Stanley Scott Papers, Box 2, African Drought 1973–74 (4); UNDP/Senior Agricultural Advisor/FAO Country Representative, Dar-es-Salaam, 3 December 1974, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. I (yellow folder); situation report, 30 July 1973, *ibid.*, vol. III; Senior Agricultural Advisor/FAO Country Representative, 4 May 1973, *ibid.*; translation of an article under the title “Drought in East Africa”, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 19 February 1974 and “Supplementary Report on Food Shortages”, April 1974 (two reports), all in *ibid.*, vol. IV; U.S. Embassy Dar es Salaam to State Department, “Drought in East Africa – Tanzania”, 25 March 1974, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1974DARES00956_b.html (accessed 23 January 2017). Shao 1986, p. 91, disputes a grave drought in 1973–1974 (but not the drought in 1974–1975). The data in Lofchie 1978, p. 463, who took it to show that there was no widespread drought, can be interpreted differently. Hiffé 1987,

resettlement of a large part of Tanzania's population for the villagization campaign in 1974–1975, rather than drought.³⁶⁰ Among the responses to the shortages, many Chagga women migrated from the countryside to the capital city of Dar-es Salaam in 1974.³⁶¹

In April 1973, President Nyerere spoke of the worst food shortages since independence, and in early 1974, the government dramatized the situation again.³⁶² Late in that year, Nyerere announced an emergency program, “Agriculture for Survival”, appealing to citizens, including city dwellers, to grow food. Tanzania had to spend 40 percent of its foreign exchange earnings (or rather, part of its foreign currency reserves) on food imports.³⁶³ Peasants had to grow specific food crops. Farmers in Dodoma district had to show that they had six acres under cultivation per wife, or they were denied access to buses and trains.³⁶⁴ Most analysts have ascribed the supposed prevention of famine and panic in 1973–1974 to the effective, free distribution of grain to the needy by the National Milling Corporation; the movement of grain between districts was restricted.³⁶⁵

How many succumbed to starvation is unclear. Stories told among the tens of thousands of Burundian refugees in Tanzania say that many children and old people died in and after 1972, despite the UNHCR's substantial support.³⁶⁶ Burundian refugees were also starving because they were resettled in 1972–1973.³⁶⁷ Clearly, many Tanzanians lived in very bad conditions during the mass resettlement 1973–1975, but it is not clear how far this led to additional deaths, and if so, how many were caused by hunger or rather by lack of shelter.³⁶⁸ The infant mortality rate in 1973 was especially high in the regions of Kigoma, Coast and Singida.³⁶⁹

Political reactions

The governments of countries affected by famine responded to it differently. Some, as in Ethiopia, Afghanistan and India, denied it for as long as, or longer than, they reasonably could. Others, like in Bangladesh, the Sahel, Indonesia, Tanzania and,

pp. 252–253, mentions famines among the Massai in Tanzania in 1969–1971, 1980–1981, and 1984. For slow aid delivery, see Mushi 1982, p. 26.

360 But see Lofchie 1978, p. 461.

361 Kerner and Cook 1991, p. 261.

362 “Tanzania food warning”, *The Guardian*, 8 April 1973, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. V; Lal 2015, p. 163.

363 See Garcia and Spitz 1986, pp. 133, 135, 140; Mwapachu 1979a, p. 120; Bryceson 1987, p. 190; Bryceson 1990, p. 209. Agricultural exports were high in 1972–1973 (though not high enough to have prevented sufficient food production): Lofchie 1975, pp. 555–556.

364 Coulson 1975, p. 57.

365 Raikes 1988, pp. 58, 97; see also Garcia 1981, p. 203; Garcia and Spitz 1986, p. 140; Bryceson 1982, p. 565, for amounts of famine relief.

366 Malkki 1995, pp. 113–114.

367 Gasarasi 1984, p. 44.

368 See Chapter 9 and Table 9.1. Melrose 1982, p. 6 mentions pneumonia and bronchitis as main causes of death in the 1970s, which may have been connected with bad housing conditions.

369 Mbilinyi 1982, p. 320.

eventually, Ethiopia, pleaded emphatically for international help. Only Nigeria refused foreign support.

Famine was not denied without reasons. Silence had something to do with bureaucrats' contempt for 'backward' people and officials' collusion with profiteers of famine. Also, the usage of the word famine had undesirable political implications; it indicated domestically and abroad that a government did not take care of its people. Domestically, famine contributed heavily to political instability, and coups toppled several regimes. There were strikes, demonstrations, tax revolts, riots and armed insurgencies.³⁷⁰ To pacify an angry public, the regime in Mali, unlike others in the Sahel, raised the minimum wage considerably.³⁷¹ In several countries, refugee camps were meant to keep the hungry away from urban politics and protect regimes from the political fallout of their misery.³⁷² Under public pressure, Indonesia's authoritarian regime moved toward a basic needs approach in development policy in 1973–1974.³⁷³ But the governments of Afghanistan (1973), Niger (1974), Upper Volta (1974), Bangladesh (twice in 1975), Chad (1975) and Ethiopia (1974–1975) all fell. Corruption and famine figured large in the rationale by those who plotted most of the coups that brought them down.³⁷⁴ Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency in India in 1975, under which 175,000 people were detained within a year, and President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines in 1972 in large part to secure their hold on power in the face of upheavals due to food shortages and hunger.³⁷⁵ Prime Minister Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh also took authoritarian measures to stay in power, confiding to UNROD's former chief, Victor Umbricht, in August 1974: "Country is fighting for survival.' 'I am fighting for survival.'"³⁷⁶ One year and ten days later, plotters murdered him and many family members. In contrast to Sen's argument that bourgeois democracy, unlike authoritarianism, prevents famine,³⁷⁷ it was several dictators who were overthrown – usually by new dictators – which implies that famine matters politically in a dictatorship; a dictator who wants to stay in power

370 For a relatively systematic analysis of the Sahel, see Ormières 1975. See also Somerville 1986, p. 31.

371 Ormières 1975, p. 142; Masini et al. 1980, p. 19.

372 Spitz 1978, p. 869, argues this was the case in the Sahel in 1973.

373 Chalmers and Hadiz 1997, pp. 58–59.

374 See Muqtada 1981, p. 7, for Bangladesh; Shepherd 1975, p. ix, and de Waal 1997, pp. 107–109, for Ethiopia; Derrick 1977, p. 564, Somerville 1986, p. 31, and Imfeld 1985, pp. 75–77 for Niger; Glantz 1976b, p. 11, for Chad; Büttner 1985, pp. 114, 116. In addition, there was a coup in Dahomey in 1972 and regime changes occurred in Cambodia, South Vietnam, and Mozambique in 1975.

375 For shortages and price increases in the Philippines, see the file FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/16 Philippines for 1968–76. Right after the state of emergency was declared on 21 June 1975, the Indian government announced a 20-point program of social and economic development to help the rural poor: "Annual Report – Oxfam South Asia" [1975], Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976. For detentions, see Frank 1981b, p. 30.

376 Conversation notes of Umbricht, 5 August 1974, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Box Bangladesh General I, file General VI.

377 See Sen 1999; a modified argument is in Plümper and Neumayer 2009. In addition to India in 1972–1975, Sri Lanka in 1974 is a counterexample.

ought to prevent it; and the occurrence of famine can be crucial for other dictatorial regimes to be established. This is also to say that it was not the hungry masses who took power but elites on their behalf. More generally, the facts that characterize the famines in 1972–1975 call into question the view that a country's responses to famine depended on its political system.

The press, which Sen emphasizes so much in this context,³⁷⁸ can also play an active and important role in alerting readers to an acute hunger crisis and providing a platform for political demands in a dictatorship, as it did in Nigeria.³⁷⁹ (The Nigerian press also served an unexpected purpose: without grass or fodder, “it is very common that animals feed on newspapers and magazines”).³⁸⁰

The political turmoil in famished countries in 1972–1975 was the result of complex social conflicts. One way in which the politicization of social conflict came to the surface was through the frequent ethnization of hunger. It is striking that certain ethnic or religious groups often endured the most starvation: Hindus and Biharis in Bangladesh; the Kel Tamasheq in Mali; Christians in Chad; Afar, Oromo, Mursi, Harerghe, and Somalis in Ethiopia; Burundians and Massai in Tanzania; Dalits and tribal people in Maharashtra and Muslims in Assam. Studies of famine have not paid systematic attention to this fact.

The governments of industrialized countries and international organizations also felt public pressure to intervene in the crises. They tried to reconcile this with other interests and agendas, which implied that they turned, like NGOs at the time, from relief to development.³⁸¹ This is the subject of much of the rest of this study.

Conclusion

What causes a global wave of famines? This chapter has briefly described acute hunger crises in which at least two million – more likely three million – people in about two dozen countries perished. Most of these deaths occurred in South Asia. In terms of natural events, observers have usually linked them to droughts caused by *el niño* and *la niña* events.³⁸² In many, but not all, countries and cases, these led to drops in staple food production. The weather's influence was important but not decisive.

Peaks in international market prices for grain in 1972 and 1974 did not directly cause the mass hunger in non-industrialized countries. Grain prices were crucial for these famines, but national (and local) prices were, if at all, only loosely connected with the international market, for food was, and is, politically sensitive,

378 See Sen 1999, pp. 178–184; also Ram 1990a and Drèze 1990b, pp. 89–97.

379 See Reddy 1988, who nonetheless found the role of the press in Nigeria, where there was no censorship, important but not decisive.

380 Quoted in van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 46.

381 See Gerlach 2015, pp. 930–933, and in more general terms Jennings 2008, p. 26. For the Sahel, see “Drought-Stricken West African Countries: Projects which could interest various U.N. Agencies” (ca. January 1974), FAO, RG 9, Division of Technical Coordination/Field Liaison Division 1974, Sahelian Zone/OSRO.

382 See Davis 2001, pp. 242–274.

and government interventions, like import monopolies, tariffs, food subsidies, and rationing and distribution systems, disconnected domestic and global prices and blunted the impact of international market developments.³⁸³ This was even so in regard to the famine in Bangladesh, where rice prices were lower in 1973–1975 than in international markets, although the former were influenced by the latter.³⁸⁴ More generally, at least rice prices in many non-industrialized Asian countries have tended to be lower than international prices.³⁸⁵ Research into this sort of price separation is still in its infancy.³⁸⁶ And some food crops were not even internationally traded.³⁸⁷ There was not one global market price, or even one uniform global grain market, in the 1970s. Arguably, this is still true.

Developments in international markets did have some indirect influence on national processes. One avenue of impact was the low level of international food aid. Despite the fanfare over international relief operations in Ethiopia and the Sahel, the overall level of food aid was drastically reduced in the early 1970s because industrialized countries wanted to reap high profits in the commercial market instead. Even commercial deliveries to countries in need failed sometimes,³⁸⁸ and close allies of the USA sometimes asked for food aid in vain.³⁸⁹ Of even greater impact on the course of famines and the lives of people in its grip was the unavailability of food aid or delays in its arrival, in part due to the lack of shipping space.³⁹⁰ (Such delays were just typical for the World Food Programme.³⁹¹) The lack of food

383 For a somewhat similar conclusion for the Sahel, see Garcia 1981, p. 24. In general terms, a similar tendency in Tanzania is observed in Government 2000, pp. 19–21 for the main staple corn, but not for rice.

384 For the latter point, see Ahmed 1979, p. 70; cf. Monke and Pearson 1991, p. 32. Ravallion 1985, p. 24 found that Bangladeshi “rice markets were reasonably well insulated from foreign foodgrain prices and trading conditions” and the impact of foodgrain imports on prices was “only mildly significant”. For a similar conclusion, see Quddus and Becker 2000, p. 159. In the 2010–2011 world food price crisis, when Bangladesh experienced no famine, domestic food prices were again insulated from the world market: Hossain 2017, p. 120.

385 See Monke and Pearson 1991, p. 32; Ahmed 1988b, p. 59 (also for rice and maize prices in Tanzania).

386 See Baltzer 2015 for the 2007–2008 global food crisis; Hazell 1988, p. 52.

387 Kanbur 1990a, p. 75.

388 See Chapter 2; Gerlach 2005, pp. 568–570; Gerlach 2002a, p. 57; Gerlach 2015, p. 931.

389 For Pakistan, see Kissinger’s memo to Nixon, 17 September 1973, NARA, Nixon, WHCF, Box 8, CO115 Pakistan 1971–74; for the Sahel, see the Brunthaver-Williams correspondence, 19 October–5 November 1973, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5719, Grain 3, Aug 11, 1973–; for reduced U.S. commitments to the WFP, see Bell to Butz, 1 February 1974, ditto, Box 5848, Food 2 (World Food Situation), January–May 1974, 1; for Indonesia, see the Butz-Brunthaver-Hannah correspondence, October 1972, ditto, Box 5615, Rice 3; for India, see Moynihan’s telegram, 23 October 1974, Ford Library, Presidential Country Files for the Middle East and South Asia, Box 12, India – State Dept. Telegrams from SECSTATE – NODIS (1); for Tanzania, see Shepherd 1975, p. 80.

390 In addition to the evidence presented in this chapter, see Sheets and Morris 1974; Shepherd 1975; Gerlach 2015, pp. 931–932; Müller 2007, pp. 36–37; Henry Kamm, “Niamey: Niger: Rebuilding the Country”, *Give Us* 1975, p. 53; Brunthaver to Butz, 25 July 1973, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5779, Wheat 3 (Foreign Trade).

391 A study by the WFP Secretariat in the early 1980s based on 84 emergencies found that on average 196 days passed between an aid request and the arrival of food in the country that requested it. This included the time the WFP Secretariat took for approval, negotiations with the country

aid forced the governments of even the poorest countries to buy large amounts of food on commercial terms,³⁹² which stressed their budgets and, ultimately and in diffused ways, resulted in imported inflation with repercussions for the price of food and countries' ability to pursue social policies. Moreover, when international food aid did arrive, in many countries, it did not often prevent mass death through starvation.

It was less global markets and direct links than parallel social processes of differentiation and stratification that led to this global wave of famines. They made landless rural workers, small peasants, sharecroppers, small tenant farmers, many pastoralists and other rural groups vulnerable. The strategies with which people tried to survive did not differ much from country to country nor from previous or later famines.³⁹³ Political responses and the conflicts they involved were synthesized in the previous section. What is striking is that in no country there was a national community of equal suffering. On the contrary, social fragmentation was typical, and certain regions, occupations, social classes, cohorts, religious groups and ethnicities were the worst impacted. Many migrants, refugees and nomads were strongly affected. Social ties loosened. Famine was, as usual, not a time of solidarity.³⁹⁴

Amartya Sen did much to illuminate the social processes that famine involved in the early 1970s. His fundamental insight was that famine strikes unequally and so who dies needs to be explained. His entitlement theory, according to which famine is not the result of a country's general lack of food but of certain groups losing their access to it because the fall in their income leaves them destitute, drew on four case studies, three of which (Bangladesh, Ethiopia and the Sahel) were part of the 1970s world food crisis. Sen observed (and this chapter corroborates) that, aside from small peasants whose harvests failed, it was primarily people from among agricultural laborers, tenants and sharecroppers, pastoralists, and certain groups of artisans and service providers who suffered and died. As the cost of staples rose rapidly, but wages, livestock and meat prices and the value of land fell, markets did not work in their favor and excluded these groups from enough food to survive. Others, however, generated gains, like grain traders and large landowners acquiring more land. So, interests clashed.³⁹⁵ In Bangladesh and Ethiopia alike, it was rising food prices, not shortages, that triggered mass outmigration from affected areas.³⁹⁶

By contrast, a liberal-technocratic interpretation by scholars from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), an institution with close ties to

of destination and seven weeks before the order was given to load the food onto ships: Matzke 1981–82, p. 179.

392 See Chapter 2; report by Moe, 22 January 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Rep., Box 14, IN India (Delhi) 1973 DR; North American Congress 1976, S. 29.

393 For overviews, see Shipton 1990 and Dirks 1980.

394 For general remarks, see Dirks 1980, p. 30; Shipton 1990, pp. 370–375.

395 See Sen 1981. Sen's first publications on this subject came out in 1976. (See *ibid.*, p. ix.) He became interested in famine research in the early 1970s and was soon in contact with FAO officials about the famines. See interview with Amartya Sen, 20 January 2003, p. 18, and Sartaj Aziz, 29 August 2001, p. 7, United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007.

396 Seaman and Holt 1980, p. 286.

the ‘World Bank’, reads like this: “Traders naturally [!] form expectations about future prices and stock foodgrains to maximize profits. Nevertheless, in crisis situations this behavior is often erroneously perceived as the primary cause of the problem”.³⁹⁷ This quote tells the reader little about reality but much about IFPRI.

Thus, one can argue on the basis of Sen’s analysis that famine is “a *product* of the social or economic system rather than its *failure*”.³⁹⁸ In other words, markets worked, they did not fail. It was just humans who failed to survive.

Parker Shipton has taken this line of argument a step further, arguing that market involvement (together with state intervention) has been among the “causes” of, as well as the “known remedies” for, famine. That is, market involvement leads to the impoverishment of large groups and social divisions, and the consequent famine in turn “forces its victims into market exchanges” and thereby accelerates social mobility and dynamics.³⁹⁹ For those affected, this often leads to more misery and dependence.

But one must keep some of the weaknesses of Sen’s theory in mind. He treated affected people like isolated individuals operating in an environment determined solely by the market. So, he largely ignored collective food security networks and was strangely silent about the state. In addition, “entitlement” is stronger as an approach than as an exclusive explanation.⁴⁰⁰ Furthermore, an adequate analysis must recognize that famine is a socially interactive process and that families get increasingly impoverished over years,⁴⁰¹ as I have shown for the Sahel, Maharashtra, Ethiopia and Bangladesh in the early 1970s. Put differently, some of the victims in 1972–1975 pursued traditional activities, and their traditional safety networks were inadequate, but many others were recently impoverished by processes of rural capital accumulation that eroded or eliminated traditional collective safety networks.

397 Haggblade and Ahmed 2000, p. 279 note 1.

398 Edkins 2006, p. 53 (emphasis in the original).

399 Shipton 1990, pp. 354 (first two quotes), 356, and 371 (last quote).

400 See Sen 1981; Osmani 1995, esp. pp. 267–268.

401 See Rangasami 1985, esp. p. 1800; Currey 1979, pp. 26–27.

4 The small peasant approach to combatting hunger and rural poverty

Ideas and breakthrough

This chapter describes the small peasant and basic needs approaches to solving the global hunger problem, their origins, the political interests behind them and their political breakthrough in the early to mid-1970s. Designed to liberate 700–800 million people throughout the world from hunger and to transform the countryside in non-industrialized countries, they were a truly global scheme. In this chapter, I sketch that scheme’s design and dimensions and show the importance that the two concepts to ending hunger and rural poverty ascribed to non-industrialized states and their development planning and to the framework of ‘integrated rural development’. Because the world food crisis of 1972–1975 and the World Food Conference of 1974 catalyzed the dominance of the small peasant approach in international development policies, I include them in the discussion.

Contemporary criticisms of existing development approaches

The small peasant approach emerged from criticism of older development policies. Based on the modernization theory of the 1950s and 1960s, the hegemonic approaches focused on economic growth and, so, on infrastructure, industry and in part on education that would serve as engines of development for a speedy economic take-off.¹ Supporting agriculture and the rural sphere was marginal.² On the contrary, the “agricultural sector [was] to be squeezed of cheap food, of labour and capital to promote industrialization”.³ Of course, the majority of the population of most Asian and African countries made their living from agriculture; even in the USA, one of the most industrialized nations, one-third of the workforce was “involved in the production, processing and marketing of farm and food products” in 1973.⁴

1 Escobar 1995, p. 74; see also Lele 1988, p. 326, on ‘World Bank’ spending.

2 In 1961, only “12 professionals” at the ‘World Bank’ worked on agriculture: *Learning From World Bank History* 2014, p. 6.

3 “Summary Record of the Agricultural Financing Symposium Held by the FAO Investment Centre through its Banks Programme”, 10–12 May 1972 (citing a disapproving Paul Streeten), FAO, RG 9, V (Misc.), Private Banks.

4 U.S. National Security Memorandum 187 “International Cooperation in Agriculture”, ca. October 1973, p. 2 of the document, NARA, Nixon Papers SF AG, Box 2, EX AG, Sept–Dec 1974 (i.e., 1973).

In as much as older development concepts dealt with agriculture, they concentrated on large farms, those with the greatest impact on production, especially for the market (often export crops), and supposedly the most productive and most receptive to modernity.⁵ According to theory, wealth would diffuse from there through society through the so-called ‘trickle-down effect’. Economic policy should center on large commercial producers, as an FAO official described his agency’s view, while the “welfare of small non-viable farmers should be an objective of social policies”.⁶ The prevailing policies emphasized the role of agricultural research, and the approach was almost entirely technical; the focus was on high-yielding varieties of cereals, the so-called protein gap, on reducing after-harvest waste of products and on exports.⁷

In the second half of the 1960s, development policy tackled the hunger problem primarily by increasing production through the use of new technologies: high-yielding seed varieties in combination with fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation and possibly agricultural machinery. In about 1968, the apparent success of the approach, especially in wheat production in northwestern India and parts of Pakistan, led to the coinage “green revolution”.⁸ The peak of this hype came when the plant geneticist Norman Borlaug was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970.⁹

But after a few years, the ‘green revolution’ faced serious criticism that contributed to the emergence of the poverty-oriented small peasant approach.¹⁰ Some, including U.S. President Nixon,¹¹ defended the ‘green revolution’, but others objected that its focus on large farmers led to rising land prices, the displacement of peasants and sharecroppers and rural unemployment, regional disparities, the spread of plant diseases, poor-tasting grain, and perhaps even a rise in malnutrition. The Indian press was very critical, and local officials in Pakistan, for example, demanded that the problems should be addressed.¹² Among the “second-generation

5 For example, see Feder 1973, pp. 290–291.

6 Ojala to Tetro, 8 September 1972, FAO, RG 12, ES, FA 8/6 I.

7 See FAO’s “focal points” in WFC2:IB/2, Information Bulletin 2, 1 July 1969, FAO, RG 9, Miscellaneous, 2nd World Food Congress; Director-General’s Meeting with President ADB, 30 October 1968, FAO, RG 9, V Miscellaneous, Asian Bank (I). Also see, for example, FAO, DDDE, “Evaluation of the UNDP/FAO Programme in Nigeria: Excerpts from Report of the UNDP Evaluation Mission 1973”, revised, February 1974, FAO, RG 9, Misc., DDDE.

8 For the genesis of the term, see Perelman 1977, p. 162, note 6.

9 Perelman 1977, p. 193.

10 In what follows, I describe the small peasant approach to alleviating poverty as different from, and critical of, the ‘green revolution’, unlike, for example, Moore Lappé et al. 1998, pp. 58–74; African Centre for Biodiversity 2016, p. 9.

11 Robert Tetro, “World Food Prospects and Problems”, spring 1974, FAO, RG 15, Reg. Files, FA 6.7 Tetro, 1974; Nixon’s message to the Congress, 19 September 1972, Nixon papers, FG 11, Box 11, EX FG 11–4 AID, 1971–72.

12 Israel Shenker, “Green Revolution Has Sharply Increased Grain Yields but May Cause Problems”, *New York Times*, 22 October 1970, FAO, RG 15, LUNO, Reg. Files UN 10/16; “Despatch of investigative missions concerning the establishment of the Integrated Rural Development Centre for Asia”, ca. 1974, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., Subject Files, FAO Cooperation with Japan; see also the file FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Green Revolution 1973–74; Perelman 1977, pp. 149–150. Merely technical objections were noted in the Official Report of the US Delegation to the Fifteenth Session of the FAO Conference, 30 October to 27 November 1969, NARA, RG 59, SNF 1970–73, Box 457,

problems”, imported inputs were expensive; the initial investment needed to farm was substantial¹³; and credit and water for irrigation tended to reach only the wealthy farmers.¹⁴ A U.S. report on India described the subsequent unrest among small farmers.¹⁵ The CIA also started worrying about the consequences.¹⁶ And a UN working group noted, “like any revolution, the ‘Green Revolution’, despite its peaceful aims, carries the seeds of violence and change”.¹⁷ Instead of trickling down, wealth was concentrating through the new technologies.¹⁸

The UN devised a two-year study in 1971 to examine “how the Green Revolution has changed and affected income distribution, land holdings, types and levels of employment, regional population movement and economic and social ‘class structures’”.¹⁹ An ECOSOC resolution in the fall of 1971 noted that “attention should be given to the economic, social and human problems which inevitably accompany such a revolutionary process” and that the ‘green revolution’s’ benefits should be distributed more widely, geographically and also socially.²⁰ The single-minded focus on raising agricultural production had worsened the social situation²¹ by polarizing “a rural bourgeoisie and a rural proletariat”, as a Soviet scholar put it.²²

Such criticism came from many sides: experts, like the famous economist Theodore Schultz, diplomats, leftists and religious groups.²³ The ‘green revolution’ “did

AGR 3 FAO, 1/1/70; ACC Functional Group on the “Green Revolution”, papers of 21 September 1970 and 1 March 1971, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files, III, UN-Green Revolution. For Pakistan, see U.S. Consulate Lahore to State Department, 19 June 1970, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic 1970–73, Box 472, AGR P; for India, see Unger 2015, p. 116. For a differentiated discussion of unemployment, see airgram of the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, 11 March 1970, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic 1970–73, Box 470, AGR I; Ahmad 1972, esp. p. 11.

13 Official Report of the US Delegation to the Tenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East, October 1970, NARA, RG 59, SNF 1970–73, Box 457, AGR 3 FAO, 8/14/70; Ahmad 1972, p. 15.

14 Born (US State Department) to Donald, 26 August 1970, NARA, RG 59, SNF 1970–73, Box 457, AGR 3 FAO, 8/14/70.

15 “All-India Agricultural Economics Conference at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh”, 7 April 1972, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Report, Box 14, IN India (Delhi) 1972.

16 CIA, Intelligence Memorandum, “India’s Foodgrain Situation: Progress and Problems”, August 1972 (confidential), NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5572, Grain 3, January 1–July 31, 1972; Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Research study, 16 April 1970, NARA, RG 59, SNF 1970–73, Box 465, AGR 1/1770, Asia.

17 ACC Functional Group on the “Green Revolution”, paper of 28 January 1971, p. 11 of the document, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files, III, UN-Green Revolution.

18 “Visit to India, December 1969–January 1970”, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976; ECA, “Note on Preparations for the Second Development Decade with Special reference to the Social Aspects”, 14 January 1969, quoted in Snyder and Tadesse 1995, p. 34.

19 “Green Revolution to be critically assessed”, article from the *Survey of International Development*, February 1972, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files, III, UN-Green Revolution.

20 Draft of item 14 for the provisional agenda of the 16th FAO Conference, November 1971, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files, III, UN-Green Revolution.

21 Pennison to Bildesheim, 6 May 1974, FAO, RG 15, REUR, IL 8/1 European Communities – General.

22 Skorov 1973, p. 17.

23 Theodore Schultz, “The Food Alternatives Before Us: An Economic Perspective”, 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5846, Food, January–June 1974, 2; Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, New York, 10 December 1973, FAO, RG 15, LUNO, FA 4/1.

not solve the world food problem”, two high-ranking members of the administration wrote to Nixon in 1970.²⁴ President McNamara of the ‘World Bank’ joined the critics early on,²⁵ saying frankly that the trickle-down theory had failed, and the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 was based on the same conclusion.²⁶ The title of a 1973 article in *Foreign Policy* was “Development: The End of Trickle Down?”²⁷ As the FAO’s liaison officer to UN headquarters reported, “governments of all political persuasions have become disenchanted with the development profile of the past 10/20 years. The proof is it has not worked. There is more poverty, more hunger, more illiteracy”, and there was more inequality as well.²⁸

More generally, inequality in non-industrialized countries and between them and industrialized states had been on the rise in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁹ And most of the economic targets of the first UN Development Decade (1960–1970) were missed. These trends fed a different kind of concern, namely, that the ‘green revolution’ had reached the limits of its ability to raise crop yields and stimulate economic growth, and new concepts were needed.³⁰ In other words, “rural poverty” was seen as “a major obstacle to national growth” which required a change in policy.³¹ From this perspective, the ‘green revolution’ needed to be expanded in a modified form,³² whereas its critics regarded it as problem-generating in itself.

Contemporary analyses

The outcome was a marked change in the approach to economic development policy. “Neither agriculture nor the small farmers have been rated very high in the operational thinking of most development theorists and practitioners until fairly recently”, Gordon Donald of the USAID noted in 1976, adding that the peasant had been considered the “main representative of [. . .] backwardness”.³³

24 Memo Hardin and Hannah to Nixon, 19 February 1970, NARA, Nixon papers, WHCF, SF FO, Box 34, EX FO 3–2 1/1/70–40/30/70.

25 McNamara’s address to the Board of Governors, 27 September 1971, in: *McNamara Years* 1981, p. 154.

26 McNamara’s speech in Nairobi, 24 September 1973, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/930801468315304694/address-to-the-board-of-governors-by-robert-s-mcnamara> (accessed 22 September 2022); Ayres 1983, pp. 8–9; for the Act, see Nicholson 1979, pp. 215–216.

27 Grant 1973.

28 Weitz to Boerma, 20 March 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43, 4 Corr. with UN agencies general.

29 See ul Haq 1972 and also Baru 1998, p. 2276.

30 For some of these arguments, see Hainsworth 1982b, p. 12.

31 “Cross-organization programme analysis of rural development activities of the United Nations system”, draft, February 1980, FAO, RG 15, LUNO, UN 10/65, vol. 2, 1979–1980. Similar Donald 1976, p. 12.

32 For example, see Narindar Randhawa, “Employment situation, its problems and prospects”, presented at a conference in Manila, 23–29 April 1972, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Employment (1972); Shapley 1993, p. 509.

33 Donald 1976, p. 11. Ul Haq 1976, pp. 1–9, described his own thinking’s shift from growth-oriented to poverty-oriented. Still in the former phase (in 1963), he had remarked: “It is well to recognize that economic growth is a brutal, sordid process. There are no short cuts to it, the essence of it lies in

Many analysts at the time conceived the calamity as a world food problem, rather than a hunger problem. They argued that food production in many non-industrialized countries had lagged behind population growth in the past one to two decades. Scenarios for the future suggested that these countries would see quickly growing grain deficits and would not be able to pay for the necessary food imports.³⁴ The large grain exporting nations that had commercialized their exports argued conveniently that they could not feed the world. As the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Earl Butz, put it: “We cannot afford to feed the world, nor should we”.³⁵ Many voters agreed, under slogans like “charity begins at home”.³⁶ On 16 September 1975, the UN General Assembly resolved that the “solution to the world food problem lies primarily in increasing rapidly food production in the developing countries”.³⁷ A number of influential players in development policy proclaimed that it was time to prioritize agriculture,³⁸ and development strategists called for channeling additional billions of dollars annually to food production and rural development,³⁹ also to address that the expansion of irrigation in important Asian countries was slower than anticipated and impeding rice farming.⁴⁰ These production-centered arguments assumed that increasing food production alone would reduce hunger.

But this would be difficult because of the number of families with tiny plots of land. According to a report from the late 1970s, more than half of India’s 82 million land-holding families (with a population of 700 million) owned less than 1 hectare. The average farm was 2 hectares. And the situation was worsening. In 1961/1962, 37 percent of the holdings (23.6 million farms) were smaller than 1 hectare.⁴¹ According to Indian government officials, pauperization continued in the following years, especially among the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.⁴²

Many development experts believed that rural society was conservative and perceived new technology as a threat to the social order.⁴³ The hunger problem

making the laborer produce more than he is allowed to consume for his immediate needs and reinvest the surplus thus obtained”. Quoted in: Stepanek 1978, p. 39.

34 For example, Matzke 1974, pp. 27–28, 33; Paarlberg to Butz, 19 April 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN 43/5 USA; Sartaj Aziz, “The World Food Situation: Today and in the Year 2000” (1976), in: Dil 2000, pp. 67–68.

35 Quoted in a newspaper clipping, “U.S. Food Program Days End” with cover letter by Edna Hill, 6 September 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5846, Food, Sept 1, 1974.

36 See letters in the file NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5847, Food 2, Nov 27–Dec 5, 1974.

37 Quoted in “International Development Strategy in Agriculture”, in: *Agriculture Abroad* 30 (6), 1975, p. 44.

38 Between 1976 and 1982, they included the ‘World Bank’, the Group of 77, the OAU, the Club du Sahel, and the European Community: Frelin 1985, p. 69.

39 Ul Haq 1976, pp. 45, 229; Colombo et al. 1977; OAU 1980, p. 14; see Cheru 1993, p. 15.

40 UN World Food Conference 1974a, pp. 34, 38.

41 “India – the Background to Poverty: Companion to Oxfam’s factsheet India”, 16 January 1979, Oxfam, Box Staff Tours, India 1966–1987, file South India 1976 Staff Tour; Davis to USDA, 7 August 1972, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 15, IN India 1972.

42 “North India & Nepal Annual Report 1978/79”, 24 October 1979, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, November 1976–January 1980.

43 UN World Food Conference 1974b, pp. 125–126; memo from Born to Fisher for the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East, Islamabad, 11 September 1970, NARA, RG 59, SNF 1970–73, Box 457, AGR 3 FAO, 9/1/70.

was often portrayed as one of subsistence farmers who usually just managed to feed their families but unable to cope when their harvests failed.⁴⁴ Even if the latter did not happen, they were seasonally vulnerable to hunger and disease before the harvest, to taking out loans and to selling part of their land when in serious distress, all of which reinforced poverty.⁴⁵ One finds sweeping statements in the sources about the “rural poor, i.e.[,] those living outside the market economy as bare subsistence producers or landless laborers, who do not have the resources needed to achieve improved levels of living”.⁴⁶ The claim that landless workers existed outside the money economy was of course utter nonsense. U.S. President Nixon informed Congress that “40 percent of the global population in all the developing countries still remain trapped in conditions of poverty beyond the reach of the market economy”.⁴⁷ Policy experts argued that subsistence farming was a problem, especially where land was scarce.⁴⁸ If subsistence farmers formed the bulk of the chronically malnourished, the obvious solution was to help them produce more food for their own consumption.⁴⁹ They should also farm more productively and keep larger (collective) food stocks, which would induce them to break with tradition and prepare them for “future modernization”.⁵⁰ Orthodox Marxists spread the same views.⁵¹

Experts argued that subsistence producers’ self-sufficiency influenced their whole attitude. As one author put it: “Peasants are not money motivated”, but they were security-oriented and thus investing relatively little labor.⁵² They were supposed to be isolated, traditional and conservative – the antithesis of what planners desired.⁵³ However, other scholars valued what they called the “peasant mode of production”: “Peasants are essentially self-sufficient and self-reproducing”,

44 Matzke 1974, p. 43; McNamara 1973, p. 16.

45 See Robert Chambers et al., “Seasonal dimensions to rural poverty: Analysis and practical implications”, February 1979, Oxfam, file Overseas Division, Marcus Thompson 1979; Chambers 1981; Sahn 1989b; Raikes 1988, p. 72.

46 “Elements of an FAO-wide Approach to Integrated Rural Development”, no date, FAO, RG 9, PR 10/52 (1974/75).

47 Nixon to Congress, 24 April 1974, NARA, Nixon papers, WHCF, SF FO Box 37, EX FO 3–2, 3/1/74.

48 “Outline for revised Assessment Paper, Section 2 (c), Increasing Production and consumption in Developing Countries”, 17 June 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43, 2B AGD.

49 “Background Paper C, Consultative Group for Food Policy and Investment: Analysis of Resource Transfers for Investment in Food Production in Developing Countries” (1975), World Bank Archive, RG 48, A1991–030 #1, 91000–08; Tweddle circular to NGOs, “Meeting at Ministry of Overseas Development, on 23 July, to discuss the World Food Conference”, 2 August 1974, Oxfam, Elizabeth Stamp’s files, World Grain Shortage, file 2.

50 R. Savary (Consultant) to Aziz, “Remarks on Subsistence Farming”, 24 April 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43, 2A Working Group on the Preparation of World Food Conference.

51 Markov 1977, p. 20 (a paper from 1975). See also Falk Moore 1996, p. 77.

52 Seavoy 1986, p. 347.

53 “The rural poor constitute the major part of the ‘traditional’ sector.” “Draft brief for Chairman”, session III, Rural Development, 20 February 1974, FAO, RG 9, V Misc., Preparation for the Round Table.

separate cells and independent, wrote Göran Hydén, an influential voice in the ensuing so-called ‘peasant debate’.⁵⁴ In another reading, subsistence farmers’ production, labor and consumption made no contribution to society.⁵⁵ One policy goal was to integrate them into market exchanges. According to the ‘World Bank’, for example, “the modernization and monetization of rural society” would alleviate poverty.⁵⁶ There was still a long way to go before the director of a UN agency stated in 1992 that the rural poor *were* part of the economic system and did not have to be “integrated” into it.⁵⁷ But in as much as subsistence farmers really existed, statistics on their production were hard to come by and highly questionable.⁵⁸

Subsistence farming was a problematic notion, anyway. James Ferguson has shown that ‘development experts’ sometimes just construed the idea of a country as agrarian with overtones of poor subsistence farming despite contrary evidence.⁵⁹ In the early 1970s, the idea that there was a vast sea of merely self-supplying peasants was outdated. In an important book of the time, Clifton Wharton Jr. stated: “Admittedly, the farmer characterized by pure subsistence production is rarely found in the real world”; rather, there were degrees of subsistence, including “semisubsistence”.⁶⁰ Correspondingly, experts thought no longer of villages as self-sufficient, homogenous and cohesive.⁶¹

Many authors offered no definition of ‘subsistence’. According to two scholars, it was “production for direct consumption, the ‘use value production’” (and yet they argued that there was also an urban form of subsistence production).⁶² Others insisted that the number of genuine subsistence farms was small.⁶³ Most owner-cultivators and sharecroppers needed to buy some products and thus sell some of their produce,⁶⁴ and this was true for landless laborers, tenants and pastoralists anyway. According to various surveys conducted in African and Asian countries in the 1980s, 20–50 percent of rural household income came from off-farm activities.⁶⁵ Scholars discussed the different proportions of foods consumed on-farm versus those marketed. Farmers marketed only a small percentage of some products, like millet in Africa and corn in Kenya, though by reputation a pro-market country.⁶⁶ Surveys also showed that few farmers were involved in selling and buying certain

54 Hyden 1980, p. 221.

55 Hanisch and Tetzlaff 1979b, p. 10.

56 IBRD, *The Assault on World Poverty* (Baltimore, 1975), p. 3, quoted in Dunham 1982, p. 140. Payer 1979, p. 298, quotes the same phrase from a ‘World Bank’ paper on rural development.

57 Jazairy et al. 1992, p. xix.

58 *Feeding the World's Population* 1984, pp. 78–79.

59 See Ferguson 2014 (1990).

60 Wharton jr. 1969, p. 13.

61 Ahmed 1985, p. 18.

62 Evers and Schiel 1979, p. 279. For an example of a broader definition, see Elwert 1984, p. 41.

63 George 1978, p. 31.

64 Some indications are in Belshaw 1965, pp. 64–74.

65 Hunt 1991, p. 55.

66 “FAO, Eighth FAO Regional Conference for Africa”, 1–17 August 1974, FAO, RG 9, Misc., DDI (10 percent of millet was marketed); U.S. Agricultural Attaché Nairobi to USDA, 9 September 1977,

products.⁶⁷ But other products were more commercialized. For instance, “gross village retention” in India in the late 1930s was estimated to be 80 percent for maize, sorghum and pearl millet but only 59 percent for rice and 49 percent for wheat.⁶⁸ Still, quantifications were tentative. Generalizations about national or supra-national trends, like three quarters of all food in non-industrialized countries was consumed on farm,⁶⁹ were risky at best.

Unemployment was also seen as important cause of mass hunger. From this perspective, reliance on “traditional subsistence agriculture” caused unemployment, which led to poverty, which weakened demand, which in turn resulted in a low percentage of marketed food and, so, malnutrition.⁷⁰ It was known, but often not taken into account in development programs, that the urban poor tended to consume fewer calories than the rural poor.⁷¹ At the same time, development planners understood that creating employment and thus reducing poverty in the countryside would put limits on the migration to cities, which many governments wanted.

The hunger problem was conceived as primarily South Asian in the 1960s. In the early 1980s, more than half of the world’s absolute poor lived in just three populous countries, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.⁷² India was home to more than one-third, and within this country, extreme poverty was concentrated in the four states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal in 1983.⁷³ In 1974, one FAO functionary reminded another that there were more hungry people in Bangladesh than in all of Africa.⁷⁴ Things had not changed much by 2010, when 42 percent of the world’s undernourished children lived in India and 5 percent each lived in Bangladesh and Pakistan.⁷⁵ According to the Economic and Social Commission

NARA, RG 166, Ag. Attaché and Counselor Reports, Box 68, KY Kenya 1977 DR (20 percent of corn in Kenya entered the market).

67 Doggett 1988, p. 285 (pearl millet in Andhra Pradesh, India, unlike sorghum).

68 Blyn 1966, p. 79.

69 Groom to Aziz, 31 May 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43, 2B Divisional Contributions – General. See also N.S. Randhawa, “Agricultural and rural development”, 3 April 1973, FAO, RG 15, RAPE, Rural Development 1972–76 (on Nepal); “Uganda – Agricultural Situation”, 26 January 1972 and ditto, 19 January 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Attaché and Couns. Reports, Box 32, UG Uganda 1972 DR and UG Uganda 1973 DR, respectively; “Annual Report for Kenya, December 85–November 1986”, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, Kenya.

70 Matzke 1974, pp. 43–44; UN World Food Conference 1974b, p. 112; World Food Council, Executive Director, WFC/20, “Increasing Food Production in the Developing Countries”, 14 April 1976, FAO Library. Quote: “Official Report of the US observer delegation to the Seventh FAO Regional Conference for Africa, Libreville, Gabon, September 14–30, 1972”, NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73, Box 460, AGR 3 FAO, 9/1/72, p. 9 of the document.

71 UN World Food Conference 1974a, p. 6.

72 Singh 1983, p. 379; World Bank 1986, p. 17; World Bank 1988, p. 3 (pointing to a ‘World Bank’ estimate of 1974). See also the office memo from Hoffman to McNamara, “World Food Conference – Preliminary Report”, 18 November 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/4 IBRD.

73 Lipton and van der Gaag 1993b, p. 16.

74 Uribe to Aziz, 24 June 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/2B Divisional Contributions – Gen.

75 “Nur Teilerfolge bei der Hungerbekämpfung”, NZZ, 26 October 2010, p. 29.

for Asia and the Pacific, two-thirds of the world's people living in absolute poverty in 1976 resided in four countries: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia.⁷⁶

In the early 1970s, many people – also in UN organizations – began to believe, inaccurately, that the global problem of undernutrition was largely a matter of Sub-Saharan Africa.⁷⁷ Africa had actually been a net exporter of grain for over 2,000 years until about 1950. The final report of the 1970 World Food Congress still hardly mentioned Africa, and an FAO Regional Conference in September 1972 acknowledged no serious African problems.⁷⁸ Africa came to be regarded as the continent of hunger in part because of its declining production per capita of staple foods in the 1970s and 1980s.⁷⁹ Africa's food imports rose, though not by a lot in absolute terms, and the continent's portion within the U.S. food 'aid' program grew considerably from 1975 to 1984.⁸⁰ Between 1972 and 1978, at least 12 Sub-Saharan states declared that food self-sufficiency was their goal,⁸¹ and an African Regional Food Plan was designed in 1976–1978.⁸² Specialists from the region argued that Sub-Saharan Africa should finally be included in the "Green Revolution".⁸³ And the low rates of savings and investment rates needed to rise, according to international experts.⁸⁴ Analyses showed that the majority of the world's pastoralists was in West Africa,⁸⁵ but according to estimates, they were much fewer than poor agriculturalists, and development policies considered the livestock sector unimportant to reducing hunger, as I show in later chapters.

The small peasant approach to combating rural poverty

The idea behind the small peasant approach was simple. The vast majority of the world's hungry consisted of poor rural dwellers in non-industrialized countries.⁸⁶ "They are the small farmers, tenants and the rural people without land or employment".⁸⁷ For many analysts, this included sharecroppers. At the same time,

76 ESCAP, "Development and Application of Technology and Industrialization", 9 July 1976, FA, RG 15, RAFE, Rural Development 1972–76.

77 See Svedberg 1991, p. 155.

78 Report 1970; see also "Official Report of the US observer delegation to the Seventh FAO Regional Conference for Africa, Libreville, Gabon, September 14–30, 1972", NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73, Box 460, AGR 3 FAO, 9/1/72.

79 See UN World Food Council, WFC/1990/7, 12 April 1990, FAO Library.

80 See UN World Food Conference 1974b, p. 112; *Feeding the World's Population* 1984, p. 337.

81 Frelin 1985, pp. 68–69.

82 FAO 1985, pp. 75–77.

83 FAO comments, "ECA revised framework of priorities for the implementation of the New International Economic Order in Africa [. . .]" (ca. 1976), FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., Subject Files: ECA I (1976/77). See also Yriart to Saouma on an Afro-Arab Summit, 18 April 1977, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., Subject Files: ECA II.

84 FAO, WCARRD, "Review and analysis of agrarian reform and rural development in the developing countries since the 1960s", 1978, p. 100, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 32, RU 7/46.33 Annex.

85 Jazairy et al. 1992, p. 334, citing a total of 26 million pastoralists worldwide. Cissé 1981, p. 318, estimated only 4–5 million in West Africa.

86 Cépède 1984, p. 288; Bull 1982, p. 3 (who refers to the IBRD in 1980).

87 UN World Food Conference 1974a, p. 1.

these small agriculturalists were important staple food producers. Thus, they were the key to solving the world's food and hunger problems both ways. Better farming methods would enable them to raise production; so, there would be more food, and they and their families would have more to eat. To increase productivity,⁸⁸ they needed to farm with 'modern' inputs, especially high-yielding seed varieties. However, these were more vulnerable to pests, drought and inadequate soil nutrients, which required the use of fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation. These inputs, however, necessitated a considerable initial investment and, thus, credit; storage facilities, transportation and marketing in order to sell surpluses and repay loans; and agricultural extension services to teach farmers in the use of 'modern' inputs.⁸⁹ As an FAO official succinctly put it, this amounted to "the transformation from traditional subsistence farming to commercial farming".⁹⁰ In many development planners' mind, this transformation superseded fighting hunger as the main goal.

Thus, a whole new system of production practices was to be put in place, which would not only eliminate hunger but also invigorate local economies and stimulate the economies of industrialized nations, mainly through their chemical and agricultural machinery industries and ease the general economic crisis of overproduction that started in 1973. Small agriculturalists would become (more) important producers and consumers. As many saw this project, it was nothing less than the integration of hundreds of millions of more or less isolated people into national and the world economies, a plan "to bring the small farmers and the landless agricultural workers into the income and employment streams" and "into the mainstream of national development programmes".⁹¹ 'World Bank' president McNamara said nearly the same thing.⁹² For transnational corporations, it offered a chance of "[t]apping Third World [p]easant [m]arkets" through "the emergence of a gradually expanding class of peasant entrepreneurs".⁹³ "The effort to involve the rural

88 The general line was to "increase the productivity of indigenous agriculture", according to a memo from U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Buttz to Ash, 30 April 1974, NARA, Nixon papers, CF, Box 12, FG 1 The President, 1973 on, file 2.

89 For example, see Bishop (FAO) to Huyser (FAO), 24 January 1974, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., Subject Files, FAO-IBRD Round Table; UN World Food Conference 1974a, pp. 122–123; Aten 1975, pp. 30–33, also citing the group of 25 eminent persons at the World Food Conference; Richard Gardner, "Statement of Conclusions" of the conference The World Food and Energy Crises – The Role of International Organizations, FAO, RG 22/UN-43/3A; Aide memoire of the U.S. Embassy in Chile, 25 January 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/4A, Prep. Com., vol. I; address by Edwin Martin at the conference The World Food and Population Crisis, 3 April 1975, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5974, Grain 3; *Feeding the World's Population* 1984, pp. 246, 257–264; Chenery 1974, p. xviii; Nicholson 1979, pp. 226–227; Shapley 1993, pp. 509–511. An early call was D. Umali, "A new approach to the work of FAO in Asia and the Far East", 1 December 1971, FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Div., PR 12/50, vol. I. Lipton and Longhurst 1989, pp. 20, 42, 55–57 and 62–63 saw less need for irrigation and pesticides for high-yielding varieties that were developed later.

90 J. Hrabovsky, "Outline for Revised Assessment Paper, Section 2 (c) [. . .]", 17 June 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/2B AGD.

91 UN World Food Conference 1974b, p. 2, see also *ibid.*, pp. 7–8. Second quote: "Report of Mission to Selected Asian Countries [. . .]", ca. July 1974, RG 15, RAFA, Rural Development 1972–76.

92 See Dupuis 1984, p. 140.

93 Fadiman 1994, pp. 53, 73.

dwellers [in non-industrialized countries] into the monetary circulation must succeed in order to give important impulses to the market and industrialization process”, lectured the head of the West German Association of Labor Unions.⁹⁴ As a group of experts noted in 1976, “the so-called ‘trickle-down’ effect has worked insufficiently”, the “rural poor constitute a dormant potential of producers and consumers” and the “solution of the poverty problem lies in the integration of the rural poor into the socio-economic system”.⁹⁵ This new orientation was “now a general consensus”, read a document from about 1978.⁹⁶ “By the mid-1970s, ‘targeting the poor’ had become the new orthodoxy in development philosophy”.⁹⁷ All of these views built on Theodore Schultz’s theory that peasants were profit oriented, willing, resourceful and efficient and just needed better technology.⁹⁸

The ultimate aim of the small peasant approach remained that of all development concepts, namely, industrialization. Implicitly, development was conceived as to follow the European model, and some of the literature explicitly compared contemporary non-industrialized countries and the first nation to industrialize, Britain.⁹⁹ But the new concept assumed another model of capital accumulation on the way to industrial society, more diffused and bottom-up than did modernization theory’s trickle-down model.¹⁰⁰ However, the new approach continued to assume that external infusions of capital would trigger economic growth, and more investment would generate more growth (a belief that now faces criticism but is still dominant).¹⁰¹ As it was formulated at the time, “the world food problem, abstracted from the population problem, is one of effectively managing the delivery of capital and technology to developing countries [. . .]”.¹⁰²

The acronym of the Scheme for Agricultural Credit Development, which the FAO launched in the late 1970s, illustrates how important development agencies thought the extension of credit to farmers was for the success of their plans: SACRED.¹⁰³ However, the larger part of capital needed for activating the peasants

94 Heinz-Oskar Vetter, “Industrialisierung und ihre Konsequenzen für die Europäische Gemeinschaft”, address at the conference *Industrie und Gesellschaft in der Europäischen Gemeinschaft*, 20 April 1972, in: Lefringhausen and Merz 1973, pp. 217–218. For the development policies advocated by West German labor unions, see Linne 2021, pp. 356–374.

95 “Some Theses and Questions”, Expert Consultation on Integrated Rural Development, Rome 10–13 February 1976, FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Div., RU 1/4.

96 “FAO/SIDA Cooperative Programme for Rural Development”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 6, IDC.

97 Black 1992, p. 208.

98 Schultz 1965; see also Perelman 1977, pp. 159–161; Ellis and Biggs 2001, pp. 440–441.

99 See Lipton and van der Gaag 1993b, especially pp. 11, 13, 15, 18, 20, 32; von Blanckenburg 1986.

100 This is in contrast to interpretations of the small peasant approach according to which it aimed at preventing capital accumulation. See Franc 2020.

101 For example, see Easterly 2006; Easterly 2001, pp. 29–37, 48. A ‘World Bank’ study in 1998 concluded that the relationship between “development aid” and economic growth was weak at best: Griffiths 2008, p. 41.

102 Albright et al. 1977, p. 44.

103 “FAO Activities and Programmes in Support of Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries, 1978/79”, FAO, RG 12, ES, UN 29/12. SACRED served international cooperation between credit institutions.

had to come from within non-industrialized countries, not foreign ‘aid’.¹⁰⁴ Thus, it was crucial, as in older development theories, to raise domestic savings rates.¹⁰⁵ However, few farmers, let alone peasants, sharecroppers, pastoralists and landless workers, had access to credit in Latin America, Asia and, particularly, Africa.¹⁰⁶ Commercial banks often shied away from doing business with illiterate peasants from remote places because of their lack of collateral, lack of trust in repayments, the high administrative costs in comparison to the small sums loaned, the lack of rural branch offices and reservations based on cultural difference. The FAO tried to make such business financially attractive.¹⁰⁷ In October 1975, it held the World Conference on Credit for Farmers in Developing Countries. There were a number of ways to address the problem. Nationalizing commercial banks in order to reorient credit toward agriculture had only limited success.¹⁰⁸ Other remedies included to introduce specialized rural savings institutions.¹⁰⁹ The limitations that such solutions had (like the concentration of credit on a few wealthy people and low repayment rates) led to the rise of microcredit institutions from the 1980s onwards.

Cooperatives, savings cooperatives in particular, were seen as one strategic way to a different capital accumulation conforming with capitalism.¹¹⁰ They were supposed to give small agriculturalists access to credit who could not save or raise enough money individually. But in the early 1970s, only a small share of foreign ‘development aid’ was earmarked for the establishment of cooperatives or credit institutions.¹¹¹ Many ‘experts’ saw cooperatives as the royal path to the spread of new technologies and empowering the rural poor,¹¹² but others warned that cooperatives were “dominated and monopolized by well-off farmers [. . .] landlords, moneylenders and traders”,¹¹³ and the number of members was often small (see

104 This was acknowledged, for example, in a letter from Ceylon’s Prime Minister Bandaranaike to Nixon, 17 May 1972, quoted in telegram from U.S. Embassy in Colombo to Secretary of State, 19 May 1972, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Ec. 1970–73, Box 478, AID 6 Ceylon 1/1/70.

105 “Summary [FAO’s] Indicative World Plan, Africa, South of the Sahara”, 8 January 1970, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files I, IWP; FAO, WCARRD, “Review and analysis of agrarian reform and rural development in the developing countries since the 1960s”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 32, RU 7/46.33 Annex.

106 UN World Food Conference 1974b, p. 57; Abbott 1976, p. 240.

107 Abbott 1976, pp. 243–246; Sir Henry Philip for Standard Bank Group, “The Syndicate Approach to rural development in developing countries” (ca. 1970), FAO, RG 9, Subject Files, I, Investment Center 1969–1970; address by Roy Jackson to FAO/Bankers Programme General Committee meeting, 26 May 1977 (draft), FAO, RG 9, DDD, BK 51/1.

108 U.S. Agricultural Attaché in Delhi, report, 19 January 1971, p. 18 of the document, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 15, IN India (Delhi) 1971 DR.

109 Abbott 1992, p. 116; for limitations, see von Pischke 1981, pp. i–ii, 3, 10.

110 For the ILO, see B. Mahajan, “Summary of Points [. . .]”, 14 December 1978, FAO, RG 9, UN 10/65 II.

111 “Despatch of investigation missions concerning the establishment of the Integrated Rural Development Centre for Asia” (ca. 1973), FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., FAO Cooperation with Japan.

112 Erdmann 1996, p. 2; Skorov 1973, p. 18.

113 A. Seth, “Agrarian Changes in Asia”, 14 February 1975, FAO, RG 15, RAPE, Agrarian Reform 1972–75; see also “ESCAP Inter-Agency Team on Integrated Rural Development Country Report: Thailand”, FAO, RG 15, RAPE, Rural Development 1972–76; Seth to Varghese, 30 March 1978

Chapter 7).¹¹⁴ Satellite farming, in which hundreds of small farms surrounded a plantation, was a big-business model favored by some to make ‘modern’ inputs available to small producers, but it played no important role in the staple food production in non-industrialized countries at the time.¹¹⁵ Land grabbing by foreign firms, much discussed after 2000, was not a serious problem in the 1970s, when international companies, fearful of nationalization, were selling off plantations, not acquiring or expanding them.

Adherents of rural poverty alleviation paid scant attention to the landless and pastoralists; their main interest was in small peasants. Their vision was creating a sea of productive little farms, 100 million new small capitalist businesses, integrated into markets on the model, or what they imagined was the model, of the European family farm.¹¹⁶ They expected peasants’ “graduation into small entrepreneurs”, as a report on Colombia in the late 1970s put it.¹¹⁷ A book about this process had the title “From Peasant to Farmer”.¹¹⁸ In a way, then, the peasant could appear like an allegory of postcolonial non-industrialized countries: remote and – only formally – independent. The vision included standardized small farms but also standardized villages, or village communities. Few experts questioned the wisdom of the small peasant approach, for example probing whether all of the poor could be expected to become businesspeople.¹¹⁹

Advocates of the approach often described high-yielding seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation and credit as a single package. Making only some of the elements available would not be sufficient. The FAO Conference in November 1973 concluded that “the nutrition problem was a very complex one in which poverty was very pronounced and that the problem could not be treated in isolation since it was part of the production-marketing-consumption system”.¹²⁰ According to a statement on agricultural development policy issued by Pakistan’s Ministry for Agriculture in early 1972, the new technologies were not reaching the peasants. The problem was that credit was not extended to small producers, seed and fertilizer were expensive, often not available in time, and had little impact when they were available because so few farmers could irrigate their fields, and most had to

about a trip to Nepal, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 1, Consultants, General and by name RU 7/46, vol. II; Erdmann 1996, pp. 2, 22.

114 Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Cooperatives), Report 1970–71, New Delhi n.d. [1971], NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 15, IN India 1971.

115 “Report of the Consultation with Agro-Industrial Leaders in Preparation for the UN World Food Conference [. . .]”, 10–11 September 1974, Toronto, p. 11, FAO, RG 12, UN 43, 2.B, ICP General; Peter Bunyard, “Agribusiness – the spectre at the feast”, *PAN*, no. 4, 8 November 1974, p. 5; “The Philippine Agrarian Reform Program: Three Years after the Issuance of Tenants’ Emancipation Decree. A Report to the President by Corrado Estrella [. . .]”, October 21, 1975, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Agrarian Reform 1972–1975. Even in the late 1980s, the impact of contract farming in Africa was limited, as figures in Watts 1990, especially p. 152, suggest, contrary to his argument.

116 See also Tetzlaff 1980, p. 459.

117 Quoted in Escobar 1995, p. 157.

118 Weitz 1971.

119 Wood 1997, p. 290.

120 “Draft report of plenary – part 7”, paragraph 118, FAO, RG 6, reel 538.

sell their crops right after harvesting them, when prices were low, because they lacked storage facilities.¹²¹ In 1972, an observer from the USA reported, “Ethiopia is using the ‘minimum package approach’ under which the farmer gets improved seeds, fertilizer, credits, etc., that he needs to be productive”, but it was not clear that the same was true for peasants.¹²² ‘Modern’ inputs were regarded as crucial for combating hunger for many years. The OAU’s Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 called for the “intensive use of input packages”.¹²³ In another understanding – in this case, by industrialists – “package deals” included, in addition to inputs, food processing, credit, marketing and distribution.¹²⁴ When ‘World Bank’ staff noticed problems with “technical packages” in the 1980s, they were looking for better implementation rather than questioning the package approach as such.¹²⁵

The emphasis on crop prices and economic incentives after 1980 can be understood as a modification of the small peasant strategy.¹²⁶ However, long before the notorious structural adjustment programs, fueled by writings of Alan Bates and Elliot Berg, the opinion was widespread among ‘development experts’ and politicians that governments, many of which controlled part of the food trade through marketing boards, should either raise producer prices for staples or let the market determine prices.¹²⁷ It was argued that low prices hurt also peasants and depressed food production. The small peasant approach reoriented development policies toward agriculture, and its focus on small farms as the basis of capital accumulation implied that the state should no longer exploit rural dwellers, as had been normal, in the interest of aiding the emergence of urban capital. However, this would cause major problems for the state in non-industrialized countries to create

121 M. Riad El-Ghoney, “The Concept of Integrated Rural Development with Special Reference to the Near East”, November 1973, FAO, RG 12 ES/IL 8/5 1.

122 “Official Report of the US Observer to the Plenary Session of the Seventh FAO Regional Conference for Africa held at Libreville, Gabon, September 25–30 1972”, NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73, Box 460, AGR 3 FAO 9/1/72.

123 UN World Food Council, WFC/50, 28 June 1977, FAO Library; Madeley 1984, p. 259, about an international conference in Arusha, Tanzania; OAU 1980, p. 10.

124 Friedrich to Marei, 4 July 1974, reporting on the conference Science and Agribusiness in the 1970s in London, FAO, RG 22, UN-43/6, vol. 1; Bell and Dunloy 1974, p. 129.

125 Visible in World Bank 1988, p. 30.

126 *Feeding the World's Population* 1984, pp. 246–247; see already U.S. Embassy in Chile, Aide Memoire about the World Food Conference, 25 January 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/4A, Prep. Com., vol. I; Theodore Schultz, “The Food Alternatives Before Us: An Economic Perspective”, 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5846, Food, January–June 1974, 2. By 1989, the ‘World Bank’ had relativized its emphasis on ‘getting prices right’: Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 10.

127 *The World Food Problem*, vol. II, pp. 525–526; UN World Food Conference 1974a, p. 43; McNamara 1973, p. 59; Yudelman to FAO, 24 July 1974 (copy), FAO, RG 12, UN-43/7 LNOR 2; NBC interview with Earl Butz, late October 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5847, Food 2, Oct 1–Nov 26, 1974, 2; Lofchie 1975, p. 565; Lofchie 1978, pp. 464–468; Wellhausen 1975, p. 64; Johnson 1978, p. 554 (Johnson was an employee of Cargill, Inc.); Chan et al. 1973, p. 7. For a USDA survey of 50 countries from 1975, see Fraenkel 1979, p. 11. See also Bates 1981; Streeten 1987, p. 24; Abbott 1992, p. 140. On the Berg Report, see World Bank 1981; Browne and Cumings 1986; Sender and Smith 1986, p. 124. Berg et al. also advocated higher ‘aid’ levels in real terms and bigger agricultural exports.

revenue.¹²⁸ On the other hand, farmers often evaded official low prices by selling their food crops on the black market or switching to unregulated crops.¹²⁹ In any case, the point of raising producer prices was to boost production and thus supply oriented instead of entitlement oriented, and it benefited farmers who produced surpluses; it harmed the many rural dwellers, including many peasants, who did not grow enough for their own consumption and had to buy staples.

Poverty was often called the root of hunger. The report of the Hot Springs Conference of 1943, which was the origin of the FAO, had already noted: “The first cause of malnutrition is poverty”.¹³⁰ However, such acknowledgment was often merely verbal, and from there, thoughts led often directly back to the idea that agricultural production should be ‘modernized’¹³¹; few really followed Amartya Sen’s insight that “the key issue was access to food rather than the total supply of food”, the so-called entitlement theory.¹³² As Stephen Devereux noted, “FAD [food availability decline theory] provided the theoretical basis for actions implemented after the 1974 World Food Conference”. Being the most important event addressing the world food crisis, the conference was all about production.¹³³ The FAO’s Global Information and Early Warning System was also entirely supply oriented.¹³⁴ While Sen argued that hunger was the result of poverty, and poverty arose from the social inequality that famines highlighted and aggravated,¹³⁵ the “global poverty discourse” reduced (and still reduces) the many existing perceptions and facets of poverty to one issue, namely, the lack of monetary income, the solution for which was supposedly economic growth. This reduction of the problem or even its substitution¹³⁶ did not take into account that economic growth might spur social differentiation, so that the liberal cure named ‘more capitalism’ could easily generate more poverty, landlessness and hunger.¹³⁷

Some development practitioners wondered what element of the new strategy was the most important one. In 1973, D. Parish of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign remarked, “FAO in the past has regarded fertilizer as the spearhead of change”.¹³⁸ But it was increasingly high-yielding seed varieties that seemed

128 Oxfam, Field Committee for Africa, “Field Secretary’s Report, Item 4”, 29 January 1974, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1974–Oct 1976.

129 Hesp and van der Laan 1985, pp. 19–21.

130 Quoted in Cépède 1984, p. 284.

131 Aten 1975, p. 13 (quoting Sayed Marei); see also Uvin 1994, p. 76.

132 Berg and Austin 1984, p. 304; Saouma 1985, p. v; Islam 1989, pp. 161–163.

133 Devereux 1993, p. 24.

134 Drèze and Sen 1989, p. 12. Conventional early warning systems are famine- and food aid-oriented, centralized, and do not predict what groups may be affected and what these could do: Davies 1996, pp. 5–7.

135 See Sen 1981.

136 Rahnema 1991 (quote p. 37).

137 This argument is in line with Robert Ayres’s remark that the ‘World Bank’s’ poverty alleviation policy in the 1970s “lacked an adequate theory of income distribution and social inequalities in general”. Ayres 1983, p. 80.

138 FAO, RAFF, “Summary Record of Staff Meeting”, 17 January 1973, FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Dev., PR 12/50, vol. II.

decisive. The hope was that they would break up traditional social structures and convert self-sufficient farms into producers for the world market as well as finance their investments in the other new inputs, which would, in turn, stimulate the rural economy because of peasants' spending. Traditions of mutual help and collective safeguards had to give way, for they hampered market development.¹³⁹ The new seeds were, in the words of one book title, "Seeds of Change".¹⁴⁰ But until the early 1970s, seed research focused on just a few staple crops: wheat, rice and corn.¹⁴¹ Accordingly, these (and cassava), but not millet and sorghum, were the crops whose global production soared (though the difference was less in Africa¹⁴²) in 1973–1983.

Since most high-yielding seed varieties required it, development planners also attributed much importance to irrigation. They considered machinery less important, though some argued that it would ease women's workload and even reduce polygamy as a result.¹⁴³ For one reason, the small peasant approach sought to reduce rural poverty and hunger by generating employment, which labor-saving technology would counteract.¹⁴⁴ For another, labor was so abundant and cheap, especially in South and East Asia, that small farmers did not need machinery.

Critics complained that the approach should not be restricted to owner-cultivators, but include landless, sharecroppers and marginal cultivators.¹⁴⁵ India's government, for example, assigned these groups some priority in its support, at least verbally, in the late 1970s but recommended that minifundists grow crops other than grain.¹⁴⁶ Acknowledging the problem of involving these 'unreachable' people, an FAO official criticized the 'World Bank's' "attitude, which is rather to overlook the problem".¹⁴⁷ The FAO later counted "foresters and fishermen, tenants, [. . .] nomads and certain types of rural artisans" among the rural poor.¹⁴⁸ However, thoughts for improving the lives of the landless rarely went beyond vague plans to generate employment.¹⁴⁹ A later internal evaluation in the 'World Bank'

139 See the analysis in Perelman 1977, pp. 145–146.

140 Brown 1970.

141 ACC, Functional Group on the "Green Revolution", "Inter-Agency Position Paper" (draft), 28 January 1971, FAO, RG 15, LUNO, UN 10/16.

142 FAO 1985, pp. 125–126.

143 "Recommendations of Regional Meetings for Africa on the Role of Women in Development", 1975, in Snyder and Tadesse 1995, pp. 30 and 36 note 12.

144 See "Official Report of the US observer delegation to the Seventh FAO Regional Conference for Africa, Libreville, Gabon, September 14–30, 1972", NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73, Box 460, AGR 3 FAO, 9/1/72.

145 Esman 1978, pp. 4–5; see also Singh 1983, p. 380.

146 Tigger Stack, "Feasibility Study and Report for Oxfam in India: A Paper for Discussion", June 1978, citing B. K. Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Oxfam, file Various countries – discussion papers.

147 "Draft Brief for Chairman", Session III: Rural Development, 20 February 1974, FAO, RG 9, V (Misc.), Preparation for the Round Table.

148 FAO, "Guidelines for the Integration of Women in Rural Development", May 1980, p. 4–5 of the document, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 16, RU 7/46.1, Follow-up General, vol. VII.

149 Draft for item 9(b), "Policies and programmes for improving consumption patterns" of the assessment paper for the World Food Conference, 26 June 1974, FAO, RG 12, Comm. Div., UN-43/4A

acknowledged that rural development projects, as defined in that institution, were “not intended to benefit directly the poorest of the poor – the landless and laborers – since it was aimed primarily at smallholders with their own land”.¹⁵⁰

The concept of meeting people’s basic needs supplemented the small peasant approach. The basic needs concept, which the International Labour Organization (ILO) championed, especially at the World Employment Conference of 1976,¹⁵¹ combined meeting minimum requirements for food, shelter and health – and later education, transportation, participation, etc. – with creating employment, incomes and economic growth.¹⁵² Meeting these diverse aims again required a “multi-pronged” development strategy.¹⁵³ As FAO officials wrote in early 1979, “[s]atisfaction of basic needs [. . .] is not merely a humanitarian issue, it is also a most important way of dynamizing the whole of the economy”.¹⁵⁴ But some found the basic needs approach too consumption-oriented, without sufficient focus on productivity.¹⁵⁵ Others in poor countries were worried that it might distract their states from industrializing, which was not necessarily the case.¹⁵⁶ Authors interpreted the strategy differently, so that the precise meaning of ‘basic needs’ was unclear.¹⁵⁷ Some, including in the USAID, conceived meeting basic needs in terms of supplemental measures for health, education and housing to bridge the time between rural development’s alleviation of poverty and the achievement of better conditions of life for the erstwhile poor.¹⁵⁸

Ideas, and terminology, similar to basic needs had appeared before 1976 in the UN sector, including ‘World Bank’ President McNamara’s communications since 1971, one of the bank’s strategists, Mahbub ul Haq’s, coinage of the term “basic minimum needs of the poor” in 1972,¹⁵⁹ and the declarations of several international

Documents; “Chapter 11 National Food and Nutrition Problems”, FAO, RG 12, Nut. Div., Reg. Files, UN 43/1; Maurice Williams, “Rethinking Development Strategies – Mid-Decade Renewal of the Commitment to Eradicate Hunger”, 24 April 1984, FAO, RG 12, UN 44/1, WFC Follow up, vol. III. On the ILO, see B. Mahajan, “Summary of Points [. . .]”, 14 December 1978, FAO, RG 9, UN 10/65 II.

150 World Bank 1988, p. xvi.

151 Tetzlaff 1980, pp. 51 ff.; Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 160; Rist 2008, pp. 164–165; Hunt 1989, pp. 259–291. Meyerowitz 2021, pp. 66–78 describes the spread of the basic needs concept within the U.S. government and UN.

152 Tetzlaff 1980, pp. 51 ff.; Bibangambah 1985, p. 49; Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 160; Preston 1996, pp. 245–248.

153 ILO 1982, p. xix.

154 “Agenda Item III.1: Agrarian reform and rural development policies and strategies for the 1980s”, 4 January 1979, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 1, Agenda and Comments – I. The document pointed to “non-material needs” as well.

155 Jazaury et al. 1992, p. 12.

156 See Singh 1979, p. 586.

157 Nagel 1985, pp. 30–45.

158 Nicholson 1979, p. 227.

159 Rist 2008, pp. 162, 165; Escobar 1995, p. 160; Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 169; Bekele 1973, p. 24; Arndt 1987, p. 101. Quote: ul Haq 1972, p. 3; see also Seefried 2015, p. 290. For a 1966 UNRISD study by Drewnowski and Scott, see Siddiqui 1980, p. 7. For James Grant of the U.S. Overseas Development Council, see Franczak 2022, pp. 108–109.

conferences in 1974–1976.¹⁶⁰ The ILO itself called Tanzania a “pioneer” having adopted the basic needs approach before it had.¹⁶¹ In 1971, Ernst Michanek, the head of the Swedish International Development Agency, wondered if sufficient nutrition is a basic human right¹⁶² and so did NGOs.¹⁶³ And an agribusiness representative invoked “the basic needs of the people in the Third World” in 1974 or 1975.¹⁶⁴ The concept of basic needs amalgamated various earlier concepts.¹⁶⁵

The ILO’s earlier emphasis on generating employment for tackling the problems of poverty and hunger seemed to be compatible with the basic needs approach, which was connected with ideas of intensification of small agricultural production for better nutrition, because the use of high-yielding varieties was viewed as labor-intensive.¹⁶⁶

The basic needs approach had many supporters, including the ‘World Bank’ and the USAID.¹⁶⁷ In October 1977, the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD declared meeting basic needs its main objective.¹⁶⁸ But the idea of basic needs has also been criticized because it “rests upon a naturalistic conception of the social”.¹⁶⁹ Another author criticized what he called the liberal basic needs approach for treating the state as socially neutral, ignoring economic and political group interests and, thus, some root causes of poverty.¹⁷⁰ As a result, Marxists and dependency theorists have shown little inclination to use the concept.¹⁷¹

The concept for implementation: integrated rural development

The concept matching the sweeping attempt to transform the rural sphere in non-industrialized countries was called integrated rural development (IRD). It was multidimensional and included the transformation of agricultural production, including raising livestock; the expansion of rural industries and trade; improving and expanding transportation, marketing and credit; improved social services such as health, education and housing¹⁷²; and sometimes political and cultural changes.¹⁷³ There was a “special emphasis on increasing yields of subsistence farmers”.¹⁷⁴ As

160 Bibangambah 1985, p. 51.

161 ILO 1982, p. xi.

162 Bekele 1973, p. 24.

163 For Oxfam’s mission statement in 1975, see Jennings 2008, p. 121.

164 Hugill 1975, p. 108.

165 Nagel 1985, pp. 9, 22–24.

166 See ILO, “A Case for Rural Employment Promotion: Elements of a Rural Employment Strategy”, July 1973, and ILO, “A Framework for an ILO Programme on Rural Employment Promotion”, 1974, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/43.

167 Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 160.

168 Antikommunismus heute 1981, p. 92.

169 Rist 2008, p. 168.

170 Bibangambah 1985, p. 54.

171 Nagel 1985, pp. 24–25.

172 “Report of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Meeting Held in Kinshasa, Zaire, 15 February–3 March 1977”, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., Subject Files, ECA I.

173 Manig 1985, p. 8. For IRD, see also Ruttan 1984.

174 “Elements of an FAO-wide Approach to Integrated Rural Development”, no date (ca. 1975), FAO, RG 9, PR 10/52 (1974/75). See also a draft thereof in RG 12, Rural Inst. and Services Div., RU

‘integrated rural development’ could include almost anything, some criticized its lack of a precise meaning.¹⁷⁵ Theoretical and structural difficulties with the approach remained unresolved.¹⁷⁶ Still, IRD was supposed to overcome “the failure of past development strategies, which concentrated largely on technical and economic aspects”, and to bring about “social, institutional and structural changes” as well.¹⁷⁷ For the FAO’s Director-General Boerma, the promise of IRD was that “the quality of life of the rural masses could be improved”. According to Herbert Kötter, the head of one of the FAO’s divisions, “The philosophy behind integrated rural development was the integration of the rural poor into existing society and providing them with an equitable share of the benefits from economic growth”.¹⁷⁸ But in 1976, specialists including Michel Cépède, Carl Eicher, Philip Mbithi and D. P. Singh objected that the FAO still needed a “major reorientation” toward improving the “material conditions of the rural poor majority”, without which they had “no confidence in FAO’s ability to play a leadership role in rural development in this decade”. They also criticized “FAO’s over-emphasis on narrowly conceived production projects and agricultural sector analysis, its disinclination to engage in discussions of policy issues [. . .]”.¹⁷⁹

Consequently, IRD seemed to require a new type of expert, one with comprehensive rather than merely technical qualifications,¹⁸⁰ or teams of experts with a variety of qualifications. This was a persisting problem, since many teams did not include social scientists or ecologists.¹⁸¹ Among ‘World Bank’ staff, the integrated rural development approach met a lot of resistance.¹⁸²

Some professionals saw IRD as no different from the older concept of area development.¹⁸³ Past area development projects had often failed, among other

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- 1/7; Montague Yudelman, “Integrated Rural Development Projects: the Bank’s Experience”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 30, RU 7/46.32, vol. II; Twelfth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East, Tokyo, 17–27 September 1974, FAO, RG 7, film reel 518.
- 175 Mahajan to Hartmans, 22 November 1974, FAO, RG 9, Misc., DDDÉ [1974]; “Operability of Actions or activeness suggested by the Group of Advisors of the Regional Programme on Integrated Rural Development of the Regional Office for Latin America in Caracas from 22 to 27 September 1975”, FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Div., RU 1/4. See also Manig 1985, p. 17; Kleemeier 1988, p. 61; Hye 1989, p. 7.
- 176 See the file FAO, RG 12, ES, PR 4/76, vol. I, 1976–1977.
- 177 M. Leupolt, “Discussion Paper on Rural Development, FAO/CERI Consultation – 2 December 1974”, FAO, RG 15, Japan 1972–75.
- 178 “Regional Representatives Meeting 3–7 March 1975, Summary Record”, draft, 29 April 1975, FAO, RG 9, PR 10/52 (1974/75).
- 179 “Report of the Expert Consultation on Integrated Rural Development, Rome, Italy, 10–14 February 1976”, FAO, RG 12, ES, FA 13/2, vol. I.
- 180 “Report of the Government Consultation on the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia, Bangkok, 22–26 March 1976”, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Rural Development 1972–76.
- 181 See, for example, “The key to nomad survival”, *The Times*, 4 July 1973, FAO, RG 12, Comm. Div., FA/21, vol. Ia.
- 182 Sharma 2017, p. 66.
- 183 “Elements of an FAO-wide Approach to Integrated Rural Development”, no date (ca. 1975), FAO, RG 9, PR 10/52 (1974/75); reference to a remark by Yudelman, IBRD, in “Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment – Inaugural Meeting” (1975), FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. III; Donaldson 1991, p. 167; contribution by F. Ali Ahmad (India), “Verbatim Records of Plenary Meetings of the Conference, 13 November 1973 FAO, RG 7, film reel 517.

reasons for being too big and lacking government support.¹⁸⁴ Some scholars claim that certain development projects in Malawi already had IRD features in the late 1960s.¹⁸⁵ IRD also bore some – others say, substantial – resemblances to the concept of community development, which had been *en vogue* in the 1950s, when over 60 non-industrialized countries hosted programs.¹⁸⁶ But community development, which was more about (allegedly) bottom-up political structures and claimed to tackle poverty, included no emphasis on agriculture, food, smallholders and also economic growth.¹⁸⁷ In particular, it had no emphasis on modernizing smallholders' food production in theory or practice. Thus, it was technically and socially different, another concept than the small peasant approach. As one Bangladeshi representative reminded others in 1976, because community development was based on the fiction that villagers had common interests, it worked through existing power structures and thereby bypassed the poor majority, which meant that it mainly benefitted the wealthy.¹⁸⁸

Important development agencies like the FAO, the 'World Bank' and the African Development Bank followed the integrated rural development concept.¹⁸⁹ From 1974 to 1986, 34 percent of the 'World Bank's' rural development projects had the characteristics of IRD projects, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (58 percent) and South Asia (45 percent).¹⁹⁰ However, the FAO criticized other UN organizations for having "had very limited direct involvement in assisting *comprehensive* rural development programmes in the developing countries".¹⁹¹ Oxfam also pursued the IRD approach¹⁹²; many non-industrialized countries subscribed to it; and agribusiness leaders called for an integrated development approach that included credit and education, occasionally also called a "systems approach".¹⁹³ But the question was how much influence international organizations were allowed to have on IRD projects because, with their holistic character, they included "a certain political element", which made control "a rather sensitive issue" for host states.¹⁹⁴

184 FAO, "Review of FAO Field Programmes 1972–73", August 1973, FAO, RG 6, film 537.

185 Kayira 2023, pp. 134–135, 167–199; Kröss 2020, pp. 82–83.

186 Schmale 1993, p. 12; Ruttan 1984, pp. 393–394; Sackley 2011, pp. 490–497; Dunham 1982, p. 139, but Dunham did not substantiate the claim of continuity.

187 See Immerwahr 2015, esp. pp. 63, 79, 89, 115–116, 165.

188 "Report of the Government Consultation on the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia, Bangkok, 22–26 March 1976", FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Rural Development 1972–76. And see Immerwahr 2015, pp. 10–11, 119.

189 See Huyser to Yriart, 17 October 1974, on the annual meeting of the IMF and 'World Bank' Board of Governors, FAO, RG 9, UN 12/1; McNamara 1973, p. 68; English and Mule 1996, p. 197.

190 Donaldson 1991, pp. 167, 174; see also *Learning From World Bank History* 2014, p. 14.

191 B. Mahajan, "Summary of Points Discussed with ILO, WHO, UN, the World Bank & Others on Monitoring and Evaluation of Rural Development", 14 December 1978, FAO, RG 9, UN 10/65 II (emphasis original). See also the rest of this file.

192 Oxfam, Minutes of the Africa Field Committee, 23 May 1974 and "A review of Oxfam's activities in Central & Southern Africa covering the period June 1974 to June 1976", both in Oxfam, Africa Field Committee January 1974–October 1976.

193 Industry-Cooperative Programme, "Dinner Meeting 22 April 1974 on Agro Industry Assistance to the World Food Conference, Summary of Discussion", FAO, RG 9, ICP, Un 43/1 I.

194 Kötter to Umali, 12 February 1975, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Japan 1972–75.

Because of their complexity, IRD projects often involved “minimum community participation”.¹⁹⁵ They developed into a blunt and expensive instrument. A sample of IRD projects financed by the ‘World Bank’ cost US\$1,300 per family.¹⁹⁶ The outcome of such complex projects was highly uncertain.¹⁹⁷ In Britain’s Overseas Development Administration, for example, enthusiasm soon waned, and many other ‘aid donors’ turned away from integrated rural development projects after about 1980.¹⁹⁸

Forces supporting the small peasant approach

Above all, the small peasant approach was adopted by the ‘World Bank’.¹⁹⁹ Measured in terms of money and influence, the USA was the most important national player in international development policies, and U.S. administrations concurred with the new approach. As an official study from 1980 put it:

About the same time the World Food Conference took place, a significant change in the approach to official development assistance was also being effected. Leading officials and experts concluded that neither the ‘trickle-down’ theory nor the ‘green revolution’ had produced the desired results. Both internationally and in the specification of the U.S. New Directions concept, the new approach was directed toward small farmers and the rural poor in the developing countries.²⁰⁰

After having been a point of emphasis in the USAID’s new directions program in January 1972, the approach was mandated in 1973 by legislation governing U.S. foreign ‘aid’.²⁰¹ In 1974, President Nixon stated that “almost 60 percent”

195 For example, see a remark about Mali in Oxfam’s “Annual Report from West Africa, Financial Year 1982/83”, May 1983, Oxfam, Box Annual reports Africa K-R, file West Africa Annual Reports.

196 See Yudelman 1977. The costs for agricultural projects 1975–1977 in general were almost as high (US\$1,200), because they were often very complex and/or involved irrigation, see Hüni 1980b, p. 46.

197 According to one evaluation, not a single sampled IRD project came close to meeting expectations: Hagen 1988, p. 22.

198 See Eicher 1990, p. 514; for Britain, see Timberlake 1985, p. 142. Timberlake’s figures suggest that IRD was never important to Britain’s ODA, unlike Riddell and Robinson 1995, p. 25 note 9.

199 For example, see van de Laar 1976; Payer 1979.

200 Comptroller General 1980, p. 7. See the demands of Bingham et al. (Committee on Foreign Affairs), 11 April 1973, NARA, Nixon papers, WHCF, Subject Files, FO, Box 36, EX FO 3–2, 4/1/73–6/30/73; 93rd Congress of the USA, 1st session, 3 January 1973 (i.e., 1974), “Act amending Foreign Assistance Act of 1971”, NARA, Nixon papers, WHCF, Subject Files, FO, Box 37, EX FO 3–2, 9/12/73–11/11/73; U.S. Embassy in Chile, Aide Memoire about the World Food Conference, 25 January 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/4A, Prep. Com., vol. I.

201 “Mutual Development and Assistance Act of 1973”, Congressional Record, House of Representatives, 26 July 1973, H6748, p. 1443, NARA, CIA database; for 1972, see AID, “Introduction to the FY 1974 Development Assistance Program Presentation to the Congress”, Ford Library, Vice Presidential Papers, Box 136, AID.

of the USAID's assistance would be used to combat hunger and poverty by raising agricultural productivity (but he exaggerated).²⁰² In the same year, the USAID issued guidelines for how to raise peasants from subsistence.²⁰³ To "bridge the gap between available technology and the utilization of techniques by small and medium size farmers" remained an important goal at least until the late 1970s.²⁰⁴ In September 1976, the Senate passed a resolution making every person's right to an adequate diet theoretically a pillar of U.S. development policy.²⁰⁵

In the early 1970s, the policy, which was based on the so-called 'Nixon doctrine' and its assumption of a new multipolar world order, was that non-industrialized countries should decide more of the issues pertaining to their 'development' (i.e., the USA should follow "a more collaborative style of assistance"), their populations should have greater participation, other industrialized nations should provide a growing share of resource transfers, and the USA should channel more of its 'aid' through international organizations.²⁰⁶

The interests of different capital groups in the USA diverged. Exporters of agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and agricultural machinery could benefit from supplying small peasants with them. For grain farmers and grain traders, this was less clear because the small peasant approach aimed at reducing non-industrialized countries' grain imports. But even U.S. farmers might benefit since the envisioned prosperity through a rise of production in the global south could make countries there 'graduate' into importers of more feed grains (for a rising meat and dairy consumption) or processed grain products.

The International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), which advocated for the interests of farmers in industrialized countries, also promoted "in the developing countries, the pursuit of policies for providing a minimum dietary and nutritional level for all the population from national production, rather than for a promotion of exports or substitution of imports".²⁰⁷ In this context, the IFAP referred to small peasants who needed more inputs, including high-yielding seed varieties.²⁰⁸

202 Nixon to U.S. Congress, 24 April 1974, NARA, Nixon papers, WHCF, SF, FO, Box 37, EX FO 3-2, 3/1/74-8/9/74.

203 See AID, 30 October 1974, NARA, RG 16, Box 5977, Gen. Corr., Foreign Relations 2 (AID) 1975.

204 "Recommendations of USDA for Presidential World Hunger Initiative", 27 November 1977, NARA, RG 354, Gen. Corr., Box 3, Circular Letters, B.

205 Khondker 1985, p. 130.

206 Richard Nixon, "A New Foreign Policy for a New World", news article, 10 June 1972, NARA, Nixon papers, NSC, Box 329; see also Comptroller General 1980, p. 7; Bingham et al. (Committee on Foreign Affairs), 11 April 1973, NARA, Nixon papers, WHCF, Subject Files, FO, Box 36, EX FO 3-2, 4/1/73-6/30/73. Quote: "Remarks - John A. Hannah, May 1, 1973", NARA, Nixon papers, FG 11, Box 11, EX FG 11-4, AID, 1973-8/9/74.

207 Gupta to Aziz, "Brief for IFAP Conference", 8 September 1972, FAO, RG 12, Comm. Div., IL 2/155, vol. III.

208 "Excerpts from the Reports of the 20th General Conference of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers", Baden, May 1974, FAO, RG 22, UN-43/3A, with reference to the IFAP's conference in October 1972.

Elites from different backgrounds propagated the new approach. Among them were officials in development agencies in capitalist states²⁰⁹ but also leftists, including critics of mainstream development policies, often working in NGOs. Susan George and Joseph Collins, among others, agreed that raising agricultural production in non-industrialized countries, especially that of the rural poor, and a holistic approach that amounted to IRD formed the only way.²¹⁰ British and international NGOs typically had the same view.²¹¹ Many NGOs accepted “assumptions and ideologies” as prevailing in the FAO.²¹² In a general sense, important advocates of the non-industrialized countries, such as the representatives at the Bandung conference in 1955 and the authors of calls for a New International Economic Order in 1974, also supported foreign investment, foreign ‘aid’, trade expansion and integration into the capitalist world economy for their countries.²¹³

Also for one Marxist historian from the GDR, to facilitate social progress, it was necessary “to integrate [African] agriculture more strongly into goods-money relationships”.²¹⁴ In the same spirit, representatives of socialist industrialized countries in international fora stressed the need for land reform – but as a precondition for what they considered a more rational and modern use of technology, genetics and machinery.²¹⁵ At the World Food Conference, Cuba co-sponsored the proposal for establishing the International Fund for Agricultural Development.²¹⁶ This (though not unanimous) leftist support should not be a surprise, for many Marxists thought that rural capital accumulation was a sorely needed and historically necessary step.

The world food crisis as a catalyst and the World Food Conference

Not all of the ideas and approaches that came to dominate the scene in the early 1970s were new. Declarations that the point of ‘development’ was to fight poverty are known from the late 1940s²¹⁷ and even the interwar period.²¹⁸ West German ‘aid’

209 For Switzerland in 1976, see Hüni 1980a, p. 147; for West Germany, see Heimpel and Schulz 1991, pp. 488, 490.

210 See Almeida et al. 1975b, pp. 122–125; see also Collins and Moore Lappé 1980, p. 34.

211 Donald Tweddle, Chairman, to members of the UK Standing Commission on Development Decade 2, 2 August 1974, Oxfam, Elizabeth Stamp’s files, World Grain Shortage, 2; Stamp to Brissenden, 29 January 1975, FAO, RG 15, Europ. Reg. Office, IL 8/30, vol. 2; Joint statement by NGOs, “National and international programmes of action”, n.d., FAO, RG 22, WFC Docs/Docs of the Preparatory Committee, fourth folder.

212 Crewe and Harrison 1998, p. 6.

213 Rist 2008, pp. 83, 85, 149; Tetzlaff 1981, pp. 28–32. For a diplomatic history of the demands for a New International Economic Order, see Kreienbom 2022. In general, see Gilman 2015; Franczak 2022.

214 Büttner 1985, p. 34.

215 See the remarks of the Soviet and Cuban representatives in preparation of the World Food Conference. UN Press Section, Office of Public Information, Press Release EC/2579, 12 February 1974, and Adel Beshai, “An edited resumé of the points made by all delegates at the 2nd PrepCom”, April 1974, FAO, RG 22, 4A.

216 See FAO, RG 22/WFC – Docs. of the Committees, Committee 2.

217 Staples 2006, pp. 22–104.

218 Frey et al. 2014, pp. 5–7.

workers called on their agencies to put this into effect in 1971.²¹⁹ To pull small peasants into market relations and have them use high-yielding seeds, fertilizers and pesticides were also no entirely new ideas.²²⁰ (But in fact, this was not a – or the – major purpose of the ‘green revolution’ since the 1940s, as has been proposed).²²¹ And NGOs, especially religious-affiliated NGOs, had urged the USAID in the mid-1960s to shift the orientation of its projects toward peasants.²²² Some thought that IRD was on the aid agenda of the decade from the start of the 1970s.²²³

Then came the world food crisis. It became the catalyst for the turn to the new approach to combat world hunger through the small peasant approach. The FAO’s Director-General Addeke Boerma was quoted as saying, “it would be a blessing in disguise if the precarious world food situation of 1973 would lead to the longer term measures that are required to ensure that such a situation can never arise again”.²²⁴ Advocates of the new approach in FAO saw the World Food Conference in 1974 as a chance to turn available analyses into policies and get them adopted. In the fall of 1973, “Mr. Boerma stated that FAO would regard the special conference as a unique opportunity for a synthesis of all factors affecting the world food problem and for the launching of an integrated attack”. That would require the conference documents “to highlight poverty as the root cause of hunger and malnutrition” and to get participating countries to provide more resources, instead of producing a “purely verbal universe”.²²⁵ One year later, directly after the World Food Conference, Boerma, speaking about how the crisis was a catalyst, said:

Although the world food situation has got worse in the last two years, fundamentally speaking the world food problem has not greatly changed. What has changed is the way in which governments now seem to be prepared to cooperate in tackling it.²²⁶

From the FAO’s perspective, the crisis reminded the public of the “profound and persistent problem” of *chronic* starvation.²²⁷ Looking back in the draft of an

219 “Grundsätze und Kriterien zur Beurteilung von Projekten: Empfehlung der Mitarbeiterkonferenz des DED 1971”, in: Lefringhausen et al. 1973, p. 150.

220 FAO/ECA Meeting on Government [. . .], May 1964, draft, PA AA IIIA2/127; “Report of the Special Sub-Commission on the FAO Fertilizer Programme”, 20 June 1970, AfZ, NL Umbricht, FAO, Second World Food Congress, June 1970; FAO Investment Centre, 17 April 1970, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files II, FAO/IBRD II.

221 This contradicts McDonald 2017, p. 155.

222 Church World Service, “Voluntary Agencies, Food and Development Assistance” (ca. July 1974), FAO, RG 12, UN-43, 4A PrepCom, vol. I.

223 “Improving rural institutions during the 1970’s – Follow-up on the I.W.P.-Rural Institutions Division”, 20 March 1970, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files I, IWP.

224 Quoted in Robert Tetro, “World Food Situation – some FAO perspectives”, October 1973, FAO, RG 15 Reg. Files, FA 6.7, Tetro 1973.

225 “Note for record”, no date, FAO, RG 15 LUNO Reg. Files, WFC-5; quote also in Draft “Proposal for Special World Food Conference under United Nations Auspices” (Walton), 31 October 1973, FAO, RG 22/2. Last quote: DJW/jkp, “Pre-planning group for Special World Food Conference”, 17 October 1973, FAO, RG 15, LUNO, WFC-5.

226 Boerma’s opening statement at an FAO Council meeting, 18 November 1974, FAO, RG 7, reel 518.

227 Food and nutrition strategies 1976, p. 8.

address to West German journalists in 1978, an FAO functionary said: “In our whole thinking and planning for world food security the world food crisis of 1972 to 1974 was a decisive occurrence”,²²⁸

The UN World Food Conference in Rome from 5 to 16 November 1974 marked the breakthrough of the small peasant approach. Representatives of 133 states, 18 UN organizations, 33 intergovernmental organizations, 161 NGOs and 69 transnational companies attended, and 400 journalists covered it.²²⁹ As its name said, it conceptualized the world hunger problem as a food problem. Despite many calls,²³⁰ the conference did not adopt substantial emergency measures such as massive food aid,²³¹ fertilizer aid and large international food reserves to stabilize prices.²³² Nor were there changes in the international system of trade. Industrialized capitalist states blocked these and similar moves. (When Pope Paul VI called on the conference for to recognize sufficient food as a human right, Earl Butz commented angrily, but unofficially, “He no maka da rules”).²³³ Conferees did agree to the goal of raising food aid back to 10 million tons annually, but it was not met until the early 1980s and still often missed in the 1990s and 2000s. They also agreed on an international emergency food reserve of 500,000 tons, which needed years to materialize. Instead, the conference enshrined the idea that the solution to hunger in non-industrialized countries was for their small producers to grow staples more productively; to do that, they needed better inputs such as high-yielding varieties of seeds, fertilizer, pesticides and irrigation as well as marketing facilities, agricultural extension and services; and, so, investment – public and private, nationally and internationally – in staple food production had to rise.²³⁴ “Support for the small

228 “World Food Security, presentation by Mrs. A. Binder to German journalists 31 May”, 23 May 1978, FAO, RG 12, ES, FA 13/1.

229 See Gerlach 2002a (especially p. 51). For recent general treatments of the conference, see Jachertz 2015, especially pp. 432–435; Wieters 2017, pp. 247–256; Shaw 2007, pp. 121–149; Franczak 2022, pp. 27–33. With special emphasis on the meetings of the Preparatory Committee, see Weiss and Jordan 1976. For the main points of the plenum discussion, see Biswas and Biswas 1975, pp. 20–27; for informal discussions, see Vicker 1975, pp. 97–123; for press coverage in the USA, see *Give Us* 1975, pp. 279–321.

230 For an appeal by the 32 ‘Most Severely Affected Countries’, see *PAN*, no. 9, 14 November 1974, p. 1.

231 For the background to President Ford’s decision not to announce a specific target figure of higher U.S. food aid during the conference, though several Congressmen pressured Secretary of Agriculture Butz, the head of the U.S. delegation, to do so, see Ford Library, Presidential Handwriting Files, documents 5–9 November 1974. Donald Rumsfeld, chief of White House staff, spearheaded the resistance to any increase.

232 Even Carroll Brunthaver, a consultant for the Brookings Institution, proposed a reserve of ten million tons. Perhaps his motivation was remorse, for he had been an architect of the U.S.–Soviet grain deal that had co-triggered the world food crisis. See his draft study, “Food Security – An Historical Approach” with cover letter of 19 July 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5846, Food, July–August 1974.

233 Quoted in Vicker 1975, p. 101. In 1976, Butz was sacked because of a racism scandal.

234 In an official preparatory document, the conference staff had called for increasing annual investment in agriculture in non-industrialized countries from US\$8–10 billion to \$16–18 billion, of which \$5–6 billion was to come from external sources. McLin 1976, p. 9. See also “Declaration of the Rome Forum on World Food Problems”, early November 1974, FAO, RG

farmer” would be the “highest priority for the years to come”, an FAO official concluded.²³⁵

The conference decided to establish three international organizations to facilitate these efforts: the World Food Council (1975–1996), a small body to monitor the situation and advise food policies, the Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment (1975–1977) to promote resource flows, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (1977–present) to support poor agricultural producers through projects and ‘modern’ inputs, an organization funded in part with oil revenues from West Asian countries.²³⁶ The conference also endorsed a number of new and reorganized units of the FAO.²³⁷

Though industrialized capitalist nations prevented adopting emergency measures, it would be an oversimplification to say that the Global North imposed this focus on the conference all alone. For it was not only U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and West German Chancellor Willy Brandt who had proposed such a conference in the fall of 1973 but also Algeria’s President Houari Boumedienne on behalf of the Non-Aligned Nations; Sayed Marei, an Egyptian, chaired it; Sartaj Aziz, a Pakistani FAO functionary, masterminded it from the background²³⁸; and representatives and scholars from non-industrialized countries were very active in formulating the policies and measures that *were* adopted, or welcomed them. (Some features of what became the IFAD were proposed by Sri Lanka, Mexico, Bangladesh, Sierra Leone and other African countries.²³⁹) Aziz was quoted as saying in 1974: “Yes, the question of the small, traditional farmer and how he is to be locked into the development process, is a central one for LDC’s [least developed countries]”.²⁴⁰ People inside the FAO saw the World Food Conference as an opportunity to muster support for some issues and long-standing plans, although the FAO was officially not in charge of the event, which created some bodies competing with it for decades.²⁴¹

22/WFC Docs. – E/Conf. 6.5/Series. For the level of food aid in the 1990s and 2000s, see Hopkins 2009, p. 81.

235 Huyser to Boerma, “Follow-Up of the World Food Conference”, 25 November 1974, FAO, RG 9, Misc., DDC.

236 This paragraph sums up the arguments in Gerlach 2002a, especially pp. 67–77; see also Gerlach 2015, pp. 930–931. For the IFAD and World Food Council in general, see also Talbot 1990 and Talbot 1994; McEldowney 1979; *Feeding the World’s Population* 1984, pp. 17–45; for the activities of the World Food Council, see Shaw 2007, pp. 167–221. World Food Council documents are in the FAO Library; see also the file FAO, RG 12-UN 44/1 WFC Follow up, vol. III.

237 Among these were the International Undertaking on World Food Security, the Committee on World Food Security (still active), the Global Information and Early Warning System, and the FAO Commission on Fertilizers. See Phillips 1981, p. 75.

238 See Gerlach 2002a. For Marei proposing something like IFAD, see Umali to Boerma, 10 April 1974, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, DG (c) ESCAP 1972–75.

239 Preparatory Committee for the World Food Conference, draft of provisional agenda for third meeting, 30 July 1974, FAO, RG 22/4A.

240 Jerome Fried, “World Food Conference: Issues and Preparation for Conference”, 17 January 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5848, Food 2, January–May 1974, 1. But Aziz was unusual in that he cited the People’s Republic of China as a prime example of how to do this.

241 See Weiss and Jordan 1976, p. 79. Each unit within the FAO contributed to the introductory documents (UN World Food Conference 1974a and b) and to the planning with what they had in the

The myth of 100 million families

Hunger was tied to poverty, and poverty was often said to affect 700–800 million people, or 100 million families, living in the countryside and locked into misery because of their low and stagnant productivity. In the early 1970s, this was one-fifth of the planet's population. The problem and the scheme to solve it were global. The theme of the 100 million families was especially cultivated by 'World Bank' president McNamara. In his well-known address to the bank's Board of Governors in Nairobi in September 1973, he said that nearly 800 million people in 100 million or more smallholder families lived in "absolute poverty", earning on average less than US\$30 per day, leading lives characterized by hunger and malnutrition, high child mortality, low life expectancy and illiteracy, but agricultural modernization would raise their incomes.²⁴² Rainer Tetzlaff called the theme of the 800 million McNamara's "propagandistically usable trademark for the third world's need for help".²⁴³ In 1978 and 1979, the 'World Bank' still put the number of those living in absolute poverty at 800 million.²⁴⁴ Eight-hundred million was a large part of the total rural population of "developing market economies", which, according to an FAO functionary, was 1.237 billion in 1970 and 1.361 billion in 1975.²⁴⁵ In 1977, the 'World Bank' estimated that 650 million people lived on an annual income of no more than US\$50.²⁴⁶ One important official spoke of "50 million small farmers", that is, farming families, owning 58 million hectares of land, in South Asia alone.²⁴⁷

The accuracy of these data was contested. McNamara used them freely; in 1972, he spoke of 900 million people earning less than US\$100 per year.²⁴⁸ "Mr. McNamara's estimates of 700 million in absolute poverty and of over 100 million small farmer families are meaningful only so far as they indicate that the problem is large", read one internal FAO document.²⁴⁹ Another called it "pure guesswork".²⁵⁰ The former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman spoke of "perhaps the

drawer; see the records in FAO, RG 22 and RG 12/UN-43. This was explicitly stated in Jasiorowski to Boerma, 5 October 1973, FAO, RG 22, UN-43, 2B Divisional Contributions from FAO.

242 Address to the Board of Governors, Nairobi, 24 September 1973, in: *McNamara Years* 1981, pp. 239, 242, 247, 249. See also Shapley 1993, pp. 510–514; Twele 1995, pp. 91–98; Matzke 1974, pp. 86–87; Senghaas 1980, pp. 196–197. A draft of the speech circulated several days before: Weitz to Jackson, 21 September 1973, FAO, RG 15, LUNO FA 4/1.

243 Tetzlaff 1981, p. 31.

244 Frank 1981a, p. 22; "Report of the Joint Ministerial Committee of the Board of Governors of the Bank and the Fund on the Transfer of Real Resources to Developing Countries (July 1978–June 1979)", FAO, RG 9, DDC, UN 12/1, vol. IX (using 'World Bank' data).

245 "First draft", 3 April 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 4, FAO Contributions, Abercrombie.

246 UN World Food Council, Executive Director, "Eradicating Hunger and Malnutrition", WFC/40, 31 March 1977, p. 13, FAO Library.

247 Address by Abdelmuhin Al-Sudeary, Chairman, Preparatory Committee for the IFAD, 26 May 1977, FAO, RG 9, BK 51/1.

248 Address to the Board of Governors, Washington, 25 September 1972, in: *McNamara Years* 1981, p. 218.

249 "Boerma/McNamara Round Table: Draft Note for Preparation of Brief on Rural Development" (ca. 1973), FAO, RG 9, Subject Files III, FAO/IBRD Round Table.

250 Bishop and de Brichambaut to Yriart, 8 November 1973, FAO, RG 9/V (Misc.), Preparation for the Round Table.

world's Number One problem: lack of food and low farm income among a billion or more people".²⁵¹

The substance of McNamara's line was also challenged. "The greatest fallacy in Mr. McNamara's presentation [in Nairobi] was to identify implicitly the rural poverty problem with the small farmer problem", leaving out landless laborers, nomads and other groups, wrote Solon Barraclough.²⁵² McNamara addressed such criticism in his address to the Board of Governors in September 1974, in which he spoke of 700 million poor people in the families of smallholders, part-time smallholder cultivators and landless workers.²⁵³ (But in 1975, he returned to 700 million smallholders, plus 200 million urbanites, as the number of absolute poor.)²⁵⁴ A 'World Bank' document from the late 1970s specified that there were 750 million people living on over 80 million smallholdings of less than 2 hectares worldwide. In addition, "tenants, sharecroppers and squatters, who represent another 30 million or more families, are often less well-off".²⁵⁵

The discourse of the 800 million people, or 100 million families, was picked up by others. In a statement to the World Food Conference in 1974, a number of NGOs emphasized that 800 million poor rural people had so far received little attention and needed "improved tools, better methods of acquiring and maintaining their plots of land, selected seeds and crop varieties".²⁵⁶ This shows how close the outlooks of voluntary agencies and the 'World Bank' were.²⁵⁷ The figure of 800 million also played a role at the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in 1979.²⁵⁸

The myth of the 100 million families is still alive, guiding important 'development' actors like the Gates Foundation. In 2007, its manager Sylvia Mathews Burwell spoke of "our effort to help one hundred million small peasants and their families to overcome poverty".²⁵⁹ A year later, the executive director of the Syngenta Foundation even referred to at least 400 million small peasant families, almost one-third of the world's population, who needed more productivity to raise their incomes.²⁶⁰ And in their 2017 campaign for a so-called Microcredit

251 Freeman to Deserti, 21 June 1974, NARA, Nixon papers, FO, Box 51, GEN FO 4-3, 5/1-8/9/74.

252 Barraclough to Yriart, 5 December 1973, FAO, RG 9/V Misc., Round Table Boerma/McNamara.

253 Speech to the Board of Governors, 30 September 1974, in: *The McNamara Years* 1981, p. 269; Feder 1976, p. 541, note 10. Perhaps this was the result of a 'World Bank' meeting in Washington in mid-January 1974 "to review data available concerning small (or poor) farmers and rural poverty". Bishop and de Brichambaut to Ganzin, 2 January 1974, FAO, RG 9, V (Misc.), Round Table Boerma/McNamara.

254 Speech to the Board of Governors, 1 September 1975, in: *The McNamara Years* 1981, pp. 309-310, 315.

255 Document in FAO, RG 9, DDC, UN 12/1, vol. IX.

256 Statement by NGOs, "National and international programmes of action", 2 November 1974, FAO, RG 22, WFC Documents/Documents of the Preparatory Committee, fourth folder.

257 However, many NGOs criticized the World Food Conference for reaching no consensus, including on such goals as commodity agreements and land reform: van Rooy 1997, pp. 93-94, 98; Page 1984, pp. 335, 347.

258 Umali 1979, p. 161.

259 "Gates" 2017. Mathews Burwell later became the U.S. Secretary of Health.

260 Ferroni 2008, p. 34.

Summit, the Freedom from Hunger and Microcredit movements committed themselves “to help 100 million families lift themselves out of extreme poverty”.²⁶¹ The goal of a similar event in February 1997 was also to reach “100 million poor households by the year 2005”; in 2006, it was to move 100 million families out of poverty and reach in total 175 million families with 875 million members.²⁶² The theme of 100 million families embodies persistent propaganda and unchanging policies, and it also reflects the unaltered magnitude of the world’s hunger problem.

A program to defend ‘peace’ . . . and capitalism

The small peasant and basic needs approaches had one important background in the Cold War or, more accurately, the struggle between the capitalist and socialist systems. Around the world, from Nicaragua and Colombia to Angola, Mozambique, India and Vietnam, to name only a few, leftist guerrilla movements operated in the countryside in the 1970s, and many were winning. To deprive them of popular support, pro-capitalist strategists looked for ways to reduce social conflict in the countryside and, thus, stabilize capitalism. In relevant documents, one finds many variations on the theme that doing something for the rural poor, for rural ‘development’ and against hunger promoted peace.

It was not by accident that Norman Borlaug, in 1970, and Muhammad Yunus, in 2006, won the Nobel Peace Prize for their activities in this field. Nor is it surprising that Robert McNamara, the ‘World Bank’s’ President in 1968–1981, had previously directed the U.S. war in South Vietnam deploying not only 500,000 troops but also 10,000 USAID officials (more than half of the agency’s total personnel).²⁶³

The USA regarded reducing hunger and helping non-industrialized countries becoming “modern” through ‘development’ as in its interest.²⁶⁴ Poverty alleviation was meant as an anti-revolutionary policy²⁶⁵ and the small farmer approach as a way “to achieve the necessary food production and political stability for accumulation to continue more or less unabated”.²⁶⁶ The new rural middle class that such policies would create would be a bulwark against radical leftism.²⁶⁷ The aim

261 Freedom from Hunger, “Freedom from Hunger and Microcredit Summit Campaign Announce Commitment to the 100 Million campaign”, <https://www.freedomfromhunger.org/freedom-hunger-and-microcredit-summit-campaign-announce-commitment-100-million-campaign> (accessed 18 August 2017).

262 Greeley 1997, p. 83; Bornstein 2005, pp. vi–vii; see also Yunus with Jolis 1998, pp. 321, 323. Yunus stated that he reduced the previously stated target of 200 million to 100 million families in 1997. For 2006, see “Global Microcredit Summit 2006”, www.globalmicrocreditsummit2006.org (accessed 6 May 2019). Dichter 2007, p. 5 writes that the Microcredit Summit campaign claimed in 2006 to be close to actually ‘reaching’ 100 million families.

263 See also Cullather 2010, pp. 159–179; “Remarks – John A. Hannah, May 1, 1973”, NARA, Nixon papers, FG 11, Box 11, EX FG 11–4, AID, 1973–8/9/74.

264 Witness Edwin Martin in: Report on the World Food Conference 1974, p. 17.

265 Gibbon 1992, p. 197 on McNamara.

266 Dunham 1982, pp. 139 (quote), 163.

267 Perelman 1977, p. 146 with reference to Martin Kriesberg (USDA).

was the “creation of a world of stable agriculturalists”.²⁶⁸ But if “development” benefited only large farmers, for example in India, as Prime Minister Indira Gandhi warned was happening, then “the green revolution may not remain green”.²⁶⁹ Doing something against inequality internationally and within poor nations, especially in the countryside, would reduce the pressure of a “seething volcano”.²⁷⁰ If rural development created hundreds of thousands of despairing unemployed, a U.S. expert wrote, it was likely that many of them would “pass over the thresholds that separate acquiescence from protest and protest from social revolution”.²⁷¹ Another, Roy Prosterman, even developed an early warning “Index of Rural Instability” in the 1970s, which predicted that “when numbers of rural landless surpass 40 percent, agrarian revolution will quickly follow”.²⁷²

Samuel Huntington’s earlier ideas on preventing revolution now seemed outdated. He had argued that “[s]ocieties are susceptible to revolution only at particular stages in their development” and that the U.S. military’s free-fire zones in rural South Vietnam that forced people to flee *en masse* to the cities, which he called “forced-draft urbanization and modernization”, undermined the “rural revolutionary movement”.²⁷³ Modernization, as a modified argument went, brought a period of instability that ‘development aid’ would have to address.²⁷⁴ According to some later emerging theories, however, economic growth generated inequality in the long run and increased the vulnerability of certain groups to famine.²⁷⁵

Leading politicians from the USA often emphasized the close relationship between military objectives, economic interests, ‘development aid’, humanitarian aims and capitalist system stabilization, for example, President Nixon.²⁷⁶ He argued: “The prospects for a peaceful world will be greatly enhanced if the two-thirds of humanity who live in these countries see hope for adequate food, shelter, education and employment in peaceful progress rather than revolution”. His successor Carter concurred.²⁷⁷ Blocked pathways to “progress” would breed violence,

268 Sackley 2011, p. 483.

269 Quoted in Israel Shenker, “Green Revolution Has Sharply Increased Grain Yields but May Cause Problems”, *New York Times*, 22 October 1970, FAO, RG 15, LUNO, Reg. Files UN 10/16.

270 D. Umali, “A new approach to the work of FAO in Asia and the Far East” (ca. November 1971), FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Div., PR 12/50, vol. I (RAFE 1971/72).

271 Esman 1978, p. 55.

272 White 2005, p. 177; see Prosterman 1976.

273 Huntington 1968, p. 652.

274 Shannon 1996, p. 6; Tetzlaff 1980, p. 399; Devereux 1993, pp. 121–124.

275 Devereux 1993, pp. 114–128.

276 Nixon’s message to the Congress, “Foreign Assistance for the ‘Seventies’”, 15 September 1970, FAO, RG 15, Reg. Files, PR 15.3, USA 1968–1971; Nixon to the Congress, 31 October 1973, NARA, Nixon, SF, IT Box 7, EX IT 29 IDA 1973–8/9/1974; ditto, 12 July 1973, NARA, Nixon, SNF AG, Box 2, EX AG May–August 1973; ditto, 1 May 1973, Nixon, WHCF, SF, FO, Box 36, EX FO 3–2, 4/1/73–6/30/73; ditto, 24 April 1974, Nixon, WHCF, SF FO Box 37, EX FO 3–2, 3/1/74–[8/9/74]; ditto, 21 April 1971, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5402, Foreign relations 2 (Foreign Assistance Program), Jan–Sept 1971. See also references in Hannah to Kissinger, 20 January 1972, Nixon, WHCF, SF CO Box 35 EX FO 3–2, 1/17/1–6/30/72 (1 of 3).

277 Nixon quoted in “Reform of the U.S. Assistance Program”, January 1972, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5569, Foreign Relations 2. For Carter, see Franczak 2022, p. 1.

which would spill over borders.²⁷⁸ A U.S. National Security Study Memorandum contained such ideas as did Secretary of State Kissinger's speeches, including the one to the UN in which he called for the World Food Conference.²⁷⁹ A former Secretary of Agriculture turned business consultant wrote that famine in the non-industrialized world could threaten "our [U.S.] stability and, in the last extension, our way of life"; so, "something must be done to bring agricultural knowhow to the small cultivators in these countries".²⁸⁰ Eliminating the fear of hunger would foster "peace" and "freedom".²⁸¹

Agricultural 'development' would create political stability and increase U.S. agricultural exports in the long run because it would shift dietary patterns in Asian, African and Latin American countries toward meat and dairy, as had happened in South Korea, Israel, Brazil, Greece and Yugoslavia. A business leader made a similar argument,²⁸² and Chester Bowles, U.S. ambassador to India, advised Henry Kissinger along the same lines to follow a policy of capitalist integration toward India because it would become a good customer of U.S. fertilizer.²⁸³ During the world food crisis, U.S. politicians also invoked the Marshall Plan, which had purportedly saved Europe from starvation and thus political instability (and communism) in the late 1940s.²⁸⁴

The 'World Bank' also sought to prevent political destabilization by overcoming rural backwardness.²⁸⁵ The analyst Robert Ayres called this "defensive modernization" to prevent leftism.²⁸⁶ McNamara stressed that it also served the cause of international peace.²⁸⁷ In a speech that he had given as the U.S. Secretary of Defense (or rather of war) in Montreal in 1966, McNamara said: "Security is development

278 John Hannah, Address at Michigan State University, 14 May 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5848, Food 2, January–May 1974, 2.

279 NSSM 2000, 22 July 1974, first draft, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5848, Food 2, June–July 1974, 2; Kissinger's speech to the UN General Assembly, 24 September 1973, FAO, RG 13, ADG, R. Aubrac files, World Food Conference, vol. III; Kissinger's speech to the OECD, 18 June 1976, Ford Library, Michael Raoul Duval papers, Box 16, Kissinger Speeches (2).

280 Orville Freeman, "The Underdeveloped Nations: Victims – and Victors – of Commodity Price Increases", 30 April 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/5.3, Box 9, Business International I.

281 Statement of Secretary Freeman before the House Committee on Agriculture, 23 February 1966, p. 26 of the document, FAO, RG 12 ES, FA 8/6 I.

282 U. Sorenson and D. Hathaway, "The Competitive Position of U.S. Agriculture", in: *Papers Submitted to the Commission on International Trade and Investment Policy*, July 1971, pp. 828–829, NARA, Nixon, FG 263, Box 1; "Remarks by James Boulware, Agricultural Attaché [. . .], Bangalore, August 23–27, 1971", NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 15, IN India 1971, second file; 94th Congress, 1st session 1975, p. 17; "Remarks by H. A. R. Powell, Chairman, Massey-Ferguson Holdings Limited, London, at Iowa-Des Moines National Bank Business Trend Meeting", 13 December 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 13, Massey-Ferguson III.

283 Bowles to Kissinger, 7 February 1969, NARA, Nixon papers, WHCF, Subject Files, Box 35 [EX] CO 66 India Beginning-7/31/69.

284 Address by Hubert Humphrey in Gardner 1974, p. 15.

285 Tetzlaff 1980, pp. 399, 504.

286 Quoted in Bello 2009, p. 29.

287 McNamara 1973, pp. 15, 53.

and without development there can be no security”.²⁸⁸ Allegedly, it was because of this speech that ‘World Bank’ President Woods had proposed McNamara as his successor.²⁸⁹ Britain’s Minister of Agriculture and the head of the Canadian International Development Agency made essentially the same argument.²⁹⁰ Some capitalist countries took longer to jump on the bandwagon. Since 1982, Japanese government reports about its foreign ‘aid’ included a section on “assistance for peace and stability”.²⁹¹ Pope Paul VI already treated development synonymic to peace in 1967 in his encyclical *Populorum progressio*.²⁹² The Non-Aligned Nations had already stated in 1964 that “the persistence of poverty constitutes a threat to world peace”.²⁹³

More than once, FAO’s Director-General Addeke Boerma warned that the low level of food production in non-industrialized countries would “lead sooner or later to violence and political upheaval” of unprecedented proportions.²⁹⁴ In 1970, he cautioned that a continuation of present policies in non-industrialized countries might result in millions of violent deaths.²⁹⁵ In October 1973, the FAO warned of the possibility that the lack of food would lead to wars.²⁹⁶ The governments of capitalist countries had long backed the FAO’s effort to become a ‘development’ agency because they saw its activities “as those of an instrument of the free world for shielding politically precarious countries against the dangers coming from communism”.²⁹⁷ One FAO functionary told another: “In one Asian country, [. . .] a group of tenant farmers dissatisfied with the Green Revolution’s profit-sharing burned a barnful of landlords to death”; he continued: “And when rural man finds himself frustrated he does often burn landlords, and sometimes go[es] on to overthrow regimes”.²⁹⁸ (In reality at least in India in the 1970s, it was often

288 McNamara speech, 18 May 1966, cited in Spitz 1978, pp. 886–887. Sharma 2017, p. 22, quotes McNamara as saying, “The essence of security means development.” For a similar statement by McNamara in 1968, see Hartmann and Boyce 1983, pp. 280–281.

289 Kraske 1996, p. 160.

290 Speech by Frederick Peart at a *Financial Times* conference on world food supplies, 1 May 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5848, Food 2, June–July 1974, 2; Paul Guérin-Lajoie, “Canada and the World Food Crisis”, 20 October 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 47, CN Canada 1975; speech by Karl Schiller to the UNCTAD, 18 April 1972, in: Lefringhausen and Merz 1973, p. 41.

291 Nuscheler 1990, p. 36.

292 See Rui 2020, p. 94; for the encyclical, see also Stollhof 2019, pp. 141–158.

293 “Programme for Peace and International Cooperation”, final document of the Non-Aligned Nations summit, Cairo, October 1964, in Synopsis 1964, p. 82. Thanks to Vita Riese for pointing me to this document.

294 Boerma speech in Washington in October 1972, quoted in a speech by Howard Cottam, 5 February 1973, FAO, RG 15, Reg. Files IN 7.2. See also Boerma’s keynote address at the conference “The World Food and Energy Crises”, 9 May 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5848, Food 2, January–May 1974, 2.

295 US Embassy The Hague, telegram of 23 (?) June 1970 (fragment), NARA, RG 59, SNF 1970–73, Box 457, AGR 3 FAO 6/1/70. See also Cullather 2010, p. 241.

296 See newspaper articles of 30 October 1973 in FAO, RG 9, Subject Files, II, LUNO 1972–73.

297 Report Rohrbach about the tenth meeting of the FAO Conference, 27 November 1959, BA B116/20179.

298 Keon to Umali, n.d. (ca. September 1972), FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Div., PR 12/50, vol. I.

rather landlords who had rural workers or poor killed.²⁹⁹ Vandana Shiva gathered evidence that an estimated 15,000 people were killed in agrarian struggles in the state of Punjab during six years in the 1980s.³⁰⁰

Food aid was to win over non-industrialized countries for the USA. It is not surprising that the surplus disposal program in 1954's Public Law 480 was dubbed the "Food for Peace Program". In the 1950s, Howard Cottam, who was important behind the scenes as the head of the FAO's Liaison Office to North America in 1969–1974, had held the same view.³⁰¹

Corporate leaders also saw a political necessity of combatting hunger. G. S. Bishop, Chairman of the British food and engineering concern Booker McConnell, stated, "Food is, perhaps, one of the most explosive ingredients in world politics", pointing to the role of hunger in the French and Russian Revolutions and the overthrow of the governments of Ethiopia, Chad and Niger in 1973–1975.³⁰²

Undoubtedly, some people who were involved used arguments of peace building and the stabilization of capitalism without conviction in order to gain support for their other humanitarian or technical goals, but it is equally clear that others genuinely believed that reducing rural poverty was a means to achieve those political objectives.

The crucial role of the state in non-industrialized countries

Industrialized states and international organizations had little ability to shape the agricultural and food sectors of non-industrialized countries directly. Thus, they focused on influencing countries' national policies. In 1975, the British Ministry of Overseas Development put it this way: "The scope for action by donors is clearly limited. It is the attitude and policies of the governments of the developing countries that are decisive". Accordingly, it held that British actors should alleviate poverty by influencing national policies, but not too aggressively.³⁰³ One year earlier, the USAID's guidelines had said: "Development assistance activities normally cannot be expected to solve the problems of developing countries. At best, the development agencies, public or private, can illuminate for developing country governments and groups promising paths toward solutions of the problem".³⁰⁴ The USAID's programs in most countries were too small to have any impact on

299 See Mies 1988, pp. 19–21; Harrison 1980, p. 103; Frankel 1973, p. 136; Siegel 2018, pp. 212–215.

300 Shiva 1991, pp. 12, 19, 183–192.

301 See Cottam's speech "Some long-term aspects of U.S. Food Policy" to an Open Forum of the Secretary of State, 19 September 1973, FAO, RG 15, Reg. Files IN 7.2.

302 G. Bishop, "The World Trend of Supply, Demand and Cost of Food Commodities", draft, 19th Annual CIES Congress of the International Association of Chain Stores, Venice, 26 May 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8 Booker McConnell II.

303 Ministry of Overseas Development, "Memorandum on Poverty Focused Country Programmes", 17 July 1975, in: *World Food Crisis* 1976, pp. 250–251 (quote p. 250).

304 USAID, "Guidelines Governing Funding for Private and Voluntary Organizations in Connection with Development Assistance under the Development Assistance Program" (cover letter of 8 August 1974), FAO, RG 9, GP 2/1 general.

economic policies or infrastructure.³⁰⁵ As the FAO functionary Jyoti Bhattacharjee wrote in 1976, it was “a view shared by most donor governments [. . .] that the food production and consumption policies of the developing country governments should be subject to a fruitful multilateral dialogue”.³⁰⁶

In 1969, the FAO’s Director-General had already stated: “In a world of sovereign states, it is governments rather than international organizations that make the important decisions. Our role is in the first place to help in the formulation of international and national policies that make sense [. . .]”.³⁰⁷ State bureaucracies administered most of the FAO’s activities.³⁰⁸ A contemporary evaluation offered numbers to support the “most striking impression” “that the success or effectiveness of a technical assistance project is directly related to the degree of involvement of the recipient government in the planning and execution of the project”.³⁰⁹ A “particular function of the [FAO/Bankers] Programme was to work with and for national development banks” to spur investment; this replaced an earlier emphasis on commercial banks.³¹⁰ In 1977, the FAO instructed its country representatives to make sure that “all FAO inputs and activities are consonant with the policies, programmes and aspirations of the Government” and to “establish a continuous dialogue” with the appropriate national institutions.³¹¹

Transnational companies, too, wanted to cooperate with national governments, as well as domestic producers and cooperatives and sought to influence national planning.³¹² As the U.S. Agribusiness Council said about its country studies in 1971, “study questions must be directly relevant to and compatible with policies in the host nation”, as well as with U.S. business interests.³¹³ Likewise, Oxfam worked through national structures and in close cooperation with local authorities. “All projects must conform with national government plans”, one of its guidelines read.³¹⁴

305 Nichol森 1979, p. 236.

306 Bhattacharjee to Huyser, 1 July 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. VI.

307 FAO/ICP, Fifth Session of the General Committee, 20 and 21 March 1969, statement by Boerma, AfZ, FAO Meetings, November 1967–1972.

308 Letter by Reeves (FAO), “Suggested Amendment”, 18 June 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/2B Divisional Contributions – Gen.

309 “Medium and long-term development assistance needs of the Least Developed Countries”, “Draft Outline of a Study”, June 1974, FAO, RG 9, Misc., DDDE.

310 Fernando de Mèredieu, “FAO/Bankers Programme Executive Committee Meeting – 5–6 October 1978”, 29 November 1978, FAO, RG 9, DDD, BK 51/1.

311 Draft letter by Director-General to FAO Country Representatives, 1977, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 5, FAO Representatives.

312 W. Simons, “Implementing World Food Conference Decisions – A Role for Agro-Industry” (March or April 1975), FAO, RG 9, ICP, UN 43–1 II; “Consultation with Agro-Industrial Leaders, 9–11 September 1974”, AfZ, World Food Conference 1974.

313 “The Agribusiness Council and Its Work”, n.d., NARA, Nixon papers, FO Box 50, GEN FO 4–3, Int. Investments 1971–72, file I.

314 Oxfam, Field Committee for Asia, “Guide to Policy in Asia”, July 1972, Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976; see also West Africa Annual Report 1975, Oxfam, Box Africa Field Committee, January 1974–October 1976.

An IBRD representative underlined the importance of “National Food Plans”, which should be influenced by external actors. The governments of affected countries, including Bangladesh and India, agreed if “such plans would be prepared and submitted under the responsibility of their respective governments”.³¹⁵ The FAO also saw for itself a “major role in assisting Member Countries in the planning and implementation of integrated rural development programmes”.³¹⁶ But such a reliance on national governments could alienate NGOs, as became clear when several of them rejected an observer’s status at WCARRD in 1979.³¹⁷

In the U.S. administration, the position was influential that the governments of non-industrialized countries “must assume increased responsibility for determining their own policies and selecting their own priorities”.³¹⁸ According to a top-level document, “The developing countries themselves must play a greater part in the formulation of development plans, so that their own knowledge of the need will be applied, and their own energies mobilized for the task”.³¹⁹ And as a bill before Congress in 1973 formulated it: “Development planning must be the responsibility of each sovereign country. United States assistance should be administered in a collaborative style to support the development goals chosen by each country receiving assistance”. Poverty-oriented projects had the “highest priority”.³²⁰ The U.S. delegation to the Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment (CGFPI) emphasized that the group should try to influence the national policies of “vulnerable countries”.³²¹ One U.S. entrepreneur was told that he could do whatever he liked in “East Bengal” “as long as he respected the wishes of the local authorities”.³²²

To a certain extent, the winds shifted in the late 1970s with the advent of the neoliberal agenda that rejected state intervention. The USA and Japan expressed reservations against the phrasing of the draft of the final declaration of the WCARRD in 1979 that said that foreign investments in agricultural development

315 “Consultative Group on Food Policy and Investment in Developing Countries, Report of the Second Meeting, February 10–12, 1976”, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. V; second quote: Bhattacharjee, “Note for the Files: Discussion with Mr. Mensah on CGFPI Programme for the Preparation of National Food Plans”, 5 October 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. VI.

316 “Elements of an FAO-wide Approach to Integrated Rural Development”, draft, 10 March 1975, FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. and Services Div., RU 1/7.

317 See RG 12, WCARRD, Box 29, RU 7/46.30, vol. V.

318 West to Paarlberg, 20 November 1970, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5402, Foreign Relations 2 (Foreign Assistance Program), Jan–Sept 20, 1971.

319 Draft of Nixon’s review of US foreign policy, 8 February 1970 (top secret/sensitive), NARA, Nixon papers, NSC, Box 325, The President’s Annual Review of US Foreign Policy, 1970.

320 “Mutual Development and Assistance Act of 1973”, Congressional Record, House of Representatives, 26 July 1973, H6748, p. 1443, NARA, CIA database. For the foreign aid bill, see Meyerowitz 2021, pp. 38–42.

321 “Abbreviated Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Consultative Group for Food Policy and Investment, July 21–23, 1975”, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. III.

322 Memo for the Files, Saunders, 24 January 1972, NARA, Nixon papers, WHCF, CO Box 58, [EX] CO 115 Pakistan, 1/1/71, file 1 of 3. This was at a time when the USA had not officially recognized Bangladesh.

in non-industrialized countries should accord with their development plans.³²³ As one scholar stated: “The history of state intervention in rural development in Africa has been little short of disastrous”.³²⁴ Another, who stated in 1980 that a ‘push from above’ was necessary to get small agriculturalists out of the “peasant mode” of production, changed his mind a few years later.³²⁵ Nevertheless, external pressure for deregulation and ‘structural adjustment’ still focused on influencing national governments.³²⁶ So far, the mechanisms had not changed much. Development agencies’ emphasis on (good) governance in the 1990s meant again that their policies were state focused. *The Political Economy of Development*, a handbook published in 1986 and reprinted in 2013, still recommended drawing up national development plans, although with some qualifications.³²⁷

It is no accident that the word “planning” has occurred several times in this subsection. If capital accumulation, the core aim on the way to industrialization, did not start automatically, then a state had to engage in economic planning to direct the allocation of resources, maximize savings, correct market prices and channel foreign investments in the desired direction (see also Chapter 12).³²⁸ According to one author, central economic planning had become widespread in East and South Asia after the early 1950s, in Africa and Arab countries a bit later, and in Latin America after 1961 through the U.S. organized ‘Alliance for Progress’.³²⁹ Others argue that countries inherited economic planning from the colonial state, as was the case in Nigeria.³³⁰ France devised the first ten-year development plan for its colonies in 1948.³³¹

It was not only countries professing to socialism that had five-year development plans; Kenya’s pro-capitalist government did too as did the Imperial Ethiopian Government since 1957.³³² In Tanzania, even most villages had their own plans, set up by civil servants; one reportedly had a four-year plan that was 46 pages long.³³³ NGOs followed suit. The office of the Catholic NGO Caritas in Tabora, Tanzania, had a three-year development plan of its own for 1976–1979.³³⁴ The Council of Indonesian Churches advised the religious units organized under its umbrella to develop their own five-year development plans.³³⁵ The Grameen Bank equally emphasizes planning and had a five-year-plan in the 1990s.³³⁶

323 “Analysis of Changes in the Draft Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action as reflected in the Final Report”, 27 July 1979, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., Subject Files, Follow-up to Programme of Action.

324 Lawrence 1986b, p. 7.

325 Hyden 1980, p. 204; cf. Hyden 1983.

326 Please 1994 is an illustration.

327 Faaland and Parkinson 2013, pp. 45–80.

328 Escobar 1995, pp. 74, 85–89.

329 J. Cairncross, “Agricultural Planning in the Developing Countries” with cover letter of 22 September 1965, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, EC 4/1; see also Escobar 1995, p. 40.

330 Van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 106; Eckert 2008 offers a broader view.

331 Büttner 1985, p. 173; Harding et al. 1981, p. 99.

332 “Report on East Africa”, March 1981, Oxfam, Box Annual Reports Africa K-R, Kenya; Asefa 1995, p. 575.

333 See Boesen et al. 1977, p. 70; Coulson 2013, p. 291.

334 Jennings 2008, p. 86.

335 Rui 2020, p. 187.

336 Holcombe 1995, p. 147.

Industrial countries and international bodies promoted planning. The Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI), an international aid consortium, urged Indonesia to “start long-term development planning as soon as possible” (but received its first five-year development plan too late to comment on it.³³⁷ And during a 1980 meeting of the Bangladesh Aid Group, a U.S. representative commended Bangladesh’s government on its new two-year development budget but advised it to author five-year plans.³³⁸

In 1971, the FAO decided to make “agricultural development planning” a main point of focus.³³⁹ The reason seems to have been its realization that bringing about the ‘green revolution’ required more planning than was previously thought: “It is therefore important that the UN and the agencies be prepared to assist governments in strengthening their overall and sectorial planning [. . .]”.³⁴⁰ The number of “planning teams” that the FAO sent to non-industrialized countries began to rise in the early 1970s.³⁴¹ FAO staff had their own experiences of planning. Sartaj Aziz, director of the FAO’s Commodities and Trade Division and designer of the World Food Conference in 1974, had previously worked ten years (1961–1971) for his country’s National Planning Commission. He later held important positions in the World Food Council and IFAD and was then Pakistan’s Minister of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs and its National Security Advisor in 2013–2015.³⁴² Before Mahbub ul Haq became an important figure in the ‘World Bank’ who was influential in developing the small peasant approach and the Human Development Index, he had also been an economist with Pakistan’s Planning Commission (1957–1970).³⁴³ The same was the case with Nurul Islam, who was first on Pakistan’s and then Bangladesh’s Planning Commission and later had some impact when working at FAO and IFPRI.³⁴⁴ Concepts did not travel on a one-way street; influences were mutual. As one example, Pakistan’s Planning Commission had initially taken up ideas by the Harvard Advisory Mission to Pakistan, sponsored by the U.S. government.³⁴⁵ And late colonial (and later) planning was in part based on work from the 1950s of the Saint Lucia-born economist W. Arthur Lewis, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1979.³⁴⁶

337 Posthumus 1971, pp. 45–46 (quote p. 46).

338 IBRD, Bangladesh Aid Group, Chairman’s Report of Proceedings, 12–13 May 1980, p. 15 of the document, AfZ, NL Umbricht, Bangladesh Aid Group Further Meetings, 1974–1980.

339 “Official Report of the US Delegation to the Sixteenth Session of the FAO Conference, Rome, Italy, November 6–25, 1971”, NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73, Box 460, 11/23/71.

340 “ACC Functional Group on the ‘Green Revolution’”, 1 March 1971, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files, III, UN-Green Revolution.

341 “Report of the 26th Session of the Programme Committee (14–25 October 1975)”, FAO, RG 7, reel 517.

342 Aziz 1979, p. v. See also Dil 2000 (a volume containing many of Aziz’s writings); interview with Sartaj Aziz, 29 August 2001, United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007; *Who is Who* 1975, p. 32.

343 Baru 1998, p. 2275; Shapley 1993, pp. 508–509. Ul Haq also served as Pakistan’s Minister of Finance (and of Planning) in the 1980s. He was criticized for working with the dictator Zia ul-Haq and defending his Islamization policy: Malik 1997, p. 159.

344 See Islam 2005, esp. pp. 18–19, 23–82, 135–160, 176, 191–202.

345 See interview with Just Faaland, 12 September 2001, pp. 44–45 and interview with Sartaj Aziz, 29 August 2001, pp. 25–26, United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007.

346 See Eckert 2009; Harriss 2005, pp. 19–20, also about 1960s criticism of development planning.

Many ‘development aid’ institutions were doing their own planning. The West German Ministry for Economic Cooperation introduced five-year plans for itself in 1973, pointing to similar tendencies in the ‘World Bank’ and similar authorities in Australia, Canada, the USA, France and Great Britain.³⁴⁷ For, beginning in 1969, the ‘World Bank’ also had five-year plans for its activities.³⁴⁸

The ‘World Bank’ also tried to influence governments’ national development plans.³⁴⁹ Despite its reputation for opposing government intervention in the economy, it recommended: “The Bank should encourage and, where requested, assist technically and financially those governments wishing to devise comprehensive rural development plans”.³⁵⁰ A former UN functionary from Nigeria later recalled: “The World Bank has also insisted on, and assisted in, development plans”.³⁵¹ ‘The Bank’ also encouraged building planning institutions, though the names changed of what they required governments to provide: first, five-year development plans; then, “Policy Framework Papers”; and then, “Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers”.³⁵² In around 1980, however, critics began to object to the Bank’s encouragement of state planning and its funding of collective agriculture.³⁵³

Industry representatives shared this predilection to help economic planning.³⁵⁴ Meeting in Toronto in 1974 to prepare for the World Food Conference, over 100 representatives of big business “agreed unanimously that agricultural planning deserved the highest priority in developing countries and required the combined engagement of government, the farmer and industry”.³⁵⁵ At least in the 1970s, important actors had little doubt that economic development planning was a good thing and indeed necessary.

Criticism of the focus on small peasants and the rural poor

Though pushed to the background for some time, there were critics of the focus on small peasants. Ermond Hartmans, a Dutch-born U.S. agronomist and a division chief in the FAO, stated in 1973 that only “minimum levels of basic resources in terms of land, capital, technologies and management” permitted “effective” modern production. Illiterate peasants from poor countries could neither comprehend politics nor follow scientific advice; so, programs to benefit them were pointless.³⁵⁶ The official assessment paper of the World Food Conference expressed this thought

347 Hein 2006, p. 204.

348 According to Twele 1995, p. 87.

349 Tetzlaff 1980, pp. 215–216.

350 Unknown ‘World Bank’ document, no date (late 1970s), FAO, RG 15, LUNO, FA 4/1, p. xi of the document; World Bank 1979. See also Escobar 1995, pp. 85–89.

351 Interview with Adebajo Adedeji, 6 March 2001, p. 33, United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007.

352 Islam 2005, pp. 412 (quotes), 417, 419.

353 Ayres 1983, p. 12.

354 US Embassy Rome to State Department, airgram, 28 January 1972, NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73, Box 460, 12/1/71 (on Nestlé consultant E. Bignami).

355 “Report of the Consultation with Agro-Industrial Leaders in Preparation for the UN World Food Conference Organized by the Industry Cooperative Programme, 10–11 September 1974, Toronto, Canada”, n.d., FAO, RG 12, UN 43/2. B ICP General.

356 Hartmans’ “Office Memorandum” to Boerma, 10 October 1973, FAO, RG 22/2.

(though contradictorily): “[T]here really is no effective way to solve the problem of the small farmers until he ceases to be a small farmer by joining a bigger and more viable unit”, namely, cooperatives.³⁵⁷ Against such rhetoric, some analysts have argued, too simplistically, that the project to alleviate hunger sought “the peasants’ elimination as a cultural, social and producing group”.³⁵⁸ Clinging to extremely small pieces of land, according to some observers, “subsistence” farmers shied away from the risks that new production methods necessitated, and rightly so.³⁵⁹ Scholars also voiced objections to the “new orthodoxy” that “the small farm could be an efficient and equitable basis for development”, pointing to “diseconomies of small scale”.³⁶⁰

Critics presented two arguments against the viability of micro-farms. First, according to agro-economists, the income from such holdings was often too small for the owner to afford a draught animal (let alone a tractor). However, draught animals or tractors were not essential in many planners’ understanding of the small peasant approach, unlike ‘modern’ seeds and fertilizers. Secondly, and more importantly, the step toward using new inputs required an initial investment for which minifundists did not have enough savings, sufficient profits to generate such savings, or adequate collateral to qualify for credit.

But some in the FAO in November 1973 saw a “danger in ‘going back’ from advanced technology to more primitive methods”. Director-General Boerma replied that energy scarcity was not a passing phenomenon and farming needed less energy-intensive methods. Eric Ojala, the head of the FAO’s Economic and Social Policy Department, assisted in saying that the small farmer approach needed new models of development and technology (i.e., intermediate technology).³⁶¹ The UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) also proposed using simple technology in “least developed countries” and intermediate technology in other non-industrialized countries.³⁶² The call for intermediate technology was especially loud from African representatives and also supported by agroindustry.³⁶³

Outside the FAO, there were similar concerns, for example in the ‘World Bank’.³⁶⁴ Sierra Leone’s representative at the inaugural meeting of the Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment in July 1975

noted the present strong donor emphasis on “subsistence farmer” development programs and asked if this is not being overdone. He noted the

357 UN World Food Conference 1974a, p. 106.

358 Escobar 1995, p. 106.

359 Ibid. (quote) and Hartmans to Huyser, 6 June 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. II.

360 Jonsson et al. 1991, pp. 64 (first and second quote), 80 (last quote). See also O’Hagan’s note “PSWAD”, January 1975, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., PSWAD.

361 “Informal Meeting of PPAB”, 26 November 1973, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/2A, Working Group on the Preparations of the WFC.

362 “UNIDO’s contribution to World Food Conference (Assessment and Action Paper)”, revised version, 29 May 1974, FAO, RG 12, Nut. Div., Reg. Files UN 43/1.

363 Programme and Policy Advisory Board, “Summary Record: Meeting 1092”, 1 October 1974, of 11 October 1974, FAO, RG 12, Nut. Div., Reg. Files, UN 43/2; UN World Food Conference, Consultation with Agro-Industrial Leaders, 10–11 September 1974, Toronto, Canada, 26 September 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN 43/2B, ICP General.

364 See Stryker 1979, p. 328.

possibility of locking project beneficiaries into low-income agriculture at a time when growing commercialization and changing family living patterns were increasing the requirements for cash incomes.³⁶⁵

And W. David Hopper, a Canadian ‘development’ specialist who later joined the ‘World Bank’, warned: “We must become extremely critical of aid efforts that [. . .] overemphasize the small producers who may occupy only 10 to 20 percent of the land areas”.³⁶⁶ A group of experts argued that small peasants and their families would consume the increase in their production and, so, have no surplus to market.³⁶⁷ Orville Freeman, the former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, told business leaders that the main concern of development should be economically viable family farms.³⁶⁸ Oxfam’s chairman agreed, and it became the organization’s stated policy: “Oxfam aims mainly to help the enterprising small farmer, capable of self-sustained economic viability”.³⁶⁹ However, views within the organization differed, and in 1977, Oxfam directed its efforts in India primarily to such farmers who to support USAID rejected for lack of viability.³⁷⁰ An Oxfam field director rejected outright the idea of extending credit to small peasants, even within an integrated rural development project: “In my view credit is a privilege, it is not everyone’s right [. . .]”. He found some support for his view from scholars and the World Council of Credit Unions.³⁷¹

And to some, the poor did not matter politically at all. Commenting on a draft of a speech by Henry Kissinger that touched on the great importance of the poorest states, the influential U.S. agricultural economist G. Edward Schuh wrote in 1975 that “there are probably 50 countries that could fall into the sea tomorrow without having any effect on us”.³⁷² That attitude was not dominant in the 1970s and did

365 “Abbreviated Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Consultative Group for Food Policy and Investment”, 28 July 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. III. See also Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment in Developing Countries, “Report on the Second Meeting, February 10–12, 1976”, draft of 4 March 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. V. For similar concerns among African representatives at the African Development Bank, see Mingst 1990, p. 63.

366 Hopper 1975, p. 186.

367 ECAFE, Expert Group Meeting on Agricultural Development, convened jointly with the FAO, 16–21 January 1974 [. . .], draft, FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Services Div., RU 7/37. For this reason, Montague Yudelman, the IBRD’s leading agricultural functionary, believed that the small peasant approach would make a greater contribution to solving the hunger problem than the food problem: “Agricultural Development and the Environment – A World Bank Approach”, Yudelman’s address to the conference “The World Food and Population Crisis: A Role for the Private Sector”, 9 April 1975, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5974, Food 2.

368 “Guidelines and Policy Decisions Necessary to a Successful Agriculture Program in the LDCs” for the Toronto meeting of the ICP, 23 August 1974, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, World Food Conference 1974.

369 “Minutes of the Field Committee for Asia”, 18 February 1970; see also ditto, 1 July 1970; quote: Oxfam, Field Committee for Asia, “Guide to Policy in Asia – July 1972”, all in Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976.

370 Paper from August 1977, Oxfam, Box India Annual reports, Bangladesh and Burma Annual.

371 Field Committee for Africa, “Agricultural Development Without Credit”, November 1973; “Minutes of the Africa Field Committee”, 23 May 1974; ditto, 9 October 1974, all in Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, January 1974–October 1976.

372 Memo Schuh to Greenspan, 23 May 1975, Ford Library, L. William Seidman Files, Box 189, Kissinger, Henry A, OECD Speech 5/28/75.

not often appear in official policy documents. But it was lurking in the background and could undermine official efforts to support the rural poor in non-industrialized countries.

The marginal role of nutrition programs and the secondary role of the concept of food security

Alternatively, international development agencies could have focused on nutrition programs, but they did not. In the course of preparing for the World Food Conference, Marcel Ganzin, the head of the FAO's Food Policy and Nutrition Division, stated that "in the [World] Bank, even more than in FAO, there is no machinery and no real state of mind to integrate Nutrition objectives into current activities".³⁷³ In late 1972, he complained that many of his colleagues just smiled when the issue of nutrition came up. At the 1974 conference, the topic had no prominence.³⁷⁴ The marginality of nutrition had a long tradition. The FAO had no department devoted to this issue, only a division whose influence was further in decline in the mid-1970s.³⁷⁵ Efforts to make nutrition important in 'development' bore little fruit.³⁷⁶ Official documents nominally on the subject dwelt on food and agricultural policies and general issues of planning.³⁷⁷ The FAO's and the WHO's funding for nutrition was miniscule from the 1950s on,³⁷⁸ and UN funding for nutrition projects was very low in the 1980s and 1990s.³⁷⁹ 'World Bank' nutrition programs went from being non-existent to receiving only US\$2.1 billion from 1973 to 1998, which was still more than it got in all the other development agencies combined.³⁸⁰

Even if it had been less poorly funded, nutritional education could at best have prevented *malnutrition* and, perhaps, death from hunger, not hunger itself, that is, insufficient calories. What became much more influential in preventing deaths, however, were basic health measures.

The state of the debate over nutrition in the mid-1970s was that the earlier hype for the alleged protein gap and the supposed need to enrich food with proteins that the poor in non-industrialized countries ate (which the food industry and the UN's Protein Advisory Group cultivated) had evaporated in what was called "The Great Protein Fiasco". The dominant opinion was then that people who consumed enough calories usually had also access to enough protein, with some reservations for children.³⁸¹ In the 1970s and 1980s, so-called 'multisectoral nutrition

373 Ganzin to Ojala, 31 October 1973, FAO, RG 12, FAO/IBRD Round Table.

374 Ruxin 1996, pp. 255, 271.

375 See Phillips 1981; Ruxin 1996, pp. 115, 289.

376 See Berg 1973.

377 For example, see Food and nutrition strategies 1976.

378 See Ruxin 1996, pp. 108, 256–257 but see *ibid.*, p. 232.

379 See Shaw 1999, pp. 558–559; Food and nutrition strategies 1976, p. 11.

380 *Learning From World Bank History* 2014, pp. xi; 2, note 5; 17; see also Ruxin 1996, pp. 278, 280.

381 Ruxin 1996 is fundamental; see UN World Food Conference 1974a, pp. 56, 63–64; *Food and nutrition strategies* 1976, p. 33; Rieff 2015, p. 164 (quote, from Don McLaren); Reutlinger and Selowsky 1976, p. 9; *Learning From World Bank History* 2014, pp. 7–8. For the evolution of the protein gap discourse, see also Carpenter 1994, pp. 159–163, 185–189, 198–201.

planning' (which assumed that malnutrition had several causes) sometimes accompanied integrated rural development programs, though the emphasis was still on the number of calories. Tied to a food system approach, experts argued that nutrition was related to multiple factors, which resulted in complex analyses, charts and plans where next to every imaginable measure could be called a part of nutrition policy.³⁸² Multisectoral nutrition planning, a reflection of "[i]llusions of technocratic omniscience and omnipotence" (that resembled the concept of integrated rural development), was so complex that it could hardly be implemented and fed primarily 'experts' who always called for more data. In practice, nutrition policies, too, emphasized agricultural production.³⁸³ Since the 1990s, the emphasis has shifted to micronutrients.³⁸⁴

In the 1970s, there was also a lack of knowledge about nutrition. The FAO's Marcel Ganzin found the "FAO estimate of magnitude of caloric deficiency in LDC's [least developed countries, C.G.] not meaningful: No basis for estimating that part of [the] population whose consumption falls below the average".³⁸⁵ There were data for only a limited number of countries.³⁸⁶ Nonetheless, two nutritionists estimated the 1965 worldwide gap in consumption at 350 billion daily calories, or 36.5 million tons per year, 3.8 percent of the world's food production.³⁸⁷ The consequences of starvation on the human body were better understood,³⁸⁸ including insights from around 1967 that periods of starvation in early childhood or in the womb can cause mental retardation and other lifelong problems.³⁸⁹

'Food security' was another concept that took off around 1973–1974. It was a broad, vague and flexible notion that came to mean nearly everything and nothing; one 1993 study found close to 200 different definitions.³⁹⁰ Its pursuit included efforts for food production nationally and internationally plus international cooperation, including trade. Its production-oriented side³⁹¹ overlapped with the small peasant approach. Other aspects of food security as it was understood in the 1970s and 1980s involved establishing early warning systems, expanding food storage, and sometimes

382 Pacey and Payne 1985 is a typical product of such thinking.

383 See the critical analysis by Field 1987, esp. pp. 16, 20, 24 (quote).

384 *Learning From World Bank History* 2014, esp. p. xii, 4, 11. See also Ruxin 1996, pp. 242–286; Biesalski 2020.

385 Jerome Fried, Office of External Research, U.S. Department of State, "World Food Conference: Issues and Preparation for the Conference", 17 January 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5848, Food 2, January–May 1974, 1. See also Ganzin to Ojala, 31 October 1973, FAO, RG 12, FAO/IBRD Round Table.

386 D. Casley, "The Nutritional Status of the World's Population", 15 February 1974, p. 38 of the document, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/2B Statistics; OECD, Development Center (Jacqueline Mondot-Bernard), "Attempted Analysis of the Food Situation in Africa" [1974], pp. 2 and 4 of the document, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/6 OECD.

387 Reutlinger and Selowsky 1976, pp. 2, 24–25.

388 See Blix et al. 1971, based on a 1970 conference.

389 Cravioto and Licardie 1973, pp. 9–11; Ruxin 1996, p. 227; see also Wines 2006.

390 Maxwell 1996, esp. p. 155; De Waal 1997, p. 54; Davies 1996, p. 15; see also Cornilleau 2019.

391 Marchisio and di Biase 1986, pp. 95–96, 110; see also the contributions in Nagothu 2015, esp. pp. 123, 182.

providing food aid and emergency precautions.³⁹² These aspects pertained more to the prevention of famine than chronic starvation. But food security projects that did not concern production did not receive nearly the funding, or conceptual thought, that agricultural inputs, production-related infrastructure and loan programs for them did. The FAO's Committee on World Food Security was consigned to the shadows since 1974 and reorganized in 2010. It considered free trade the primary solution to food insecurity and considered granaries in vulnerable countries the secondary solution.³⁹³ In the 1980s, it was influenced by FAO's Director-General Saouma who emphasized individuals' access to food rather than national self-sufficiency and grain stocks but then arrived at a "conceptualization of food-security as market-based".³⁹⁴ In other words, Sen's entitlement theory was hijacked and vulgarized by neoliberals who equated entitlement simply with "lack of purchasing power".³⁹⁵

Critics have dismissed the national food strategies that the World Food Council (and the FAO and European Community) asked non-industrialized countries to formulate in 1979 as shallow exercises.³⁹⁶ Dozens of countries created them.³⁹⁷ They oriented them toward agricultural production and investment in it.³⁹⁸ In the 1990s, again, very little money was "earmarked for food security [but] the rhetoric about food security was increasing globally and within the [World] Bank".³⁹⁹

Conclusion

In the early 1970s, a broad international coalition of experts, politicians and activists made a new approach to development dominant. Built on a critique of modernization theory and the 'green revolution' but not marking a full break from them, the new approach sought to alleviate rural poverty and hunger by raising the productivity of small agricultural producers through providing them with packages of new inputs. Hundreds of millions of people in non-industrialized countries were supposed to be integrated more thoroughly into market relations, which would relocate parts of capital accumulation to rural areas and ultimately stabilize capitalism and even strengthen it in the Cold War. This enormous, global social engineering project was production-oriented and technical in character; it relied much on national planning – influenced by foreign actors – and its objectives were by no means entirely humanitarian. Actors' visions of the future reveal that a major driving force for the project was the effort to reduce poor countries' food imports (see Chapter 12).

392 Nehemiah to Dutia, 11 July 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43, 2B Divisional Contributions-Gen.; Chidzero 1988, pp. 134, 141; OAU 1980, p. 9; Dil 2000, p. 528 (writings of Sartaj Aziz).

393 "Mit NGO gegen den Hunger", in: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 16 October 2010, p. 31; Cornilleau 2019, pp. 28–32.

394 Jarosz 2009, p. 51; see also Maxwell 1996, p. 157; Davies 1996, p. 15.

395 Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 301.

396 Chidzero 1988, p. 148. For the European Community, see Geier 1992, p. 11.

397 See UN Press Release FC/126, 14 November 1980, FAO, RG 15, LUNO, UN 44/10.

398 *Feeding the World's Population* 1984, p. 34.

399 *Learning From World Bank History* 2014, p. 21.

The world food crisis of 1972–1975 facilitated the new approach's breakthrough, but the concept addressed only some of the social groups worst affected by the famines of the early 1970s (see Chapter 3). The new policy focused on small peasants and some sharecroppers, but it ignored landless workers, pastoralists and others, groups who were among the hardest hit by the famines. This was symptomatic. Landlessness had spread, especially in South and Southeast Asia, because of the very processes of commodification in rural areas that the new approach sought to accelerate. Thus, the small peasant approach was bound to increase social differentiation, including among the poor, with unclear consequences for the extent of hunger.

5 Degrees of implementation

Global perspectives

Was the new emphasis in the early 1970s on modern inputs for small agricultural producers just a change of discourse? Or did ‘development’ agents take substantial steps in this direction? This chapter examines, with an emphasis on global players like the ‘World Bank’, how far development policies in the 1970s turned to agriculture, the degree to which rural development programs and projects became really poverty oriented, and if so, what was left of these changes in later decades. This chapter also describes, on a general level, reasons restricting the implementation of poor peasant-oriented projects and policies and the consequences that they had if actually implemented.¹ Finally, it deals with the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in 1979 because it was symptomatic of limitations to poverty-oriented small farmer ‘development’ and to how it was pursued.

A shift to agriculture?

One way to address these questions is to look at the relative importance given to agriculture. In the 1950s and 1960s, ‘development aid’ had concentrated on infrastructure and industry with very little devoted to rural areas. Though a shift of resources to the countryside does not prove a reorientation toward small farmers, showing that the former was the case would be an indicator for changes that would need to be specified further. The staff organizing the World Food Conference stated in 1974 that it was necessary to more than triple annual agricultural ‘aid’ from US\$1.5 billion to \$5 billion, in particular, for land and water development, credit for small farmers, and fertilizer. Sixty percent of the \$1.5 billion came from the ‘World Bank’, but ‘aid’ for agriculture constituted just around 3 percent of the bilateral ODA of OECD member countries in 1971 and 1972.² The proposed sum of \$5 billion was surpassed (not adjusted for inflation) within a few years; total ‘aid’ commitments to agriculture reached US\$6.8 billion in 1977 and nine billion in 1978. The sum had already sharply increased in 1974 and 1975 but dropped in

1 The case studies in Chapters 7–10 will discuss degrees of implementation and its effects in certain countries.

2 UN World Food Conference 1974a, pp. 4, 8–9, 131; see also UN World Food Council, WFC/18, 6 April 1976, p. 6, FAO Library.

1976.³ It was not always clear how much of this increase was “for expanding food production”.⁴ Some of the money (US\$2.4 billion in 1977 as compared to \$0.5 billion in 1973) was registered with the FAO Investment Center, in which FAO cooperated with partners such as the IBRD and regional banks.⁵ Adjusted for inflation, international financial support of agriculture in “least developed countries” doubled from 1973 to 1977.⁶

According to one analysis, international ‘aid’ resource flows to the food and agriculture sector of non-industrialized countries from 1974 to 1982 tripled in real terms, a greater increase than in development funds for other purposes; ‘aid’ to food and agriculture to Asia and the Pacific grew more than to Africa, and much more of the ‘aid’ for food and agriculture was distributed through multilateral channels than for other sectors. But the increase in ‘aid’ to countries categorized as ‘least developed’ was less than the average, about 19 percent of total flows to food and agriculture in 1974 and 17.5 percent in 1982.⁷ Foreign ‘aid’ to agriculture in 1983–1985 fell short of the World Food Conference’s targets set in 1974 but was still high at US\$8.3 billion.⁸

It was the ‘World Bank’ group that greatly increased the amount of its loans for agriculture in non-industrialized countries and its share of the total sum available for that sector in the 1970s. From 20 percent of the Bank’s lending sum in 1969–1973 (US\$518 million annually), agriculture’s share increased to 26.4 percent (\$1.481 billion per year) in 1974–1976 and to 34.5 percent (\$2.817 billion per year) in 1977–1981.⁹ It remained above 20 percent until 1986.¹⁰ This turn to agriculture, which was initially a low priority, had started after 1963. From 1963 to 1968, this sector received 18 percent of the lending.¹¹ In 1971–1972, the total was US\$436 million; in 1972–1973, it was \$938 million.¹²

Similarly, the EEC reported in 1976 that 40 percent of its ‘aid’ targeted agriculture while only 10 percent of its members’ bilateral ODA did.¹³ This trend of a greater percentage of multilateral lending going to agriculture than in bilateral

3 OECD, DAC, Note of the Secretariat, “Aid to Agricultural Research”, 13 February 1981, FAO, RG 12, Ec. Analysis Branch, IL 7/1; Stamenkovic (UNCTAD) to Santa Cruz (FAO), 7 July 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 26, RU 7/46.28, vol. IV.

4 See the contradictions (and higher data) in UN World Food Council, WFC/36, 25 March 1977, pp. ii and 14, FAO Library.

5 Comptroller General 1980, p. 43.

6 Condos, “Food and Agriculture in the Least Developed Countries in the 1980s: Problems and Prospects”, third draft, 11 January 1981, FAO, RG 12, ES, UN 29/15.

7 See Williams and Stephens 1984; Sartaj Aziz, “The Complex Reality of the Food Problem” (1979) and “Reaching the Rural Poor: Bankers on Motorbikes” (1981) in Dil 2000, pp. 86, 98.

8 Islam 1989, p. 171.

9 Tetzlaff 1980, p. 433. The sum for 1980–1981 was a projection. See also Adler 1979, p. 188; Sen 1979, pp. 202–204; Ayres 1983, pp. 5, 18–19; Matzke 1974, p. 48.

10 *Learning From World Bank History* 2014, p. 20.

11 FAO/IBRD Cooperative Program, Progress Report No. 20, July–September 1968, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files, III, FAO/IBRD III. See also Kröss 2020, pp. 51–85.

12 UN World Food Conference 1974b, p. 45.

13 “European Report”, 3 April 1976, FAO, RG 15, Europ. Reg. Office, IL 8/30, vol. 3.

flows continued in 1977 and 1978; while sums generally increased, agriculture's share of 'aid' commitments was over 50 percent for the IDA and well over 30 percent for the IBRD and the African Development Bank, but it was only 17.2 percent in 1977 and 19.1 percent in 1978 for the Asian Development Bank, 9.7 percent and 14.0 percent for the USA, 18 percent and 22.8 percent for Japan, and 18.7 percent and 20.5 percent for West Germany.¹⁴ The proportion of the ADB's lending that went to agriculture was above 25 percent throughout 1973–1990 (but a bit lower in the years immediately before and after).¹⁵ In the early 1980s, 10–12 percent of all bilateral ODA and 30–40 percent of multilateral ODA targeted agriculture.¹⁶ And the OECD's member countries provided less than half of their bilateral ODA to very-low-income countries (those with an average annual per capita income below US\$400): 44.4 percent in 1973–1975 and 39.3 percent in 1982–1984. The figures for multilateral "aid" were 50.7 percent and 68.8 percent, respectively.¹⁷ In 1973–1974, the IBRD and the IDA committed two-thirds of their lending to countries importing large amounts of grain, whereas these received only 26 percent of bilateral ODA.¹⁸ Canada failed to live up to its verbal declarations to concentrate its 'aid' on the poorest countries, at least until 1990, and its turn to agricultural development had already waned in the late 1970s.¹⁹ Japan announced a shift in 'aid' from industry to agriculture in 1973, but in 1987, still no more than 9 percent of its ODA was devoted to agriculture.²⁰

In 1974, an NGO representative asserted, probably with some exaggeration, that only 5 percent of Britain's ODA went to agriculture in non-industrialized countries, but 95 percent of British NGOs' 'aid' did. However, Oxfam's expenditure on agriculture was only 21.1 percent in 1975–1976. In 1984, 16 percent of British ODA was for agriculture, and most 'aid' for agriculture and rural development in 1979–1984 was spent on infrastructure and growing export crops.²¹ Apparently, West

14 OECD, DAC, Note of the Secretariat, "Aid to Agricultural Research", 13 February 1981, FAO, RG 12, Ec. Analysis Branch, IL 7/1. For the African Development Bank, cf. Mingst 1990, pp. 59, 64–65.

15 Kappagoda 1995, pp. 4, 170 (1991 and 1992 17.4 percent). For similar data for the African Development Bank, see English and Mule 1996, p. 197.

16 Islam 1983, p. 201.

17 According to Krueger et al. 1989, p. 71, OPEC countries channeled 23.2 percent and 32.8 percent of their 'aid' in those years to very low income countries. For the low-lending figures to agriculture, especially food production, by the OPEC Fund for International Development in the 1970s and early 1980s, see Shihata et al. 2011, pp. 44, 86, 98, 280–281.

18 World Food Council, WFC/20, report of the Executive Director, "Increasing Food Production in the Developing Countries", 14 April 1976, FAO Library.

19 Morrison 1998, pp. 114, 121, 167, 200, 258. For a similar judgment, see the interview with Gerald Helleiner, 5 December 2000, p. 51, United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007.

20 Markham to Yriart, 20 September 1973, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div Subject Files, FAO Cooperation with Japan; "Japan's Development Assistance in 1971", FAO, RG 15, RAPE, Japan 1972–75; Nuscheler 1990, pp. 56–57.

21 "Notes of an Informal Meeting of NGO Representatives on the World Food Conference", Geneva, 4 July 1974, FAO, RG 22, UN-43/6, vol. 1. Cf. Oxfam, "Minutes of the Field Committee for Africa", 25–26 May 1976, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, January 1974–October 1976; Clark 1986, pp. 27–28.

German NGOs run by churches devoted less than 10 percent to agriculture in the early 1970s.²² Many NGOs differed little from government agencies in this point.

Within agriculture, the allocation of 'aid' shifted to irrigation and rural development (a vague category of broad, often IRD-style projects) and away from livestock and possibly also nutrition and support for credit institutions.²³ This seems to have been largely in accordance with plans within FAO.²⁴ Ambitions at the time were flying high in FAO, with plans for drawing up a world map of existing and potential irrigated lands.²⁵

Official financial commitments to agriculture in the 30 so-called 'least developed countries' more than quadrupled in nominal terms, and more than doubled in real terms, over the period from 1973 to 1979 from US\$1.746 billion to \$7.259 billion.²⁶ The increase may have included domestic funds of non-industrialized states, but only few countries in South, Southeast and East Asia reached as high a percentage as 25–30 percent of government investment being channeled to agriculture in 1978: the Philippines and Bangladesh.²⁷ Such figures hardly indicated a "[t]op priority for agriculture"²⁸ but at least some change. For example, Nigeria sextupled its investment in agriculture in its development plan for 1975–1980 compared to the previous plan. And it moved its focus after 1972 from cash crops to food crops.²⁹ In summary, there was a clear shift. National and international financial flows to agriculture increased considerably in the 1970s and remained high in the 1980s.

The question remains whether this was a passing affair. Not only was foreign 'development aid' generally reduced in the 1990s³⁰ but the proportion of it devoted to agriculture as well. From 1988 to 1995, 'aid' to agriculture decreased from US\$16 to \$10 billion.³¹ The FAO reported that agriculture's share of total ODA was constant throughout 1980–1988 at around 25 percent, but it fell to 19 percent on average in the period from 1989 to 1991 and averaged 14 percent in 1995–1997.³² According to one source, 19 percent of worldwide ODA had targeted agriculture

22 "Auszug aus dem Kirchenbericht der Bundesregierung", April 1972, in: Lefringhausen and Merz 1973, p. 169.

23 There are some contradictions between *Feeding the World's Population* 1984, pp. 285–290, and Williams and Stephens 1984, p. 338. But see World Bank 1988, pp. 110–111.

24 "Magnitude of Future Food Gap", draft, 16 July 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69. Vol. II.

25 "Draft for Discussion: Present and Future Irrigated Lands of the World", March 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDC, 4/69 (CGFPI), vol. I.

26 A. Condos, Third draft of FAO contribution to the study "Food and Agriculture in the Least Developed Countries in the 1980s: Problems and Prospects", 11 January 1981, FAO, RG 12, ES, UN 29/12.

27 Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East, "Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in Asia with special reference to the WCARRD", March 1978, revised draft, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 19, RU 7/46.7 Asia and the Far East.

28 Michael Lipton's comment in Robinson and Griffin 1974, p. 158.

29 D. Canette, "Nigeria", in: *Agriculture Abroad* 24 (6), 1974, p. 11; US Agricultural Attaché Lagos, 11 January 1977, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 69, NA Nigeria DR.

30 For the argument for a "Hidden Crisis in Development" (i.e., in development bureaucracies), see Quarles van Ufford et al 1988.

31 [FAO] TeleFood n.d. For different data that, however, also show a decline from 1988 to 2006, see ETH Globe, no. 3, September 2008, p. 11.

32 FAO 2000, p. 17. Donner 2000, p. 86, located the decline in the second half of the 1990s.

in 1980, but it fell to 9 percent in the late 1980s, and it had dropped to 3.8 percent by 2006.³³ In 1990–1991, 14 percent of British ‘aid’ projects had “poverty potential”, and only 6 percent potential “towards reducing poverty in rural areas”.³⁴ The ‘World Bank’s’ loans for agriculture also fell to 3 percent of its total lending in around 2007, compared to 30 percent in 1980; it stayed above 20 percent until 1986 and above 10 percent until 1995.³⁵ The share of all ODA disbursement going to agriculture reached a low of about 3 percent in 2006 and did not reach 5 percent until 2017. (Commitments were a bit higher.)³⁶ Government spending on agriculture in Asian countries fell from 14 percent in 1980 to 7 percent in 2004.³⁷

Non-industrialized countries halved their own investment in agriculture from 1980 to 2004 (cutting it down less strongly than foreign ‘aid’ agencies); those in Sub-Saharan Africa reduced it by more than half. In 2003, the African Union pronounced in its Maputo Declaration that member states should use at least 10 percent of their budgets for agriculture, but initially, only two member states met that goal, and around 2008, it was six (including Mali). The declaration included clauses about food production, the reduction of hunger and an emphasis on small-holder production.³⁸ That is to say, the ‘aid’ discourse again focused on poverty around the turn of the century.³⁹ This verbal emphasis never quite disappeared.⁴⁰

Were rural development programs poverty oriented? The ‘World Bank’

However, how much of the stated reorientation toward poverty alleviation was really implemented? This implementation has often been doubted or denied. In 1981, Gavin Williams wrote that “rural development does not usually achieve its objectives” in Africa, and ‘development’ projects’ reference to poor peasants was “largely rhetoric”.⁴¹ In one instance, a German ‘aid’ worker talking to colleagues in the field was quoted as cynically saying: “Hopefully nobody here believes seriously that we were sent here to help the poor”.⁴²

The ‘World Bank’ was crucial to agricultural and rural development policies. Much has been written about its turn to small peasants and poverty alleviation.⁴³

33 “Hungergipfel” 2009. Rieff 2015, p. 137, mentions a drop from 18 percent in 1979 to 2.9 percent in 2006. See *Learning From World Bank History* 2014, p. 17. Krueger et al. 1989, p. 100.

34 Mosse 2005, p. 22.

35 Clapp and Cohen 2009b, pp. 3, 5; *Learning From World Bank History* 2014, p. 20; World Bank 1988, pp. 10, 97.

36 FAO, “Development flows to agriculture”, June 2019, www.fao.org/economic/ess/investment/flows/en/ (accessed 27 September 2019).

37 *Learning From World Bank History* 2014, p. 17.

38 Mittal 2009a, p. 20; Simmons and Howard 2009a.

39 Fraser and Whitfield 2009a, pp. 77–78.

40 For West Germany in 1986, see Shaw and Clay 1993, p. 178. Somewhat contradictory is World Bank 1988, p. 15.

41 Quoted in Ferguson 2014, pp. 9, 18.

42 Rauch 1993, p. 251.

43 For example, see *The McNamara Years* 1981; ul Huq 1976; Kröss 2020, pp. 146–152.

This shift is obvious from the addresses by the institution's president Robert McNamara in 1971–1972 and the Bank's cooperation with FAO.⁴⁴ Within the institution, figures such as Mahbub ul Haq, Montague Yudelman and others have been credited with promoting such policies.⁴⁵ With them, the 'World Bank' moved from its concentration on South Asia to a global effort.⁴⁶ The rural poor were to be lifted out of poverty through making them more productive by providing peasants with credit, access to water and land, agricultural extension and other services.⁴⁷ The aim was to transform subsistence peasants *en masse* into independent agriculturalists producing for the market who would work their family farms on the basis of self-exploitation. Ultimately, this was supposed to create the conditions for extended capital accumulation.⁴⁸ The FAO tried to influence the 'World Bank' through the FAO/IBRD Cooperative Programme, which employed 70 experts and 45 other staff in 1970 and had generated projects with a combined budget of US\$700 million.⁴⁹ Some FAO officials were skeptical about the 'World Bank's' claim to follow the small peasant approach, noting its practice of funding the better-off.⁵⁰ And the new policy did not change everything – funding for infrastructure and industry always remained important 'World Bank' activities.⁵¹

In terms of discourse, the 'World Bank' changed its strategy in 1981 to imposing on non-industrialized countries so-called 'structural adjustments', austerity measures directed against state intervention in the economy. This deregulation strategy was visible by 1979.⁵² Many states were in fact deeply in debt. Two scholars claimed that over 58 percent of 'World Bank' loans in 1978 were for repayment and interest payments on its own earlier loans.⁵³ Accordingly, it shifted its policy in the early 1980s to rapid payoff projects, export products and against government marketing boards.⁵⁴ It reduced its emphasis on poverty and basic needs in 1982 but announced after about 1987 that poverty alleviation would always be a concern, though subordinate to economic growth.⁵⁵ After all, it had traditionally proclaimed that poverty reduction was an important objective, and in 1993, its President Lewis Preston called it "the prime objective of the Bank".⁵⁶ In the 1990s, "Our Dream Is

44 Addresses on 27 September 1971, 14 April and 25 September 1972, in: *McNamara* 1973, pp. 50, 66–67, 102–116, 118. See also the file FAO, RG 9, Subject Files III; FAO/IBRD Round Table.

45 Shapley 1993, p. 509; Baru 1998; Stryker 1979, p. 327.

46 McNamara speeches, 30 September 1968 and 25 September 1972, in: *McNamara* 1973, pp. 21, 120.

47 Tetzlaff 1980, p. 74. Matzke 1974, p. 88.

48 Tetzlaff 1980, pp. 390, 459.

49 US FAO Interagency Committee, "Observations on Medium Term Program Planning", NARA, RG 59, SNF 1970–73, Box 457, AGR 3 FAO 8/14/70.

50 Memo of Bishop and de Brichambaut for Yriart, 8 November 1973, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files, III, FAO/IBRD Round Table.

51 Ayres 1983, p. 235.

52 Siebold 1996, pp. 39–40, 52–54; Clark 1988, pp. 15–16, 19.

53 Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 89.

54 IBRD 1981.

55 Siebold 1996, pp. 42–45; this was also the sequence according to Gibbon 1992. Kraske 1996, p. 226, suggests less change in the early 1980s.

56 Quoted in Hossain 1995, p. 251; see also Kraske 1996, p. 270.

a World Free of Poverty” was carved in stone at the Bank’s headquarters in Washington D.C. for all of its employees to see.⁵⁷ But a recent language analysis concludes that the institution’s specific uses of the word “poverty” in its annual reports cast doubt on whether it ever seriously pursued poverty reduction.⁵⁸

In agriculture in particular, the World Bank group became the “biggest development player” (or actually returned to this position).⁵⁹ From 1968 to 1981, 28.3 percent of IBRD and IDA funding commitments were for agriculture and rural development.⁶⁰ Much of it, especially in South Asia, was through preferential IDA loans.⁶¹ Forty percent of the Bank’s agricultural loans went to the poorest countries from 1969 to 1973, although according to official data, over three quarters of all of its loans were for better-off farmers (who owned over 5 hectares).⁶² From the early 1980s to the early 1990s, its lending to agriculture and rural development remained at a high level around US\$3.5 billion, though there was some internal shifting from the IBRD to the IDA and, thus, more preferential terms.⁶³ In 1980, more than half of the institution’s agricultural lending still went to Asia.⁶⁴ As was true for lending to agriculture of non-industrialized countries globally, the ‘World Bank’s’ commitments to food production in South, Southeast and East Asia in 1973 and 1974 clearly surpassed those of all other ‘aid’ agencies combined. But its impact was small, for the total annual resource flow to food production per capita was US\$0.82 in that area (and \$1.30 worldwide).⁶⁵ If the ‘World Bank’ planned to “reach” 100 million people (60 million poor among them) with US\$7 billion in agricultural and rural development programs in 1975–1979, this translated into \$14 per capita annually even for those ‘reached’. In 1977, the annual figure was US\$77 per capita.⁶⁶ In 1978, McNamara stated that, in fiscal years 1974–1978, ‘World Bank’ projects raised the income of over 10 million poor rural families.⁶⁷ But even its own optimistic plans showed that it could not come close to ‘reaching’ all the 700–800 million rural poor in a reasonable time frame, which made the anticipated

57 Sharma 2017, p. 54.

58 Moretti and Pestre 2015, p. 81. Thanks to Moritz Feichtinger for pointing me to this publication.

59 Frey et al. 2014, p. 11; Tetzlaff 1980, p. 433; for earlier periods, see Yudelman 1975, p. 135.

60 Sharma 2017, p. 127; see also Stryker 1979, p. 329.

61 Hümi 1980b, pp. 152–153, 159.

62 Yudelman 1975, p. 136.

63 IBRD p. 5.

64 Report by Fernando, “Visit to Washington, 29 September–3 October 1980”, 20 October 1980, FAO, RG 9, DDC, UN 12/1, vol. X.

65 David Bates and Graham Donaldson, “World Bank and Agricultural Development”, *Agriculture Abroad*, 30 (4), 1975, p. 42; CGFPI, “Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East, August 5–13, Jakarta: Investment for Food Production in Asia and the Far East: An Analysis of Resource Flows”, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. V.

66 Hundred million rural poor, according to McNamara’s address to the Board of Governors, 1 September 1975, in *The McNamara Years* 1981, p. 311. See Memo Huyser, “Inter-Divisional Working Group on Food Production and Investment”, 10 July 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. II; “World Bank Annual Report 1977: Highlights”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 6, World Bank; World Bank 1988, p. 16.

67 Address to the Board of Governors, 25 September 1978, in: *The McNamara Years* 1981, p. 506.

growth rates unattainable for the peasants.⁶⁸ According to estimates, at its peak, ‘the Bank’ provided no more than 1–2 percent of all agricultural investments in non-industrialized countries and 1 percent of those countries’ capital needs.⁶⁹ By implication, total foreign ‘aid’ did not do much more.

In sectoral terms, the ‘World Bank’s’ agricultural lending in 1969–1974 was primarily for irrigation (34.6 percent, compared to slightly over half before 1970) and agricultural credit (21.1 percent).⁷⁰ In its rural development projects, much of the designated sum was spent for roads, electrification and other infrastructure.⁷¹ The Asian Development Bank’s agricultural loans also emphasized irrigation though the proportion decreased from over 50 percent in the early 1970s to 39.4 percent in 1978–1980.⁷² By contrast, international resource flows to agriculture and rural development in Sub-Saharan Africa reflected little emphasis on irrigation (9 percent) but rather export crops and, to some extent, livestock raising.⁷³ Only 16 percent of the ‘World Bank’s’ agricultural lending to Sub-Saharan Africa from 1974 to the mid-1980s, the peak of the small peasant approach, went to rainfed cereal production.⁷⁴ In 1969–1978, much less than half of its agricultural loans were for food crops.⁷⁵ In 1974 and 1975, there was a wave of financing for fertilizer factories (but little fertilizer ‘aid’ on concessional terms).⁷⁶ Between 1972 and 1977, the share of the ‘World Bank’s’ agricultural lending that could be linked to reducing poverty nominally increased from 28 percent to 63 percent.⁷⁷ By contrast, support for nutrition was marginal.⁷⁸

The ‘World Bank’s’ data on the proportion of its ‘beneficiaries’ who were actually poor were contradictory.⁷⁹ Its concept of what was “directly poverty-oriented”

68 Feder 1976, pp. 534, 537.

69 See Ayres 1983, p. 53.

70 See FAO, “Report of the 26th Session of the Programme Committee”, 14–25 October 1974, CL 64/7, p. 20, FAO, RG 7, film 517 and Connally to Nixon, 29 June 1971, NARA, Nixon papers, SF, IT Box 7, EX IT 29 IDA 1971–72. Slightly lower percentages for 1969–1974 are given in David Bates and Graham Donaldson, “World Bank and Agricultural Development”, *Agriculture Abroad*, 30, 4, 1975, p. 46; higher ones are given in Feder 1976, p. 537, and World Bank 1988, p. 106 (for 1965–1973).

71 Moore Lappé, Collins and Kinley 1980, p. 43.

72 *Feeding the World’s Population* 1984, p. 293. Jazairy et al. 1992, p. 135 claim that 80 percent of all ‘aid’ in 1940–1986 went to irrigation.

73 “Ninth FAO Regional Conference for Africa, Freetown, Sierra Leone: Investment Policy Requirements for Increasing Food Production in Africa. Prepared by the Secretariat of the Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment”, 14 April 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. V.

74 Clark 1986, p. 29.

75 Stryker 1979, pp. 329–330.

76 Statement by Sheldrick, World Bank Archive, RG 48, A 1991.030 #1, 91000–08 CGFPI – 1st meeting/Transcripts, 02, 22 July 22 1975; Bell to Congressman Richmond, 5 May 1975, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5974, Food 2, April 24–September 22, 1975; UN World Food Council, WFC/39, “Agricultural Inputs”, 31 March 1977, FAO Library, pp. 8–9 of the document.

77 Gibbon 1992, p. 195.

78 Ganzin to Ojala, 31 October 1973, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., Subject Files: FAO/IBRD Round Table.

79 Feder 1976, p. 536; Kröss 2020, p. 173.

was very broad.⁸⁰ And little information was available about the outcome. According to critics, “it was virtually impossible to estimate with any precision what percentage of the direct benefits were in fact going to members of the target groups”. Such data were not even collected, monitoring and evaluation in this respect were lacking so that nobody “appear[ed] to know at all” what social groups were ‘reached’.⁸¹

In 1981, one scholar concluded: “There is very little evidence that recent World Bank projects have benefited the poorest farmers, or have even been intended to do so”.⁸² McNamara claimed in 1978 that 75 percent of 363 agricultural projects funded in fiscal years 1974–1978 included a “component specifically addressed to the needs of the small farmer” and that more than half of the total benefits from over 200 of them went to the rural poor.⁸³ Put the other way around, one quarter of the Bank’s agricultural projects did not address small farmers at all and at least half of the benefits from up to 44 percent of the projects went to the better-off minority of the rural population. Most of the money did not reach the rural poor, but wealthier ruralites.⁸⁴ Other official ‘World Bank’ data from the 1970s indicated that virtually none of the funding for projects concerning education, electricity, industry, transportation and water supply (which together accounted for the majority of funding) was even intended to ‘target’ primarily the poor.⁸⁵

According to ‘World Bank’ reports in 1989 and 1994, its ‘structural adjustment’ in Africa had stimulated economic growth (though even this was highly questionable), helped reduce poverty, and the ‘green revolution’ was scale-neutral. But these in part absurd claims were based on dubious statistical methods, which damaged the institution’s credibility.⁸⁶ A study commissioned to showcase ‘World Bank’ poverty alleviation measures showed that most of the institution’s “actions to reduce hunger”, secondary to other purposes, were unrelated to small farmers and agriculture, but pertained to economic liberalization, food subsidies, food aid, nutrition and health, education, general income generation and agricultural research.⁸⁷ One report found that the IBRD’s foodgrain lending projects in India had mostly benefitted medium farmers with five or more hectares but “to a considerable extent bypassed the small farmers”. It concluded that the small farmer strategy could have only a minor impact on genuinely small farmers.⁸⁸ However, this forecast was more optimistic than Ernest Feder’s, who argued that McNamara’s

80 Sharma 2017, p. 67; see also Moore Lappé and Collins 1980, pp. 53–71; World Bank 1988, p. 4.

81 Ayres 1983, pp. 94–95 (first quote), 134–137 (second quote 136).

82 Williams 1981, p. 25.

83 Address to the Board of Governors, 25 September 1978, in: *The McNamara Years* 1981, p. 506; Ayres 1983, p. 5.

84 Stryker 1979, p. 332, made a broader similar argument.

85 See Hürni 1980b, p. 163; for another admission that the Bank’s agricultural programs “have reached the poor less than was hoped for”, see Kröss 2020, p. 181.

86 Siebold 1996, pp. 46–47, 51, 54; Tetzlaff 1980, pp. 438–452; Clark 1988, pp. 16, 19. World Bank 1988, p. 4 acknowledged problems with the institution’s methodology and claims about beneficiaries.

87 Binswanger and Landell-Mills 1995, esp. pp. 9–10.

88 Undated paper (ca. 1975), probably from within the IBRD, FAO, RG 9, DDI, PR 4/69, vol. II.

“little green revolution” would generate intense competition among smallholders, in which the fortunate would benefit at the expense of the unfortunate, who might then be reduced to landless laborers working for the former.⁸⁹

There were systemic reasons for a smaller than desired flow of resources to small peasants. “By and large, such farmers show unfavorable relationships between costs and returns as compared with larger farmers largely because of the high supervision costs involved, less efficient use of inputs, and longer time taken to arrive at full production”. As a result, projects involving peasants had “a low priority”. Noting this, FAO officials wondered whether current evaluation methods did justice to peasant programs or should be modified to include positive “secondary economic effects”.⁹⁰ These might include an expansion of demand and markets by increased business of smaller farmers, despite projects’ costs and organizational problems.⁹¹ However, as critics objected, the World Bank group’s assistance was only in the form of loans; the only way peasants could generate income to repay their loans was to grow marketable surpluses and sell them, but peasants just liberating themselves from hunger could hardly be expected to generate these.⁹² Besides, ‘World Bank’ officials resisted their president’s desire to measure the social effects of its projects.⁹³

Moreover, there were structural problems. The Bank’s projects were large (and getting larger in the early 1970s). In 1974, 272 of its “professionals dealing with agriculture” (only 40 of whom were outside Washington) administered projects with a cumulative budget probably exceeding US\$2 billion. The institution’s staff was growing but less than the project sums.⁹⁴ In 1977, the average budget of an agricultural project was \$27.5 million.⁹⁵ The ‘World Bank’s’ rural development projects had longer time frames and were more expensive than other projects; they often experienced delays; and there were substantial disbursement shortfalls.⁹⁶ But such technical difficulties alone do not explain their failure.⁹⁷ And failures they often were, even subjectively. According to the IBRD’s Operations Evaluation Department, 37 percent of its rural projects failed in the 1970s compared to 11 percent of non-rural projects.⁹⁸ And the assessments changed over time: an evaluation in hindsight found that of 27 agricultural projects of 1961–1975 considered

89 Feder 1976, p. 539.

90 Working Group on Agricultural/Rural Employment, “Work of the FAO/IBRD Cooperative Programme of interest to the Working Group”, 6 May 1971, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/43. Similar ‘World Bank’ skepticism about peasant projects is expressed in “Small-Farm Projects Case Study of the Muda Irrigation Scheme”, 25 October 1972, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files I, Investment Center, from 1970.

91 FAO Investment Centre, “The Benefits of Financing Small Farmers in Underdeveloped Countries: Points for discussion”, 14 April 1970, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files II, FAO/IBRD II.

92 Moore Lappé and Collins 1980, p. 60.

93 Sharma 2017, p. 67.

94 See statement by Yudelman, World Bank Archive, RG 48, A 1991.030 #1, 91000–08 CGFPI – 1st meeting/Transcripts, 02, July 22, 1975. From 1968 to 1981, the total number of ‘World Bank’ staff grew from 1,600 to 5,700: Kraske 1996, p. 179. See also Ayres 1983, pp. 4, 6.

95 “World Bank Annual Report 1977: Highlights”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 6, World Bank.

96 Ayres 1983, pp. 126–127; Tetzlaff 1980, pp. 461–468.

97 Shapley 1993, pp. 514, 527–554.

98 Shapley 1993, p. 551.

successful at that time, ten were later regarded as failed, eight as having had marginal or uncertain results, and only nine were attested “longer-term sustainability”.⁹⁹

The goal of poverty alleviation was controversial among ‘World Bank’ staff. A task force on poverty in the 1980s met internal resistance and was disbanded.¹⁰⁰ In 1976–1977, some employees publicly criticized what was then “the Bank’s” new focus on agriculture and smallholders.¹⁰¹ Richard Jolly later said, “poverty issues were treated by many Bank staff as the toys of McNamara and Mahhub [ul Haq]”.¹⁰²

Consequently, McNamara said in 1979 that in UN Development Decade II (1971–1980), “none of the targets had been achieved, particularly in the poorest countries”.¹⁰³ One analyst argued that the ‘World Bank’s’ agricultural projects in 1973–1980 had, despite their substantial size, “failed to boost output”, or their effects were “offset” by declines in the sector.¹⁰⁴ An internal evaluation in 1978 found that, of nine rural development projects, three had failed and four others had mostly benefitted well-off farmers.¹⁰⁵ In the same year, McNamara said that “agricultural and rural development projects often did increase the skewedness of income distribution”.¹⁰⁶ Patrick Sharma argues that the institution’s “antipoverty projects [. . .] generally failed to reach their goals”. Another study cited an agricultural expert who said that ‘World Bank’ money went “all to the wrong people”.¹⁰⁷

By the institution’s own criteria, its rural development projects had a failure rate of 37 percent compared to 21 percent of “non-poverty projects”.¹⁰⁸ From 1974 to 1979, 75 percent of its rural development projects in Eastern and Southern Africa, 40 percent in West Africa and 19–29 percent in other world regions failed.¹⁰⁹ There were special difficulties with rainfed agriculture and small peasants.¹¹⁰ According to a broader self-evaluation, half of the audited ‘World Bank’ rural development projects in Africa from 1963 to 1986 failed.¹¹¹

Scholars disagree about whether the ‘World Bank’ seriously attempted to integrate the rural poor of non-industrial countries in the capitalist market or not.¹¹² Though problematic, the Bank’s data make it appear very likely that its agricultural and rural development projects, despite the growing share designated for the poor sections of the population, did not primarily benefit them and that this was often by design.

99 World Bank 1988, p. 35.

100 Clark 1988, p. 8.

101 Stryker 1979, p. 328; see also World Bank 1988, p. 6.

102 Interview with Richard Jolly, 21 July 2005, p. 49, United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007.

103 Quoted in Fernando to Yriart, 10 October 1979, “Annual Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, Belgrade, 2–5 October 1979”, FAO, RG 9, DDC, UN 12/1, vol. IX.

104 Founou-Tchuigoua 1990, p. 39.

105 Sharma 2017, pp. 122–124.

106 Quoted in Sharma 2017, p. 123.

107 Sharma 2017, p. 123; second quote in Payer 1979, p. 306. See also Dunham 1982, pp. 165–166.

108 Donaldson 1991, p. 175.

109 David 1991, p. 194.

110 Donaldson 1991, p. 177.

111 Eicher 1990, p. 514.

112 See Tetzlaff 1980, pp. 504–513, for the former view, Feder 1976 for the latter.

Other players

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was a much smaller player in funding rural development.¹¹³ But it is worth examining because it was conceived at the World Food Conference and intended to “focus on small farmers and the rural poor, especially in food-deficient countries” with low per capita incomes.¹¹⁴ In 2000, “IFAD’s philosophy” was still described as combating rural poverty through increasing the productivity and incomes of the poor, and a year later, it again declared that its focus was increasing food production among the rural poor in accord with the “small-farmer model”.¹¹⁵ Perceiving that poor states were plagued by high food and oil costs, its creators originally designed the IFAD to mobilize capital from oil exporting nations, so-called ‘petrodollars’, in international rural “development” (“An Arab ‘Marshall Plan’”), although the share of capital provided by OPEC countries was shrinking later.¹¹⁶ (Except for these contributions, OPEC countries’ ‘aid’ focused neither on the poorest countries nor on agriculture.¹¹⁷) Since member countries were slow to contribute, IFAD lacked funds at first and did not begin operations until late 1977.¹¹⁸ By 2001, it had provided US\$7 billion in loans for 600 projects.¹¹⁹ Like other agencies, the IFAD focused on Asia.¹²⁰ It also tried to get other funding bodies to favor the rural poor through co-financing projects.¹²¹ Around 2000, its typical projects were about raising smallholders’ incomes, improving institutions, transferring technology, agrarian reform, microfinance, teaching rural women new skills, tribal development and self-reliant water management.¹²²

113 Around 1990, it employed a staff of 140. Abbott 1992, p. 28.

114 Comptroller General 1980, part 2, p. 4; see also FAO Industry-Cooperative Programme, 13th Session of the General Committee, 25–26 May 1977, FAO, RG 9, ICP, Summary Reports of the Executive Committee (remarks by Sartaj Aziz); “Notes for Dr. Phillips’ Address to the FAO/Bankers Programme General Committee Meeting”, 7 June 1979, FAO, RG 9, DDD, BK 51/1. The IFAD’ establishment also built on other proposals, like Sri Lanka’s for a World Fertilizer Fund and earlier ideas of an “inputs fund”. See Report of the Council of FAO, 63rd Session, 15–19 July 1973, CL 63/Rep, FAO, RG 7, reel 517; “Official Report of the US Delegation to the Fifty-Sixth Session of the FAO Council, Rome, Italy June 7–18, 1971”, NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73, Box 459, 6/1/71.

115 *IFAD and NGOs* 2000, p. 9; Woodhouse 2008, p. 26 (quote). For similar goals in 1987–1991, see Mullen 1995, pp. 49–50.

116 Talbot 1994, p. 114; Comptroller General 1980, p. 1; Hunter 1984, p. 212; Shihata 2011, p. 45; *Feeding the World’s Population* 1984, p. 36; Mullen 1995, p. 46. Quote: Marei 1976, p. 102, see *ibid.*, pp. 102–111. For influential figures’ ideas about mobilizing Arab money, see Shapley 1993, pp. 517–518 (for the Shah of Iran, see also Sharma 2013, p. 584); Thee 2003, p. 175 (recollections by Suhadi Mangkusuwondo on the North-South dialogue group); Freeman to Flanigan, 24 June 1974, NARA, Nixon papers, Subject Files AG Box 2, Ex AG, 1974; attachment to Freeman to Marei, 17 July 1974, FAO, RG 22, UN-43/6, vol. 1. Former FAO Director-General Sen claimed to have floated the idea in 1967: Sen to Butz, 20 September 1974, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5847, Food 2, Oct 1–Nov 26, 1974.

117 See Hunter 1984, pp. 171, 174; Shihata 2011, p. 44.

118 Comptroller General 1980, p. 1; Talbot 1994, p. xxv.

119 Interview with Sartaj Aziz, 30 August 2001, p. 81, United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007.

120 *Feeding the World’s Population* 1984, p. 93.

121 Seddon 1993, p. 73.

122 *IFAD and NGOs* 2000, pp. 16–23.

The IFAD's first president, Abdelmuhsin Al-Sudeary of Saudi Arabia, described its objectives as "Growth with Social Justice" and its "main target groups" as "small farmers and rural landless workers".¹²³ In 1988, his successor, Idriss Jazairy of Algeria, said that the institution aimed to benefit "the smallholders, the landless, the nomads, agro-pastoralists, rural poor women and fishermen".¹²⁴ But the number of livestock projects in 1978–1987 was just 5.9 percent of the total. Most of its projects were comprehensive and administrated under the rubrics of "agricultural development" and rural development in general.¹²⁵ Raising grain production was a major goal, and to reach small farmers, IFAD "does not apply the 12 per cent internal rate of return criterion commonly used by the World Bank", an FAO official wrote.¹²⁶

But contrary to its lofty rhetoric, the IFAD was a loan institution that demanded repayment. Accordingly, at least half of the IFAD's loans and projects in 1986–1990 was for middle-income countries, and in 1978–1990, the proportion of low-interest loans fell to below half.¹²⁷ In this period, the 13 countries with the lowest average consumption of calories received only 17 percent of the IFAD's loans.¹²⁸ Thus, as its own data revealed, it was not much different from other 'development' institutions in that only a small part of its activities was actually devoted to the rural poor in the poorest countries. Similarly, an independent evaluation of its projects in 1994–2003 found that half of them had only a modest impact, especially on women, and most had no impact beyond the period of financing; the rural poor in the poorest countries received few loans; the amount of food consumed by most participants increased only modestly or fell; and "IFAD has not yet become a leader on rural poverty issues in international circles".¹²⁹ Because of its limited staff, the IFAD had no mid-level officers in 'target' countries and was incapable of a continuous 'policy dialogue'.¹³⁰

Except for the last point, the U.S. Agency of International Development's role was similar. Some of its numbers looked good. From fiscal 1973 to 1975, the percentage and absolute amount of money spent on what counted toward increasing food production and improving nutrition rose steeply in the context of its "small farmer strategy".¹³¹ But critics charged that, contrary to its figure of 90 percent,

123 Address by Al-Sudeary, 26 May 1977, FAO, RG 9, DDC, BK 51/1.

124 Quoted in Seddon 1993, p. 74.

125 Seddon 1993, p. 76.

126 Abbott 1992, pp. 28–29 (quote p. 28). For a list of IFAD projects, including many for small agriculturalists (but some "Not effective"), see Jazairy et al. 1992, pp. 366–370.

127 Mullen 1995, pp. 52–53.

128 Mullen 1995, p. 54.

129 Poate et al. 2005, pp. iv, 5, 24, 41 (quote), 43, 45, 144. A more recent Canadian evaluation argued, on the basis of vague criteria, that IFAD projects were mostly effective in the reduction of poverty but often not in regard to women. See *Development Effectiveness Review* 2014.

130 Interview with Sartaj Aziz, 30 August 2001, p. 85, United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007.

131 AID, "Implementation of 'New Directions' in Development Assistance: Report to the Committee on International Relations . . .", 22 July 1975, pp. 5 and 9 (quote) of the document, Ford Library, Stanley Scott Papers, Box 2, AID, Stan Scott's Activities 1975–76 (1). See also Comptroller General 1980, pp. 43–44.

only 32 percent of official U.S. ‘aid’ was received by the poorest countries (21 percent if food aid, Peace Corps expenditures, and USAID’s Economic Support Funds were included) and that data saying that more than half of USAID funds went to food production and nutrition included large expenses for electrification and road construction.¹³² According to the agency’s Agricultural Development Policy paper in April 1978, the most successful measures for increasing food production involved agricultural research, the construction of infrastructure (specifically roads, water and electricity) and improvements in marketing, none of which specifically targeted the poor.¹³³ In April 1976, a circular from USAID headquarters to its field offices complained that many project proposals still did not include an evaluation of negative effects on the poor.¹³⁴ One anthropologist saw USAID’s problems rather in implementation and deep-seated prejudice than planning:

Despite the rhetoric of the New Directions and despite the many social soundness analyses attached to project design documents, it is sadly clear that development activities during the 1970s and early 1980s reveal little predication of interventions on effective participation by the rural poor.¹³⁵

Rather, ruralites were viewed as “obstacles to development”.¹³⁶

One must keep in mind that USAID’s budget decreased in real terms from the period 1968–1972 until 1983,¹³⁷ and its staff was reduced by 44 percent (more than 8,000 people) from fiscal 1968 to fiscal 1974.¹³⁸ For example, its funding of fertilizer procurement was reduced by over 80 percent from fiscal 1968 to fiscal 1974.¹³⁹ Programs to supply other agricultural inputs shrunk further after 1977 and for rural infrastructure from 1979 on.¹⁴⁰ The agency’s New Directions program increased the percentage of its resources that went through UN institutions. And it strengthened its ties with NGOs that managed an increasing part of USAID’s funds.¹⁴¹ Though the “small farmer strategy” continued to dominate U.S. ‘aid’ policies verbally, the emphasis beginning in about 1982 was on getting non-industrialized countries to institute unregulated markets, abolish subsidies and produce goods for export.¹⁴²

132 Moore Lappé et al. 1980, pp. 17, 35.

133 Nicholson 1979, p. 224.

134 AID, “Program and Project Issues in AID’s ‘New Directions’”, 28 April 1976, in: Talbot 1977, p. 278.

135 Horowitz 1986a, p. 253.

136 Horowitz and Painter 1986b, p. 3.

137 The Commission on Security and Economic Assistance, “A Report to the Secretary of State”, n.d. (1983), pp. 13 and 17 of the document, NARA, RG 286, 250/67/01/01, Entry 3, Box 1.

138 USAID, “Introduction to the FY 1974 Development Assistance Program Presentation to the Congress”, Ford Library, Vice Presidential Papers, Box 136, AID; see also “Remarks – John A. Hannah, May 1, 1973”, NARA, Nixon papers, FG 11, Box 11, EX FG 11–4, AID, 1973–8/9/74; “Reform of the U.S. Economic Assistance Program”, January 1972, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5569, Foreign Relations 2.

139 “Draft resolution III on fertilizers”, attachment 1: “A.I.D. Financed Fertilizer procurement” (ca. October 1974), Ford Library, Paul C. Leach Files, Box 10, World Food, November 23–30, 1974.

140 *Feeding the World’s Population* 1984, p. 745.

141 Wieters 2017, pp. 243–244.

142 *Feeding the World’s Population* 1984, pp. 246–247, 257–264, 272–274 (quote p. 246).

It was the same with FAO. According to an internal evaluation, as of 1 January 1977, no more than 15 percent of total budget for all FAO programs “directly aimed at the rural poor”. The rest was claimed to benefit rural poor only inadvertently, indirectly or in the long term.¹⁴³ Of 21 agricultural projects in the FAO/Bankers Programme in 1974–1978, most were for agro-industries and only claimed to “depend on a production component drawing from small farmers”.¹⁴⁴ Of 39 FAO projects evaluated in 1979, 15 had big farmers as main beneficiaries, five middle farmers or urban dwellers, and only nine helped primarily small peasants or landless workers.¹⁴⁵

It also seems that non-industrialized countries’ development programs were often lacking a poverty orientation. This was also the case in India, for example, although Indira Gandhi was elected prime minister in India in 1971 under the slogan “Banish poverty”, and by 1973, her country had introduced several programs aimed at reducing the poverty of peasants.¹⁴⁶ The succeeding Janata Party-led government claimed to introduce policies oriented toward rural poverty alleviation, condemning earlier (Congress Party) approaches as “elitist”.¹⁴⁷ However, between 1978 and 1985, India’s large Integrated Rural Development Programme, aiming at raising monetary incomes, resulted in only 3 percent of the overall target groups climbing over the national poverty line, defined by an average daily consumption of 2,400 calories. At best, 18.7 percent of the program’s participants surpassed this threshold.¹⁴⁸ As other examples, poverty reduction was a major objective of Kenya’s development plan for 1979–1983, “but no concrete targets are established”, and Nigeria’s development plan for 1975–1980 neglected millet (a crop which many of the poor grew) and included contradictory data concerning sorghum and corn.¹⁴⁹

Structural problems

There were also problems concerning an organizational level. A 1975 ‘World Bank’ study noted that “the best means of reaching large numbers of small farmers is still unclear”.¹⁵⁰ This was also true for credit programs in the narrow sense. As

143 “Integrated Rural Development: FAO Policy” (revised draft), n.d. (1979), FAO, RG 9, UN10/65II.

144 “Note for the discussion on policy for the FAO/Bankers Programme”, May 1978, FAO, RG 9, DDD, BK 51/1.

145 Maaß 1981, p. 221.

146 For Gandhi, see Chavan to Irvin [1972], NARA, Nixon papers, WHCF, SF, CO Box 36, (EX) CO 66, 1/1972. See also “Verbatim records of Plenary Meeting of the [FAO] Conference”, 13 November 1973, FAO, RG 6, film reel 538.

147 WCARRD/INF 2, “Recommendations made by Governments in their Country Review Papers”, January 1979, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Interdepartmental Committee.

148 Srivastava 1990, pp. 22–23, 27, 33.

149 Ghai et al. 1979a, p. 68; Central Planning Office, Federal Ministry of Economic Development and Reconstruction, Lagos, “Guidelines for the Third National Development Plan 1975–1980”, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 24, NA Nigeria 1973.

150 Quoted in “Proposal, as revised by the Investment Centre, for a study on the role of farmer-level organizations in channeling credit to small farmers in agricultural development projects”, December 1977, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. I.

the leader of the loan sector of the development field after 1973, the ‘World Bank’ emphasized small farmers even less than its predecessor the USAID had. None of them tried to extend its programs to “the very poorest farmers or to landless farm workers”.¹⁵¹ In 1975, a consultation committee of the Asian Development Bank advised it to pay more attention to the rural poor, but the committee acknowledged that the ADB, like “the rest of the development community”, had yet to find a way to reach them.¹⁵² In 1978, an FAO working group found that the agency had neither the “machinery” for poverty-oriented rural development projects nor any criteria to apply in their planning and evaluation,¹⁵³ and in 1979, Dharam Ghai and others noted: “Relatively little work has been done in applying the basic needs approach to development and programmes at the national level”.¹⁵⁴

Toni Hagen’s critical evaluation of development projects in the 1980s concluded that they failed more often than not, especially when organized by national or international development agencies, whereas projects organized by NGOs or private companies had a higher success rate; not a single integrated rural development project had remotely met its expectations; the projects with the largest budgets were the least successful; and those with a high own contribution by locals were among the most successful.¹⁵⁵ The famous development economist Paul Streeten’s assessment of NGOs in the 1990s was more reluctant: “Frequently they do not reach the poor, and hardly ever the poorest”. They had no impact on 80 percent of the 1.3 billion people living in extreme poverty, but he added: “NGOs may be doing less harm than governments in the field and may even be doing some good”.¹⁵⁶

Integrated rural development (IRD) projects in particular were often regarded as failures. From 1965 to 1986, 40 percent of the ‘World Bank’s’ agricultural development projects were of that type, and 55 percent of all IRD projects in that period were in Africa. Half of all audited IRD projects failed, and two-thirds of the failures were in Africa.¹⁵⁷

Another problem with the new, ambitious IRD approach to rural development was a lack of “suitable projects”, as various agencies called it with little variation.¹⁵⁸ Among the reported difficulties was the inability of non-industrialized countries’

151 Donald 1976, pp. 3–10 (quote on p. 6).

152 “Recommendations from the Asian Development Bank Consultative Committee on a strategy for investment in support of agricultural and rural development in Asia”, 6 December 1975, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Rural Development 1972–1976.

153 “Summary of Observations and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Rural Development 29–30 May 1978”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 6, IDC.

154 Ghai et al. 1979a, p. viii.

155 Hagen 1988, pp. 22, 92–94, 101. Hagen had a positive bias toward private business (“Man has an orientation toward the market economy”, *ibid.*, p. 27).

156 Streeten 1997, pp. 196–197, 210.

157 *Learning From World Bank History* 2014, p. 14.

158 Comptroller General 1980, pp. i–ii, for USAID; “Minutes of Meeting of Field Committee for Asia”, 26 November 1976, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, November 1976–January 1980; similar quote in IBRD, Bangladesh Aid Group, Paris, 4 and 5 June 1975, “Chairman’s Report of Proceedings”, AfZ, NL Umbricht, Bangladesh Aid Group Further Meetings, 1974–1980 (about USAID). See also Agricultural Initiative 1975, p. 93.

institutions to identify, prepare and operate projects.¹⁵⁹ Such reports hint at the different outlooks of national or local authorities, on the one hand, and foreigners, on the other hand, which may have contributed to the patronizing way in which international development agencies offered “large standardized packages” to all countries without recognizing their differences.¹⁶⁰

Until at least 1990, Japan based its ODA on the trickle-down theory, and initiatives for more poverty orientation had little effect. One reason was that the government’s ‘aid’ apparatus was incapable to run many small projects.¹⁶¹ Such organizational limits were also mentioned as a reason why the ‘World Bank’, Canadian International Development Agency and West German Ministry for Economic Cooperation tended to support big projects instead of small basic needs projects.¹⁶² Small but influential European countries like Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands concentrated their ‘aid’ on countries that had national policies for poverty alleviation but were themselves mostly unable to implement projects to this end.¹⁶³

Most importantly, projects to alleviate rural poverty failed because of mechanisms on the ground. The failure of development projects has generally often been ascribed to squandering money, poor planning and organization, paternalism and bribery, among other reasons.¹⁶⁴ The failures disillusioned many ‘aid’ workers in the field.¹⁶⁵ In the case of rural poverty alleviation through the small peasant approach, ‘aid workers’ tended to end up in close cooperation with wealthy and well-educated villagers, usually with men. Among the reasons were convenience (e.g., to be able to use existing privately owned infrastructure), foreigners’ lack of language knowledge and the need to cooperate with local authorities who usually had close ties to economic powerful village elites. Consequently, they tended to channel resources to places close to roads rather than remote settlements and more to larger than smaller farmers.¹⁶⁶ “The rigorous social mobilization process [of consulting the local poor for what to do, C.G.] is not the methodology that was adopted in UNDP projects”, said Ponna Wignaraja about the practice in the 1990s.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, the pressure to prove performance and present results discouraged participatory practices (which nearly everybody pretended to pursue) and led ‘aid workers’ to confine their exchanges largely to circles of ‘experts’.¹⁶⁸ The very concept of ‘participation’

159 “Notes for Dr. Phillips’ Address to the FAO/Bankers Programme General Committee Meeting”, 7 June 1979, FAO, RG 9, DDD, BK 51/1.

160 Ferguson 2014 (1990), pp. 70 (quoting Gavin Williams), 259.

161 Nuscheler 1990, pp. 58–59.

162 Hancock 1989, pp. 220–221.

163 Stokke 1995b, p. 18.

164 See Hancock 1989.

165 See Dünki 1987, generally for Switzerland and on p. 26 for West Germany.

166 See Mosse 2005, esp. pp. 57, 84–85; see also Erler 1985, esp. p. 88. These mechanisms are also briefly touched upon in “Boerma/McNamara Round Table: Draft Note for Preparation of Brief on Rural Development” [1973], FAO, RG 9, Subject Files III, FAO/IBRD Round Table.

167 Interview with Ponna Wignaraja, 6 March 2001, p. 95, United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007.

168 Mosse 2005, p. 161; Erler 1985. A typical example is documented in the field trip notes in Beloncle 1985.

usually masked a top-down approach through which development workers defined projects and communication channels and then ‘enlightened’ and activated locals.¹⁶⁹ So-called motivators or animators, sent by foreigners, the nation-state or churches to the countryside and working closely together with village elites, were key to this approach.¹⁷⁰ Since the 1990s, agents of microfinance organizations have become crucial in such processes of top-down pseudo-participation, arguing that they aim at “empowerment”.¹⁷¹

Thomas Hüsken has argued that many ‘aid workers’ found a rationale for working together with corrupt officials and dignitaries on the local level who appropriated ‘aid’ funds in the convenient assumption of an immutable cultural difference, thereby reproducing, or producing, that cultural difference.¹⁷² In a way, the existing power structures meant that infusing large sums of capital to the countryside in non-industrialized societies intensified inequality by necessity.

Detrimental effects of rural anti-poverty projects

A study from the early 1970s of 74 countries concluded that “hundreds of millions of desperately poor people throughout the world have been hurt rather than helped by economic development”.¹⁷³ In 1976, a joint FAO/WHO publication noted that past development policies “have commonly had the effect of aggravating malnutrition”.¹⁷⁴ Toni Hagen found that many of the largest development projects that he evaluated were harmful.¹⁷⁵ Critics doubted that the ‘World Bank’s’ loans of US\$2 billion in 1974–1981 “have had any impact on poverty”, and average real income had continued to decline.¹⁷⁶

Worse, an FAO functionary noted in 1978 that rural poverty had been “aggravated by the forced sale of land by small and marginal farmers driven into debt by their inability to meet the higher costs of the new technology, especially during the crop failures caused by drought and floods in South Asia in 1971–74”, that is, by the very process that many rural development projects wanted to intensify. This process had even led poor farmers into bonded labor in, for example, Java,¹⁷⁷ and the new technologies led “capitalist farmers” to evict their tenants in order

169 Green 2014, pp. 37–39.

170 For example, see Sivini 1987, pp. 61–100, on Mali. For Christian motivators in Indonesia, see Rui 2020; Krause 1982, esp. pp. 46, 80. Wignaraja 1990, pp. 127–131, also found animators necessary. Motivators sent to villages were already part of the concept of community development: Immerwahr 2015, pp. 73–79, 117.

171 Pearson 2005, p. 163 (“empowerment has become the new liberation”). Meyerowitz 2021, p. 225 calls it an “emerging scholarly consensus” that microcredit schemes will not empower their customers.

172 Hüsken 2006, esp. pp. 54–55, 135–140 and 135–143.

173 Griffin 1976, quoting Irma Adelman and Cynthia Taft Morris.

174 *Food and nutrition strategies* 1976, p. 13.

175 See Hagen 1988.

176 “Visit to the Philippines, 5–23 June 1981”, Oxfam, Box Tour Reports Asia (not India), Tour Reports Philippines.

177 First draft, 3 April 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 8, Abercrombie I 1(a).

to farm that land more profitably with agricultural laborers.¹⁷⁸ In 1979, an FAO document noted: “The conventional rural development policies everywhere, generally speaking, have been of scarce benefit to the poor [. . .]. The rural poor [. . .] are becoming poorer often as an indirect result of their own government’s development programme”. Furthermore: “The current productivity oriented policies of many governments are widening the income gap [. . .] within rural societies”.¹⁷⁹

Several studies of small farmer projects in West Africa found them “disappointing” with little participation and many dropouts. To explain this, one hypothesis was that the projects were not intended to help small farmers but to put them into debt and thus tie them to a capitalist economy. Another was that states subverted the projects through marketing interventions (namely official pricing) to benefit the urban population.¹⁸⁰ An evaluation in the 1990s of 16 NGO projects in India, Bangladesh, Uganda and Zimbabwe found that they benefitted the moderately poor more than the poorest (whose incomes were raised in only four projects) and men more than women.¹⁸¹ In other words, such studies found that many development projects exacerbated inequality through unequal access to funds.

Signs of failure: the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development

By the end of the 1970s, the small peasant approach and rural poverty alleviation policies had reached obvious limits. The event that illustrates this best is the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) held in Rome in July 1979. It is considered a failure. Few of its resolutions were implemented. Aside from some verbal references to conference aims as alleviating rural poverty, few of the participating countries allocated specific funds to it, and according to FAO’s own judgment, “very few” instituted meaningful land reforms before 1988; in fact, in most countries, people’s access to agricultural land deteriorated.¹⁸² WCARRD is interesting because of the struggles to determine its themes and scope and the material gathered in preparation.

WCARRD was a major event. The FAO Council accepted in principle the idea of a conference on the problem of the “rural masses” in November 1974. Its preparation took the two years from 1977 to 1979 and included five regional conferences, three interagency meetings, and some other events. At least 53 states

178 “Impact and Implication of the Policies Regarding External Trade, Aid and Private Investment in Agrarian Reform and Rural Development” [1978], FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 8, 11(f) Mr Del Castillo.

179 “FAO for ROAP” (1979), pp. 12 and 56 of the document, FAO, RG 15, LUNO, FA 13/2.

180 Richards 1985, p. 39.

181 Riddell and Robinson 1995, p. 65.

182 *The Impact of Development Strategies* 1988, pp. 1, 3 (quote), 33, 38–46; Talbot 1994, p. 73. The initial reaction of the media and within the FAO was also skeptical: Raymond to Santa Cruz, “Evaluation of WCARRD Media Coverage”, 13 August 1979, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 5, Follow-up.

prepared country reviews, and 115 “case studies” were produced.¹⁸³ In attendance were four heads of state (including Presidents Nyerere of Tanzania and Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh); about 94 government ministers; 1,385 delegates and observers; representatives of 22 UN organizations, 18 intergovernmental organizations, and 40 NGOs; and 430 journalists.¹⁸⁴

An important point of departure was the observation that development policies oriented toward economic growth had “had no real effect on eliminating the destitution of the rural masses [. . .] because of inadequate social and economic structures”, specifically, concentrated land ownership. “[I]nitially conceived as having a narrower scope”, the WCARRD took on a broader “dimension” by placing land reform within issues of agriculture and general development.¹⁸⁵ This also meant, as one document put it: “As the Conference deals with rural development, it contains a bit of everything”.¹⁸⁶ The conference considered land reform in conjunction with increasing the political and economic participation of the rural poor; strengthening associations, cooperatives and labor unions; building infrastructure; and creating new institutions,¹⁸⁷ which also incorporated rural power structures.

The WCARRD re-emphasized raising small agricultural producers’ productivity by providing them inputs, services and access to markets, supplemented by a call for improving their access to land and paying more attention to the active role of women.¹⁸⁸ One preparatory document outlined as main objectives: “Agrarian reform and rural development objectives for the 1980s geared to eradicate poverty, improve quality of life, increase production, promote employment and increase effective demand”.¹⁸⁹ Participants envisioned national programs of action that included ceilings on land ownership and tenancy reforms. The FAO offered to provide states data and help with drafting and evaluating policies, but it wanted

183 “Why FAO is organizing a world conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development”, draft, May 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 6, Information and Publicity I; “Draft Report-2”, 28 May 1979, *ibid.*, Box 14, RU 7/46.1, vol. V (quote); for WCARRD’s genesis, see draft statement by Santa Cruz, 23 February 1979, FAO, WCARRD, Box 10, Santa Cruz IV. See also Islam 2005, pp. 345–349.

184 See FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 6, Heads of State; Raynaut to Santa Cruz, 13 August 1979, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 5, Follow-up; “World Conference” 1979, p. 5. Slightly different figures are in: Ad hoc Meeting of the ACC Task Force on Rural Development, 27–28 September 1979, “Overall Assessment of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development and Its Implications for the UN System in Terms of Follow-up Action”, FAO, RG 9, UN 10/65 III.

185 FAO Conference, November 1977, 19th Session 12 November–1 December 1977, “Draft Report of Planning – Part 10, Agenda Item 16”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 1, Agenda and Comments I. See also “New Dimensions of the WCARRD”, 7 November 1977, *ibid.*, Box 13, RU 7/46, vol. VII and also WF/16, press release on the third meeting of the preparatory committee for the World Food Conference, 4 October 1974, FAO, RG 22, WFC – Press Releases.

186 “Brief for the Director-General on Points Which Could Be Raised at the ACC Meeting, London, 5–7 April 1978”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 1, ACC.

187 See already “Draft report of the first committee” of the World Food Conference, 15 November 1974, FAO, RG 22, WFC – Docs. of the Committees.

188 Abbott 1992, p. 123.

189 “Draft Annotated Provisional Agenda”, 7 March 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 1, Agenda and Comments I.

to leave the rest to national authorities.¹⁹⁰ Unlike the World Food Conference, the WCARRD set no deadlines for its measures and founded no new institutions.

Land reform was the crucial issue. In the 1970s, many scholars argued that reducing rural poverty and inequality required redistributing wealth and thus land.¹⁹¹ The U.S. anti-communist expert Roy Prosterman found land reforms necessary to prevent revolutions.¹⁹² ‘World Bank’ President McNamara added in 1971 that land reform was desirable “not only on grounds of equity, but on grounds of efficiency as well”.¹⁹³ Since latifundists did not farm their holdings as intensely as small growers, McNamara advocated a “reasonable redistribution of land”, like what occurred when Taiwan instituted its ceiling on agricultural holdings after World War II.¹⁹⁴ However, some of the authors in an influential ‘World Bank’-sponsored publication cautioned against land reform and advised only moderate reforms of tenant farming conditions.¹⁹⁵ Despite the Bank’s supposed positive view of land reform, it “rarely” financed it prior to the 1990s.¹⁹⁶ The USAID also found unequal land distribution in the late 1970s a serious obstacle to equality and to raising production, and in 1978, the Presidential Commission on World Hunger recommended that U.S. President Carter pursue land reform in his foreign policy, but U.S. representatives abroad often opposed steps in this direction in international fora when other countries called for it.¹⁹⁷ Two researchers with the USAID who considered land redistribution in Bangladesh imperative spoke of the “reluctance among foreign aid institutions to provide direct support for agrarian reform”. The U.S. General Accounting Office rejected land reform.¹⁹⁸ Many development planners thought that rural development needed “social and institutional change”,¹⁹⁹ but it was an open

190 FAO, World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Report, July 1979, pp. 4–10, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 14, RU 7/46.1 Annex; Marchisio and di Biase 1986, pp. 115–116.

191 For example, see Griffin 1976, especially pp. 8–10; see also Islam 1989, p. 165; Pennison to Bildesheim, 6 May 1974, FAO, RG 15, REUR, PR 1/2, vol. I.

192 White 2005, p. 177.

193 Speech to the Board of Governors, 27 September 1971, in: *The McNamara Years* 1981, p. 155.

194 McNamara 1973, p. 67.

195 See Bell 1974, pp. 59–62; Bell and Dunloy 1974, pp. 131–133; see also Ahlvia 1974, p. 81.

196 Binswanger and Landell-Mills 1995, p. 14. See also Hayter 1971, pp. 153–156. Palmer 1997, chapter “General – Land reform”, p. 1 mentions a ‘World Bank’ policy to support small farmers through land reform.

197 For USAID, see Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 78; excerpts from the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 in “First Draft to World Hunger Working Group”, 9 November 1977, NARA, RG 359, 350/8/23–26/0, Box 3, B; “Meeting of the Board of Trustees of International Food Policy Research Institute”, n.d. (1978?), FAO, RG 12, ES, IL 3/445, vol. II. For the commission, see “White House Press Briefing Sol Linowitz, Chairman, Presidential Commission on World Hunger”, 5 October 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 11, U.S. Commission on World Hunger; *The LNOR Link*, no. 286, 13 October 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 10, H. Santa Cruz III. But see “Official Report of the US Delegation to the Sixteenth Session of the FAO Conference, Rome, Italy, November 6–25, 1971”, NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73, Box 460, AGR 3 FAO, 11/23/71; cf. Varghese, “Back to the Office Report”, August 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 19, RU 7/46.7 Asia and the Far East.

198 Januzzi and Peach 1980, p. 72 (quote); U.S. General Accounting Office 1975, pp. 5, 22–24.

199 *Feeding the World’s Population* 1984, p. 301.

question whether it was politically possible or desirable. Here they reached the limits of their influence.

The FAO had long been very reluctant to take up the politically sensitive issue of land reform and produced little more than rhetoric for 30 years. The first FAO-organized world conference on agrarian reform in 1965 had failed to produce an international strategy and even a common understanding of what land reform was.²⁰⁰ Some in the FAO argued that greater productivity was the only admissible justification for it.²⁰¹

And there was resistance on the national level. Before the WCARRD, the governments of OECD and, especially, EEC countries made a coordinated effort to strip the main conference document of all relevant content in order to deny the event “any impact or meaning”.²⁰² In particular, the government of Malaysia and the military dictatorships of Chile and Argentina opposed land reform.²⁰³ The disagreement continued after the conference as industrialized states filed reservations against the conference declaration in favor of land reform. National sovereignty over resources and control over foreign investment and the expropriation of land were points of contention. South American dictatorships continued to oppose land reform.²⁰⁴

Criticism also came from the left. Scandinavian countries as well as UNRISD experts like Solon Barraclough, Jacobo Schatan and Pierre Spitz found the FAO’s preparatory documents too technocratic and unpolitical, and the draft Plan of Action was “rather bland and extremely general and vague [. . .] class and group conflicts within the developing countries are being glossed over”.²⁰⁵ Most of the invited participants and institutions belonged to an elitist circle of academics and intellectuals; there were few farmers among them.²⁰⁶ “Bureaucrats and elites cannot solve problems of rural poor without their participation”, commented an angry

200 Maaß 1981, p. 211; Marchisio and di Biase 1986, pp. 112–115, esp. p. 112, note 5, “Bericht über die Weltlandreform-Konferenz, 20. Juni – 2. Juli 1965 in Rom”, PA AA III A3, Nr. 10.

201 Carpenter to de Brichambaut, 13 December 1973, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., Subject Files: FAO-IBRD Round Table.

202 Santa Cruz to Saouma, “Comments Made By Governments on WCARRD/4”, Rough Translation, 14 May 1979, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, WCARRD – Confidential Corr. 1979, vol. II.

203 “Chronological Development of the ‘Declaration of Commitment to Action’, 14th FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East, Kuala Lumpur, 25 July–3 August 1978”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 2, Kuala Lumpur – Malaysia; “Record of Conclusions Reached at the Meeting with the Director-General on Preparation for the WCARRD”, 6 September 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 12, Director-General I – Confidential Correspondence I.

204 “From the Draft Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action to the Final Report: An Analysis of Changes”, 27 July 1979, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., Subject Files, Follow up to Programme of Action: WCARRD, 12–20 July 1979, Annex to Report, FAO, RG 12 ES, RU 7/46.1, vol. II.

205 See “Joint Nordic Submission with Reference to Sections C and D in the FAO Outline to Country Review Papers”, June 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 8, Nordic Countries, and “Comments on Draft Declaration of Principles for WCARRD”, 18 January 1979, *ibid.*, Box 9, Principles and Programme of Action (quote).

206 See enclosures with Nehemiah to Santa Cruz, 18 April 1979, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 9, Santa Cruz IV.

representative from Lesotho who called the conference a “failure” and a “hoax”.²⁰⁷ And before the conference, conflicts, also fueled by a selective invitation policy, arose between the FAO and NGOs, who split into two blocs, sometimes called the “Doers” and “Thinkers”. The latter, the Rome Declaration Group, consisting of about 100 organizations, held a simultaneous counter-meeting in Rome, arguing that development had often harmed the rural poor. The Rome Declaration Group advocated poor countries’ integration into world trade no longer.²⁰⁸ Even those NGOs that did attend the WCARRD criticized its documents for referring to farmers as “targets” and “objects” and called for the establishment of new rural power structures in non-industrialized countries and “development not only *for* the people but *by* the people and *with* the people”.²⁰⁹

In essence, states left rural power structures untouched although land reform would not have meant revolution. However, the WCARRD in 1979 demonstrated that, while the small farmer approach to poverty alleviation was still dominant, any plans according to which the governments of capitalist countries, industrialized or not, would make small farmers more productive by commercializing their operations were – even on a policy level – subordinate to the interests of big farmers to which these governments were wedded. This set limits on any new models of capital accumulation and to altering the face of the countryside.

Conclusion

In 1979, the FAO came to a devastating conclusion. The 1970s had brought no improvement to hunger and malnutrition. The amount of food that non-industrialized countries supplied for themselves had decreased as had their share of global agricultural exports. “Existing patterns of rural development have proved inadequate for any significant reduction of poverty. Little progress has been made towards the establishment of an effective system of world food security [. . .]”.²¹⁰ “[T]he overall progress [. . .] in solving the world food problem have [sic] been essentially marginal”.²¹¹ From 1970 to 1978, food production grew more slowly than the population in 58 of 106 so-called ‘developing’ countries.²¹² (The same was true

207 WCARRD, Summary Notes (Plenary), 19 July 1979, afternoon session, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 12, WCARRD-Summary Notes, July 1979.

208 See Sharp 1984 (quote); Marchisio and di Biase 1986, p. 116, note 16; Franc 2020, pp. 190–191. See also the file Rome Declaration Group at the Food First Institute, Oakland. For selective invitations, see Weitz to Nehemiah, 30 April 1979, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD – Confidential Correspondence, II 1979.

209 “Statement by Mr. Maxime Rafranson (WCC) of the Consortium of NGOs Attending the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Rome, 12–20 July 1979”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 28, RU 7/4630, vol. VI (emphasis original).

210 “New International Development Strategy, Draft paragraphs proposed by FAO”, 6 November 1979, FAO, RG 12, ES, UN 29/15.

211 Sartaj Aziz, “The Complex Reality of the Food Problem”, 1979, in: Dil 2000, p. 84.

212 Excerpt from a 1980 report by the Independent Commission on International Development Issues (also called the Brandt Commission or the North-South Commission) in: Pallach 1986, pp. 408–409.

for 46 countries, 23 of which were in Africa, from 1979–1981 to 1985–1987.²¹³ In 1982, Maurice Williams, the World Food Council’s Executive Director from the USA, stated that the “proportion of the total population with inadequate diets has increased over the position of the last decade”.²¹⁴ Another publication did report that the proportion of the world population that was malnourished declined from 1975 to 1985, but there was little improvement in respect to young children, and the absolute figures were rising.²¹⁵ The small peasant approach did not solve the world hunger problem nor, arguably, the world food problem.

However, there *was* some shift toward funding agriculture and rural development projects and programs in the early 1970s, which lasted for about two decades, some elements longer; and policies and projects *did* channel more resources to ruralites living in deep poverty, small peasants in particular. It is clear that anti-poverty rural development concepts and programs had deep contradictions. As one example, capital accumulation was the goal, but then how could it be expected to happen without growing inequality, that is, exploitation? But it would be too simplistic to deny altogether that development agencies in industrialized states, non-industrialized countries and international organizations sought to reduce hunger and poverty, undertook measures to this end, aimed at small producers and strove for capitalist penetration of the countryside to bring about rural economic transformation in non-industrialized societies. It was not just rhetoric.²¹⁶ The case studies in this book will further corroborate this claim.

Poverty and chronic hunger persisted and capital accumulation did not occur, or did so in ways contrary to the plans, but this was not only because of bad intentions and deceptive declarations; limitations of policy design and structural capacity contributed, and so did the fact that the social dynamics in non-industrialized societies were beyond agencies’ control. The consequences were complex. Social engineering failed, as usual; new production methods were often not spreading as anticipated; and in many places, the small peasant approach aggravated social polarization and reproduced hunger.

213 Sartaj Aziz, “Agricultural Policies for the 1990s”, 1990, in: Dil 2000, p. 163.

214 Williams’ statement, 28 September 1982, FAO, RG 12, UN-44/1 WFC.

215 “Prevalence of Malnutrition” 1989, pp. 202–205.

216 Cf. Ferguson 2014 (1990), pp. 14–19.

6 Unexpected limits to growth

The spread of capital and technology

If the rural poor in non-industrialized countries were to be saved from hunger by integrating them into market relations, this, of course, did not only concern governments and international organizations. Massive business interests were involved as well. Who if not private companies would expand capitalist structures? The economic crisis evolving since 1973 made it all the more important for the industrialized economies to tap new markets. No organization is better suited to demonstrate what came out of such efforts than the FAO's Industry-Cooperative Programme (ICP), in which many agribusiness firms were involved. I start this chapter with its history and analyze its structures, activities and the aims of its participating companies, and I evaluate the ICP's impact.¹ Then I turn to specific agribusiness sectors relevant to the staple food production in non-industrialized countries and assess the extent to which they were able to expand. This will show the limited extent of the global spread of technology to small peasants, on the one hand, and the role of transnational corporations in this process, including a limited flow of capital, on the other hand.

Transnational agribusiness in a global organization: the FAO's Industry-Cooperative Programme and the world food crisis

Founded in 1966 and dissolved in 1978, the ICP was, according to FAO's Director-General Boerma, a "joint venture" of transnational agribusiness corporations and the UN. Members had to be multinationals, corporations active in more than one country.² The ICP was unique, the only institution that represented business in the UN system. For the multinationals, this was the ideal base from which to launch expansive projects in close contact with the development community.

The ICP was founded in the context of the FAO changing its orientation from data collection and technical advice into development under the directorship of Binay Ranjan Sen (1956–1967). In the mid-1960s, investment-focused programs

1 This part of the chapter draws heavily from Gerlach 2008.

2 Extract of statement by Mr. A.H. Boerma at the 6th Session of General Committee, ICP, 23–24 March 1970, in paper dated 15 July 1971, FAO, RG 9 Subject Files I/ICP IV. Multinationals: Hugill, "Agribusiness", p. 108, and ICP, 44th and 45th Sessions of the Executive Committee, 24 and 26 May 1977 of 24 June 1977, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/5.1.

like the FAO/IBRD Cooperative Programme were introduced. Under Sen's successor, Boerma, who was even more inclined toward investment, the FAO/Bankers Programme and the FAO Investment Center followed swiftly. In 1966, 18 mostly U.S.-based and British companies formed the nucleus of the ICP.³ By the mid-1970s, about 100 corporations from nearly 20 countries had joined. They included such prominent firms as Hoechst, Bayer, BASF, Ciba-Geigy, Sandoz, International Minerals and Chemicals (IMC), Dow Chemical, Pfizer, Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), BP, Royal Dutch/Shell (which sold pesticides and/or fertilizers, and, increasingly, seeds); Massey Ferguson, Caterpillar, John Deere, Ford, Fiat, Voest-Alpine (tractors and machinery); Cargill (the only participating major grain trader, which also provided seeds); Mitsubishi, Mitsui (mixed interests); and Ralston Purina, Del Monte, Castle & Cooke, Pillsbury, Heinz, Nestle and Unilever (food processing).⁴ The ICP had a small secretariat at FAO headquarters in Rome headed by the Executive Secretary. Though administratively placed in the FAO's Development Department, the program was financed by membership fees. A corporate leader was elected the chairman and served for two years.⁵ The General Committee composed of senior executives representing their companies met twice a year. Working groups, which met more frequently but irregularly, were established, among others, for pesticides (the biggest, whose companies controlled 90 percent of world production), seeds industry development, farm mechanization training, agricultural by-products, protein foods, dairy, meat, forestry, fisheries and the use of plastics in agriculture.⁶

What the FAO wanted from the ICP was for it to increase the flow of capital to the agriculture of non-industrialized countries, the spread of technology, expertise, training and advice at all levels from local to government levels.⁷ What transnational companies, above all, wanted from it was to gain access to knowledge and data about planned projects from FAO and non-industrialized countries, data on agricultural production, trade, and their relevant policies and legislation. From March 1970 to March 1971, member companies made 950 requests of the FAO for a total of 2,400 documents and sent 250 emissaries to its headquarters.⁸ They also used the FAO as a gateway to the entire UN system to obtain similarly strategic information. (In

3 FAO, Circular letter no. 90, August 1965, PA AA, IIIA2, Nr. 140; Secretary Note to Item 9, Cooperation with Industry (1965), BA B116/20218; Hugill, "Agribusiness", p. 108; Carroz 1967, pp. 469–471; speech of Boerma on Private Banks Program meeting, 8–9 May 1969, FAO 9, SF I, IBRD III. For the Investment Centre, see Maaß 1981, p. 224.

4 For membership lists, see Carroz 1967, p. 472, note 21 (1 January 1968); Simons 1975, pp. 43–44 (1975); Friedrich and Gale 2004, pp. 109–111 (1977).

5 The Executive Secretary in the 1970s was the West German forestry expert Alexander Gunther Friedrich, Walter Simons headed the ICP office in New York. Friedrich and Gale 2004, p. 54.

6 "How big business has started to feed Africa", *Africa*, no. 71, 1977, p. 95; Friedrich and Gale 2004, p. 62.

7 FAO, Circular letter, August 1965 (see note 6/3); paper of 15 July 1971 (see note 6/2).

8 "Programme Achiev[e]ments", 12 March 1971, FAO, RG 9, SF I, ICP IV; see the 20-page list of inquiries by ICP members, enclosure to a memo by V. E. Gale of ICP, 25 November 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8. Sample requests of the UNDP and other agencies for 18 and nine project papers, respectively, in: Ciba-Geigy to Latour (ICP), 10 August 1971 and 23 March 1972, FAO, RG 9, DDI,

1972, the ICP's official name was changed to "Programme of Agro-Allied Industries with FAO and other UN organizations".) However, plans to go beyond "the confines of agriculture, forestry and fisheries" failed. Transnational companies also used the FAO for public relations in order to gain reputations as respected partners in development and improve the international investment climate. Moreover, they sought "solid contacts" with government authorities. The preferred outcome, of course, was to generate specific business opportunities, ideally of a sort where governments or international organizations would assume financial risks and prevent nationalizations.⁹

In going south, it was not unusual for firms to cooperate with national or international development agencies, seeking subsidies. A historian of the Japanese general trading and manufacturing firm Mitsui pointed out in 1973:

In carrying out overseas projects it is often necessary to work through international organizations such as World Bank, The International Development Association, Asian Development Bank or Private Investment Company for Asia, as well as through national development banks and regional associations.

Negotiations required local knowledge, "sophistication and infinite tact".¹⁰

Critical scholars have described the ICP as the ideal tool for multinationals to enter and manipulate the UN system and thus to penetrate non-industrialized countries. In this view, transnational companies had gained massive power and substantial freedom of maneuvering through the organization.¹¹ "It is, of course, the type of organization which gets a bad press from untidy young ladies with their heads full of sociology", a former ICP chairman quipped.¹² Indeed, several facts suggest that the ICP had substantial influence on UN development policies in the 1970s. A number of business-friendly resolutions at the UN World Food Conference in November 1974 came into being as a result of direct input by some of the 69 corporate leaders who – operating from a couple of suites in a hotel opposite the conference venue – were allowed to participate via the ICP. They included resolutions on pesticides, fertilizers, nutrition, the combating of trypanosomiasis in Africa, and

IP 22/8, Box 11, Ciba Geigy I; correspondence between BP and the FAO 1972/73, *ibid.*, Box 10, BP I; Solomon 1978, pp. 167, 169.

9 Paper of 15 July 1971, see note 6/2; "Business International Report on ICP", December 1970, FAO, RG 9, SF I/ICP IV; "Political Exploitation of Economic Efficiency", n.d., FAO 9, Misc., DDI; Albright et al. 1977, especially pp. 53–54; Solomon 1977, p. 70; Maaß 1981, pp. 228–236; "Friedrich Heads FAO's Industry Cooperative Program", *Delegates World Bulletin* 3 (3), 1973 (12 February 1973); quote: Friedrich and Gale 2004, p. 85. Sometimes companies even asked for the FAO's "co-operation and backing" for sales of specific products: Douglas-Pennant (BP) to Simons, ICP, "Nu-Way Benson Mini Drier", 22 September 1971, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 10, BPI. Or they tried to use the ICP to prevent the establishment of industries in non-industrialized countries as unwelcome competition: "Aktentnotiz" by Umbricht of 23 March 1968, AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, FAO Meetings, November 1967–1972.

10 Roberts 1973, pp. 486–487.

11 See George 1977, pp. 184–204; George 1981, pp. 261–293; Maaß 1981.

12 Hugill 1978, p. 280.

the World Soil Charter.¹³ Susan George claimed, sarcastically, that the ICP delegation was the Conference's biggest, larger than that of the USA, although the names of the ICP delegates miraculously vanished from the official list of participants between the provisional and the final version.¹⁴ Ahead of the conference and much in the spirit of what transpired, Victor Umbricht, an influential figure in the ICP, wondered: "Food problem is not a political problem: Can FAO depoliticize it?"¹⁵ Moreover, ICP companies planned to influence discretely the positions of their home governments at the conference.¹⁶ At a preparatory meeting in Toronto, about 180 business leaders (not all of whom were involved in the ICP) discussed ways to increase business in non-industrialized countries that could be related to the world food crisis. But their papers were unspecific, and no substantial steps concerning "subsistence-level farmers" were apparent.¹⁷

Moreover, in 1970, Paul Cornelsen, the vice president of Ralston Purina and then the chairman of the ICP, launched the election of the U.S. fisheries expert Roy Jackson as Deputy Director-General of the FAO (1972–1977) which took place in late 1971. Thus, private business got the second highest official in the biggest UN sub-organization appointed. Once in office, however, Jackson seems to have been "largely left aside" by FAO leaders.¹⁸ Through the FAO, the ICP managed to establish cooperative agreements with other UN sub-organizations and regularly obtained confidential information on planned projects.¹⁹ It was because of the

13 W. Simons, "Implementing World Food Conference Decisions – A Role for Agro-Industry" (March or April 1975), FAO, RG 9, ICP/UN 43/1 II; "Remarks by W.W. Simons", 3 April 1975, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5974, Food 2; "The Follow-Up – ICP Proposals", FAO, RG 9, DDI, PR 4/75; Solomon 1978, pp. 170–172; Simons 1975, p. 40. For the mixed conclusions of an ICP member from the World Food Conference, see Kettle (Massey Ferguson) to Friedrich, n.d., FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 13, Massey Ferguson II.

14 George 1977, p. 189; see UN World Food Conference, Provisional list of delegates, 11 November 1974, Addendum: International Organizations, FAO 22, WFC Docs, Docs. of the Preparatory Committee, fourth file; *PAN*, no. 3, 7 November 1974, p. 1.

15 Notes (by Aziz?) from a meeting of ICP's General Committee, 11 March 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN 43/2B, ICP-General, paraphrasing Umbricht.

16 Kettle (Massey Ferguson) to Friedrich, 4 October 1974, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 13, Massey Ferguson II; Neil Schenet (IMC) to Butz (October 1974), NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr., Box 5847, Food 2, Oct 1–November 26, 1974; Henry J. Heinz to Vidal Naquet, 10 June 1974, FAO, RG 22, UN-43/3A Regional meetings.

17 UN/World Food Conference, DDI:G/74/89, Consultation with Agro-Industrial Leaders, 10–11 September 1974, Toronto, of 26 September 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN 43/2B ICP-General; material in FAO, RG 12, UN 43/2B Consultation with Agro-Industrial Leaders; Simons to Horst Genting, UNDP Senior Agricultural Advisor, FAO, RG 9, DDI, UN 43/1 II; AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, World Food Conference; George 1981, pp. 276–283.

18 See R. H. Dean, Chairman of the Board and CEO of Ralston Purina, to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Hardin, 15 December 1970, and Hardin's answer, 15 February 1971, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1971, Box 5402, Foreign Relations 1 (FAO), Jan–Nov 19, 1971. For U.S. government efforts to get Jackson appointed, see the exchange in NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73 Economic, Box 459, 2/1/71. Quote: Abbott 1992, p. 44.

19 Cooperative agreements were signed with 11 UN sub-organizations from 1969 to early 1971: "Programme achiev[e]ments", 12 March 1971, FAO, RG 9, SF I, ICP IV; Albright et al. 1977.

protests of scientists, NGOs and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions against multinationals', particularly pesticide producers', penetration of the UN that FAO's Director-General Edouard Saouma dismantled the ICP in 1978. The FAO's 1981 official administrative history concealed the fact that the ICP, which had become a political embarrassment, had ever existed.²⁰

Unexpected limits to growth: internal criticism and conflicts

Arguably, the FAO's US\$2 billion, 40-year project to "control" trypanosomiasis with DDT and other chemicals on over seven million square kilometers in Africa (in order to develop an export-oriented cattle industry for the European market) and its contribution to the 'development' of Brazil's Amazonian region were the ICP's biggest commercial successes.²¹ However, many other of its big projects, such as making Sudan (among other regions, Darfur region) the granary and meat supplier for the Arab countries and producing protein-enriched foods for the poor of non-industrialized countries (especially the projects to derive protein from mineral oils, the darling of transnational capital), did largely not materialize.²² And most of those that did were unrelated to the production of grains or starchy roots although the ICP discussed and declared their profound interest in supporting the rural poor in non-industrialized countries and fighting hunger. At the World Food Conference, the Toronto meeting, and a similar gathering of industrialists in London in 1974, multinationals did proclaim their intention to do something about the world food problem.²³ But few educated their employees about that problem and specific repercussions it could have on the corporation's work. Caterpillar was an exception.²⁴ Projects such as tractors for Africa were unrealistic. "[M]arket

Information: Latour (ICP) and Ergas, note for file "FAO Investment Centre and FAO Industry Cooperative Programme", 22 December 1969, FAO, RG 9, SF I, Investment Centre, 1969–70.

- 20 See Phillips 1981; for the discontinuation of ICP, see the files FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/5.1, *Tagessanzeiger*, 18 April 1978, and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 21 June 1978, FAO, RG 13, GII, IN 2/1, brown file Criticisms, vol. III. For the role of the ICFTU, see the correspondence in 1977 in FAO, RG 9, DDD, BK 51/1; less than impartial: Friedrich and Gale 2004, pp. 81 and 83.
- 21 Dinham and Hines 1983, pp. 41–42; George 1977, pp. 186–187; the file FAO, RG 9, DDI, PR 4/44; Jasiorowski to Boerma, 5 October 1973, FAO, RG 22/UN 43/2B Divisional Contributions from FAO; Linear 1982; Linear 1985, pp. 19, 45–70; Otto Matzke, "Die Welternährungslage heute und morgen", *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 7 July 1974; Pickstock 1976.
- 22 C73/LIM/15, Agricultural Adjustment: Sudan, August 1974, FAO, RG 6, Reel 537; Agenda for the meeting of the London Group, 27 May 1974, FAO, RG 9, ICP, IL 3/235; cf. FAO, RG 12, PAG, PAG Matters-Policy 1971–76. For the Darfur project, see also Bös 1984, and for its revival, see Haefliger 2015. I am grateful to Agnes Tandler for information on protein from mineral oil; see also "Italproteine to experiment with synthetic proteins", in: *Daily American*, 8 April 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 10, The British Petroleum Co. Ltd. II.
- 23 For Toronto, see UN/WFC DDI: 6/74/89, "Consultation with Agro Industrial Leaders, 10–11 September 1974, Toronto, Canada", 26 September 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN 43 2.B ICP-General; for London, see Agricultural Initiative 1975.
- 24 See FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 11, Caterpillar I and II.

economics are often a source of frustration”, the ICP’s Deputy Executive Secretary noted about the development of adjusted technologies.²⁵

Generally, ICP member companies complained that non-industrialized countries’ orders for their products fluctuated greatly from year to year, also because they sometimes lacked hard currency, and there were high trade barriers.²⁶ They also could not solve the problem that small-scale institutional credit was not available and small agricultural producers who invested in modern input packages got indebted. Rather companies focused on food processing and the marketing of higher-priced processed foods, including dairy products for urban consumers, and on governments’ capital-intensive plantation, forestry and fishery development projects. And they preferred minority equities, consultancy contracts and providing feasibility studies over making large own investments, which they saw as risky in a time of expropriations, nationalizations and hostility toward multinationals.²⁷ On the contrary, they divested from plantations.²⁸ Nationalizations took place in dozens of post-colonial countries, including many with no socialist orientation whatsoever.²⁹ It was less the aim of business activities to control resources and strategic assets and to increase profits through moving production non-industrialized countries than to find and secure markets.³⁰ And industry was “increasingly convinced that its major role is in the transfer of planning and management skills, technology, and of marketing and distribution systems”, as the ICP’s Executive Secretary put it. Corporate leaders flamboyantly portrayed managerial expertise as the “scarcest input” big business had to offer.³¹

Arguably, firms from different sectors could assess the ICP’s success or failure in different ways. Aside from the food-processing industry, which is less interesting here, pesticide-producing corporations were clearly the most active in the ICP, using it as a powerful public relations instrument. They also urged UN

25 Quote: Simons 1975, p. 42. UN/WFC, DDI:G/74/89, “Consultation with Agro-Industrial Leaders, 10–11 September 1974, Toronto, Canada”, FAO, RG 12, UN 43/2B ICP-General; Walter Simons (ICP), “The World Food Problem – A Role for the Private Sector”, speech, Dallas, 3 April 1975, NARA RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1975, Box 5974, Food 2. Tractors: Simons to Friedrich, 2 April 1976, and Weitz’s sarcastic comments to Yriart, 21 April 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDI/ICP/PR 15/49.

26 George 1981, pp. 71–72; FAO, ICP, “Emergency Measures in Regard to the Supply of Fertilizers and Pesticides”, 12 July 1974, FAO, RG 9, Misc. DDI.

27 Simons 1975, p. 42; Frank 1981b, p. 81; UNCTNC 1983b, pp. 218, 263; Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 39.

28 George 1978, pp. 126–128.

29 See OPIC, Annual Report Fiscal Year 1973, p. 10 of the document, NARA, Nixon Papers, FG 264, Box 1, EX FG 264, 1/1/73 and more generally Box 1; the files Nixon papers, FO, Box 48, EX FO 4–3, International Investment 1971–72, files 1–4; Salzmann 1975, pp. 90–91; Tetzlaff 1980, p. 303; Allen and Viscuzi 1976, p. 153; Akinsanya 1980; on Unilever’s experiences, see Garreau 1977, p. 40.

30 For conceptual literature on the functions of foreign corporate activities, see, for example, Chudnovsky et al. 1999, p. 45; Grosse 1989, pp. 35–38.

31 Friedrich to Huyser, 6 June 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. II; second quote: Friedrich’s telegram to Marei, 12 September 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN 43/2B Consultation with Agro-Industrial Leaders.

organizations not to approve documents unfavorable to the chemical industry, and Swiss chemical firms organized a conspiracy to secure ICP against critics in the UN and silence critical journalists.³² By contrast, the activities of fertilizer companies in and through the ICP were very limited (because a dozen major companies were already cooperating with the FAO in a separate network), those of the producers of agricultural machinery were mostly restricted to advertising their promotional films, and the seed producers only began to organize themselves effectively within the program in 1976. Most of the secretive major grain-trading firms did not even join the ICP.

In addition to showing films, such as Caterpillar's "Lands of Promise, Fields of Hope", Hoechst's "Food for Six Billion" and Ciba-Geigy's "Beacon in the Night" (on fighting the rice stem borer in Indonesia), members' main activity in direct cooperation with ICP seems to have been the organization of workshops and conferences, such as the FAO's seminars "on the safe and effective use" of pesticides in São Paulo, Colombo and Nairobi.³³

For a couple of years, member companies were ready to treat the ICP like a subsidiary that first needed to get established before paying off. Then, they started to complain. Records show their bickering about payment of the modest membership fee (first US\$3,000, later \$5,000) and a substantial fluctuation in membership. For example, from 1970 to March 1972, 29 companies terminated their membership and 26 joined, and from February 1976 to October 1977, 19 firms (nine of them U.S.-based) left, among them Cadbury, Del Monte, General Mills, Heinz, Mitsui, Pfizer, Renault and Sumitomo Trading, and nine (only two of which from the USA) became members.³⁴ U.S. companies' relative lack of interest was a constant concern. After the initial years, they were only 20–30 percent of participants, while Western European firms dominated.³⁵ Opening an office headed by Walter Simons

32 Büttiker to Latour, "International Convention for Plant Protection", 8 August 1972, Rohmer to Friedrich, 18 July 1973 and 2 February 1974 (on UNIDO's Workshop on Pesticides in May 1973), FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 11, Ciba Geigy I and II; *Die Unterwanderung* 1978 is telling about the conspiracy.

33 FAO's Fertilizer Industry Advisory Committee (FIAC) was created in the 1960s. For members, see Gardner-McTaggart to Minnick, 24 October 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDI, PR 7/2. Machinery: Solomon 1977, p. 81. Seeds: Hendrie (Shell) to Nagashima (Mitsubishi Europe), 1 July 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 13, Mitsubishi. Films: FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 11, Caterpillar I; description of films in *ibid.*, Ciba Geigy I and II; Redlhammer to Friedrich, 10 September 1975, and Friedrich's letter, 3 February 1976, *ibid.*, Box 12, Hoechst; "New Partners", *Wall Street Journal*, 18 March 1975.

34 "Programme achiev[e]ments" (see note 6/8); Wrigley (BP) to Friedrich, 17 October 1972, FAO, RG 9 DDI, IP 22/8, Box 10, BP I; material in FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/4 and 22/5.1.

35 Friedrich (ICP) to Weitz, 6 April 1973 and draft of 27 May 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDI, PR 15/49; Paul J. Byrnes, U.S. Permanent Representative to FAO, to Simons, 30 January 1973, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/4; Walton to Cottam, 2 March 1973, FAO, RG 12, ES FA 8/6 II ("an increasingly critical matter"). Of 108 members in 1975, 30 were from the USA, 17 from Britain, 13 from France, eight each from Italy and the Netherlands, seven from Switzerland, six from Japan, five from West Germany and 14 from other countries: Simons 1975, pp. 43–44; list in NARA, RG 59, SNF, Economic 1970–73, Box 458, 12/1/70; Friedrich and Gale 2004, p. 57.

in New York City in 1973 did not help. All of the ICP's chairmen after 1972 were European.

Whoever had expected a vast array of business projects emerging directly from ICP's activities was bitterly disappointed. "ICP is not an important factor in social and economic development in developing countries, nor does business view ICP as an effective link with developing countries", wrote, gloomily, the ICP's secretariat.³⁶ The ICP had yet to "reach take-off point" and become a "success".³⁷ The complaints were mutual. In 1971, ICP's director (an FAO functionary) noted: "Industry's action has so far been relatively disappointing".³⁸ As late as 1975, the ICP's consulting firm, Business International, advocated the FAO's "getting companies focusing on actual investments".³⁹ In 1970, the same consultancy had already concluded: "Majority of ICP members discouraged and disillusioned. Most members have a faint idea of what ICP is doing. ICP has failed to influence FAO, UN agencies or individual governments". Upon becoming the ICP's chairman, Anthony Hugill remarked that members were always asking, "what on earth you are doing in the Programme, what is it doing for your shareholders, what use is it" and this "shouldn't go on for ever".⁴⁰ His predecessor Umbricht judged that ICP had not "made the grade", especially because FAO officials were either too uninterested or too skeptical of business to seek the group's advice, and ICP had failed to serve as consultant for UNIDO, WHO and the 'World Bank'. Criticism of its meetings and reports as superfluous was widespread. Only some members participated in a committed way; dynamics rested on the personal dedication of two dozen business leaders.⁴¹ According to one Massey Ferguson manager, "There is no commercial payoff for members of the Programme".⁴² On the other hand, complaints tended to target group activities, which needed to be more specific, more than ICP as a channel for information and contacts available to individual companies.

Members also criticized the ICP's country missions, which had been planned since 1967 but only began five years later in an effort to focus the program on business investment. Between 1972 and 1977, ICP teams, which included two to four high-level corporate representatives and staff, were sent to ten countries: Dahomey (Benin), Venezuela, Liberia, Sri Lanka, Brazil (twice), Cameroon, Colombia, Pakistan, Tanzania and Senegal. (A dozen more trips were organized

36 "ICP – A strategy for accomplishment", no date, FAO, RG 9, Box 9, DDI, IP 22/5.3, Business International I.

37 ICP, "Closed meeting of the Executive Committee", 27 July 1971, FAO, RG 9, SF I, ICP IV.

38 "Mr. Latour's notes on the Future of Industry-Cooperative Programme", 21 June 1971, FAO, RG 9, SF I, ICP IV.

39 Freeman to Friedrich, 4 August 1975, FAR, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/5.3, Box 3, Business International I.

40 "Business International Report on ICP, December 1970: Summary, conclusions and recommendations", FAO, RG 9, SF I, ICP IV; "Statement J.A.C. Hugill on March 10, 1972, upon his election as chairman [. . .]", FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/4; Osvaldo Ballarin (Nestlé of Brazil), "What do we get out of it?", April 1976, AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, FAO, ICP, 1972-. For Business International in general, see Rubner 1990, pp. 80–85.

41 "Business International Report on ICP" (see note 6/40); "ICP – A strategy for accomplishment" (see note 6/36); Umbricht to Hugill, 23 May 1973, AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, FAO, ICP, 1972-.

42 Address of Powell, 13 December 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 13, Massey-Ferguson III.

by Working Groups.) However, teams usually spent only two or three weeks in a country, reviewing government projects and long-term planning and proposing their own projects. Preparations were often flimsy, the groups lacked local and, sometimes, agricultural expertise, and, consequently, their reports, though listing possible projects, were thin. Above all, country missions hardly ever led to projects involving transnational companies, a fact criticized by members and the governments of countries visited.⁴³ The missions were short lived; there was only one after 1974.⁴⁴ Unlike similar investigations of the U.S.-based Agribusiness Council sketched later in this chapter, the ICP's missions reflected Western European capital interests focusing on Africa and Latin America and were dispatched, with two exceptions, to small- and medium-sized countries without large potential markets in order to explore and open up smaller, otherwise less-interesting economies, especially by influencing government planning, and it was often in response to countries expressing interest in such visits. The FAO also tried to influence the ICP's missions.⁴⁵ But given a strictly national project framework in host countries, this apparently did not lead to any lucrative business prospects.

Outside country missions, the fact that existing projects proposed by governments or FAO were tailored for public funding cooled down corporate enthusiasm. This led to a reversal: ICP member companies were asked to make own proposals for projects. However, from March 1970 to March 1971, they initiated no more than 18.⁴⁶

Three ideologically affirmative studies between 1970 and 1976 came to similar results: member corporations' enthusiasm for ICP was strictly limited. Many even stated that it had failed in the very fields that were found most important beyond generating direct business opportunities: the information that businesses sought was often either not available or of little value, members had to request it, and contacts and informative channels into the UN system beyond the FAO left much to be desired.⁴⁷

43 Plans: Carroz 1967, pp. 480–481. Introduction: exchange in the FAO, RG 9/SF I/ICP IV and V. Problems: Wrigley to Friedrich, 17 October 1972 (see note 6/34); ICP, General Committee, tenth session – Conference, Summary Record, 22 March 1974, FAO, RG 22, UN-43/2B; Ballarin and Altweg, 12 April 1973, in: *Die Unterwanderung* 1978, p. 34; Solomon 1978, pp. 178–184. However, a paper from 1977 claimed that ICP members had 101 commercial projects in countries visited by its missions “[a]lthough it would be difficult in every case to prove close correlation between missions and project implementation”: Review of ICP Country Missions and Working Parties 1972–1977, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/5.1. See also FAO, RG 9, ICP, Collection of Mission Reports I and II; “ICP – Guidelines for Missions”, n.d., FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/9 General I.

44 Cf. Friedrich and Gale 2004, p. 60.

45 For the interest in influencing planning, see U.S. Embassy Rome to State Department, “FAO: The Industry-Cooperative Program”, 28 January 1972, NARA, RG 59, SNF Economic, 1970–73, Box 460, 1/1/72. Selection: “Discussion on proposed high level industry missions”, 4 August 1971, FAO, RG 9, SF I, ICP IV; “Consultation with Agro-Industrial Leaders” (see note 6/23). Countries' requests: “Industry Cooperative Programme”, 10 November 1972, FAO, RG 9, IP 22/9 general, vol. I; Hugill's circular, 11 May 1972, FAO, RG 9, SF I, ICP V. FAO: Solomon 1977, p. 83.

46 Simon 1975, p. 37; “Programme Achiev[e]ments”, 12 March 1971, FAO, RG 9, SF I, ICP IV.

47 See Albright et al. 1977, esp. pp. 53–54; “Business International Report on ICP”, December 1970, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files I/ICP IV; Solomon 1978; Olsen, Vice President, FMC, to Simons, 6 March 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN 43/2B ICP-General.

The ICP: conclusion

Among the core advantages that corporations took from their participation in the ICP were access to information and data from the UN, contact with other UN agencies and credibility from operating under the umbrella of the UN. The discontinuation of ICP, which was announced in the fall of 1977, hit corporate leaders hard. They had long realized that the UN's enquiries into multinationals threatened their interests but apparently thought that ICP was no vulnerable point. During these enquiries, they had confidently portrayed the ICP as a model for future mutually fruitful cooperation with the UN on a larger scale.⁴⁸ In 1978, ICP was terminated but replaced by the Industry Council for Development (ICD) with some of the ICP's former staff, but the ICD never became officially part of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) as planned. Hence, business found the new organization less attractive than the ICP. (It was also less focused on agriculture.) Only 32 of the ICP's 100 member companies joined. Swiss business leaders judged in the light of the "ICP debacle" that "not much positive will come out of it [ICD]".⁴⁹ The ICD's star faded in the early 1980s. Later attempts to reintroduce big business into the UN system included the Global Compact in 1999–2000.

Despite benefits as mentioned, the ICP, which was supposed to be a catalyst, yielded few tangible results, for which the FAO criticized it.⁵⁰ And few of its projects addressed the production or consumption of staple foods in non-industrialized countries. Firms were averse to risks and preferred to operate in large markets (including those in wealthier non-industrialized countries), Western European capital interests prevailed, and their conflicts with UN impartiality and national policies impeded the program. Organizational deficiencies added to its difficulties. Companies chose to work within, and got tangled up in, the usual bureaucratic development framework ("the style of business and bureaucracy are basically incompatible", one evaluation complained), which stressed that collaboration with governments was necessary, but to follow the project approach implied that efforts were confined to national boundaries, which made their undertakings in smaller states unprofitable.⁵¹ In the ICP, there "was a rough consensus that agricultural

48 ICP, General Committee, tenth session – Conference, Agenda, 11 March 1974, and Summary Record, 22 March 1974, FAO, RG 22, UN-43/2B; ICP, Annual Report April 1973/March 1974, FAO, RG 9, Misc., DDI; FAO, DDI G/74/S, 18 December 1973, FAO, RG 12, UN 43/2B Divisional Contributions Gen.; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 21 June 1978; see also *Die Unterwanderung* 1978, esp. pp. 52–55; the ICP paper on which its Geneva presentation was based is in Friedrich and Gale 2004, pp. 113–129.

49 Weir and Schapiro 1981, pp. 54–55; Dillon 1984; Maaß 1981, pp. 235–236. Cf. AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, FAO, Sub-groups + ICP/ICD, esp. Bodmer (Ciba-Geigy) to Umbricht and response, 25 and 27 January 1979, and ICP Ex. Committee, 49th session, 24 July 1978; *ibid.*, FAO, ICP, 1972–, especially ICD, First Annual General Meeting, 12–13 July 1979.

50 Yriart (Director of FAO's Development Dept.) to Yohalem, Vice President, CPC International, 17 April 1974, FAO, RG 9, Misc., DDI; Pierre Terver, Statement for ICP's General Committee's 8th session, 18 September 1972, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/5.1.

51 Different criticisms of taking the project approach are in Freeman (Business International) to Friedrich, 4 August 1975, FAO, RG 9 DDI, IP 22/5.3 Business International I, and Olsen (FMC) to Simons, 6 March 1974, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 12, FMC. Quote: "ICP – A strategy for

production projects may not seem as attractive as other investments because of long maturity and payout periods, and this may deter cautious investors".⁵² Small farmers' lack of credit in poor countries was a hurdle to win customers that was never overcome. So, companies in the 1970s preferred lucrative activities like management contracts, feasibility and pre-investment studies, and food processing.⁵³ This reinforced existing mechanisms which led to little, and for the most part agribusiness did not infuse the practical capitalist spirit into staple food production as the FAO had hoped, at least not through ICP. Direct capital investment in input industries remained low, while ICP as a marketing channel helped exports of agrochemicals (more than machinery) grow. Not surprisingly, corporate cost-profit and market size-related considerations were often incompatible with development projects, let alone social concerns.

A separate way: the Agribusiness Council

U.S.-based corporations preferred to pursue investment in the agribusiness sector of non-industrialized countries by organizing themselves into a largely national body separate from the UN, the Agribusiness Council, which still exists today. It was founded on the initiative of the U.S. Department of Commerce in 1967, one year after the establishment of the ICP, under changed conditions in the international economy. First, the Indian food crisis of 1965–1967 seemed to offer new opportunities for grain exports and input industries because the 'green revolution' was quite suddenly to be expanded to large parts of Asia, which had not become fully manifest before ICP was founded and certainly not when it was initiated in the spring of 1965. Second, the recession of 1966–1967 in several industrialized nations suggested that there would be benefits to finding additional markets and investing beyond the capitalist Global North.⁵⁴ In this situation, "a group of business, academic, foundation, and government leaders" formed the Council with the support of U.S. President Johnson,⁵⁵ an indication of the cooperation among corporations, the state and research institutions.

In addition to U.S. agribusiness, nonprofit groups, international organizations, individuals and later some foreign firms were members of the Agribusiness Council. In 1970, the membership included about 70 companies and 59 in 1975. Only nine firms were also members of the ICP.⁵⁶ In cooperation with the USAID, the

accomplishment" (see note 6/36). Cf. Summary report of ICP General Committee meeting of 11 to 12 February 1975, 28 February 1975, FAO, RG 9, ICP, Summary Reports of the General Committee. For risk avoidance, see also Albright et al. 1977, p. 45.

52 Remarks by W.W. Simons at the conference "The World Food and Population Crisis: A Role for the Private Sector", Dallas, 3 April 1975, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5974, Food 2.

53 Dinham and Hines 1983; George 1978, pp. 56–57.

54 For the preparatory phase, see Goldberg 1966, pp. 81–84 and 89.

55 See www.agribusinesscouncil.org, "History", accessed 1 September 2022. The same quote is also in *Agricultural Initiative* 1975 (a publication by the Agribusiness Council), opposite the title page.

56 Membership: Second World Food Congress, Commission VI, Private Sector Support, February 1970, FAO, RG 9 V Misc./2nd World Food Congress; Agribusiness Council, Membership list, January 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IL 3/235. Overlap: Yohalem, Senior Vice President, CPC

Agribusiness Council explored the investment climate in non-industrialized countries, identified economic sectors promising for agribusiness investment, and, like the ICP, organized country explorations resulting in recommendations for projects to and by companies and governments. In contrast to the ICP, the Agribusiness Council's expeditions focused on Asia and still seem to.⁵⁷ When foreign governments requested technical or managerial assistance, U.S. government officials asked the Council to render judgment on the "suitability" of pursuing projects.⁵⁸

In the early 1970s, the Nixon administration encouraged corporations to expand their exports in order to improve the U.S. balance of trade (see Chapter 2). At the same time, there were heated debates about the national costs and benefits of firms' foreign investments. Government officials acknowledged that they had neglected ICP as a way to generate foreign business for U.S. firms, despite the ICP's appeals. And in the face of growing international competition, corporations complained about the lack of federal support, supposedly contrary to Western European governments.⁵⁹ In February 1974, the Agribusiness Council organized a conference, in London, of business leaders, researchers, development experts and foundation officials, Science and Agribusiness in the Seventies, to consider links between the world food problem and international investment. However, only 45 of the more than 150 participants were from the USA, no more than 13 of whom were corporate executives.⁶⁰ This indicates that U.S. companies were less inclined than Western Europeans to use international fora or channels to expand business.

My approach to study such organizations⁶¹ may create the impression that plans for getting substantial amounts of inputs, goods and capital into the staple food sector of non-industrialized countries failed, but a closer look at different industrial sectors uncovers significant variations. Transnational agribusiness did play a role in the integration of small farmers in non-industrialized countries into markets but

International, to Hugill, 11 April 1973, FAO, RG 9, ICP, IL 3/235. Non-U.S. firms: *Agricultural Initiative* 1975, p. 4.

57 Up to 1971, nine countries were visited (six in Asia, three in Latin America), among them six larger markets (Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, South Korea, Mexico, and Turkey). "The Agribusiness Council, Inc." with cover letter of 19 May 1971, NARA, Nixon, FO, Box 50, GEN FO 4-3, Int. Investments 1971-72, file 1. Sample report: The Agribusiness Council, "Agribusiness Prospects in Sudan: Summary Report", 22 September 1972, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IL 3/235. For general operations, see Agribusiness Council, Report of Activities 1976, *ibid.* For more recent times, see www.agribusinesscouncil.org, "Scope of Activities", accessed 29 April 2005.

58 Telegram from the U.S. Embassy Manila, "Agri-Business Council", 6 April 1971, NARA, RG 59, SF, Economic, 1970-73, Box 471, AGR Phil 1/1/1970.

59 Mair (USDA) to Palmby (Vice President, Continental Grain) and Hardin (Vice President, Ralston Purina), 21 February 1973, NARA, RG 16, 170/10/13/4, USDA Gen. Corr. 1973, Box 5714; "FAO Activities of Interest to the U.S. Government - Industry Cooperative Programme", 20 June 1972, FAO, RG 9, Subject Files I/ICP V.

60 See the contributions in *Agricultural Initiative* 1975 (for participants, see pp. 197-207); and report of Donald Paarlberg (USDA), 22 February 1974, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IL 3/235. At a similar meeting, the World Food Supplies conference organized by British Airways and *The Financial Times*, 1-2 May 1974, only one representative of a U.S.-based company spoke (FAO 12, UN-43/5 GB).

61 For the Industry Cooperation Program (formerly the Business and Industry Program) of the Canadian International Development Agency, see Morrison 1998, pp. xv, 22.

in forms other than those development experts had planned, far from everywhere, and preferably on public funding.

Strategic industries: transnational capital expansion in practice

In the 1970s, raising staple food crops in non-industrialized countries became more entangled with the global economy than before, though very unevenly. Before I deal with this process on the level of various nations in Chapters 7–10, I examine the spread of business and technology to non-industrialized countries through internationally (and nationally) operating firms producing agricultural inputs, its conditions, outcomes, and limits.

Fertilizer

Experts called fertilizer the “single most important input”, which was the title of a film produced by the FAO Fertilizer Programme (in cooperation with the industry), and the “spearhead of change”.⁶²

Building on cheap energy and serving the expansion of agricultural production, the global fertilizer economy was in a glut in the 1960s. The capital-intensive international fertilizer industry had seen a number of spectacular takeovers, most by big U.S.-based oil companies. Regional cartels competed fiercely, one or two companies dominated Western Europe’s national markets and another handful controlled the U.S. market.⁶³ Among the biggest exporters were the USA, Canada, West and East Germany, France, the Netherlands, Japan and Morocco. Manufactured fertilizer exports grew spectacularly from US\$1.3 billion to \$10.8 billion between 1970 and 1980.⁶⁴

Like with food, exporting countries got rid of their surpluses by fertilizer aid in the late 1960s and early 1970s,⁶⁵ which served the support of domestic industries, agricultural change in non-industrialized countries and general foreign policy objectives. In non-industrialized countries, this ‘aid’ largely aided wealthier farmers who intensified their production, on top being helped by local state subsidies. After 1968, Northern fertilizer ‘aid’ was reduced to help prices rise and increase profits in the industry,⁶⁶ and concessional deliveries were reduced further because of good business opportunities during the energy crisis.

62 [2nd World Food Congress,] Report of the Special Sub-Commission on the FAO Fertilizer Programme, 20 June 1970, AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, FAO, Second World Food Congress; second quote: RAFE, Summary Record of the Staff Meeting, 17 January 1973 (remark of Dr. D. H. Parish), FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Div., PR 12/50, vol. II.

63 Perelman 1977, pp. 169–173; Räuschel 1975, p. 28; UNCTNC 1982, pp. 28–30, 34–37, 55–56.

64 Daberkow and Parks 1990, pp. 12, 15.

65 Wheeler to Nixon, 22 October 1970, NARA, Nixon papers, WHCF, SF FO, Box 38, GEN FO 3–2, 1/1/70–12/31/70; Hopper 1975, p. 184.

66 “World Food Conference, Draft resolution III/Discussion”, 30 October 1974, Ford Library, Paul C. Leach files, Box 10, World Food, Nov 23–30, 1974; RAFE, Summary Record of Staff Meeting, 24 January 1973, FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Div., PR 12/50, vol. II. Much of the remaining U.S. fertilizer aid went to South Vietnam.

From 1967–1968 to 1972–1973, fertilizer use in non-industrialized capitalist countries in the Far East grew by 18.2 percent annually from 2.3 million to 5.3 million tons (with just below 50 percent produced in the region). Africa experienced, on a lower level, a similar increase of 17.6 percent per year from 300,000 to 900,000 tons, and about 75 percent were imported.⁶⁷ African fertilizer use lagged far behind all other world regions.⁶⁸ Due to the energy crisis and the rise in prices, growth in use slowed temporarily in some non-industrialized countries.

From 1970 to 1980, fertilizer use in Indonesia increased from 119,000 to 630,000 tons, in Thailand from 214,000 to 337,000 tons, and in Malaysia from 436,000 to 1,051,000 tons. Use in the Philippines reached 803,500 tons by 1974.⁶⁹ In the early 1970s, it also rose spectacularly in countries like Nigeria and Ethiopia. However, this wave, indicating new production methods, did not reach all countries. In 1972, Laotian fertilizer consumption was a mere 920 tons, and in 1971, the Lao Development Bank had extended credit for any purpose to no more than 60 farmers.⁷⁰ Internationally, growth slowed unevenly after 1973. Non-industrialized countries' total consumption no more than doubled from 18 million to 37 million tons in the decade after 1972–1973 (the lowest growth was for nitrogen) with imports only rising from nine million to 11 million tons. Asia's consumption grew 2.5 times (most steeply from 1977 to 1980), Africa's by only slightly more than 50 percent and the continent accounted for no more than 3 percent of global consumption; in the early 2000s, it was 2 percent and merely 1 percent for Sub-Saharan Africa excepting South Africa. In all of Africa from 1981–1982 to the early 2000s, fertilizer application, which was less than 6 kilograms per hectare of cropped land in the late 1970s, virtually stagnated below 3 million tons, while Asia's use more than doubled again.⁷¹ Fertilizer use in Sub-Saharan Africa in around 2010 was

67 Fertilizer use in non-industrialized countries surged by 13 percent annually from 1962–1963 to 1972–1973 compared to 14.7 percent in the second half of that period: Almeida et al. 1975a, p. 110; draft of item 9(a): "Fertilizers" for the World Food Conference, June 1974, FAO, RG 12, Comm. Div., UN-43/2A WG on the Preparation of the WFC; ECOSOC resolution on fertilizers and pesticides: Report of the [FAO] Working Party, 22 May 1974, FAO, RG 15, RAPE, World Food Situation – Fertilizer 1973–76. Moroccan phosphate exports overseas distorted African self-sufficiency statistics. The "Far East" refers to UN definitions of regions at the time.

68 For nitrogen, 2.9 kg per hectare of arable land were used in Africa while consumption was more than three times higher in capitalist non-industrialized Asia (11.1 kg per hectare in the Far East), four times higher in Latin America, and 10 to 25 times higher in industrialized nations. "Note on problems in N-fertilizer production", November 1973, FAO, RG 9, V (Misc.), Preparation for the Round Table.

69 *Feeding the World's Population* 1984, p. 180; U.S. Agricultural Attaché, Philippines: February Agricultural Highlights, 10 March 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 53, PH Philippines 1975 DR.

70 U.S. Agricultural Attaché, Agricultural Situation – Fertilizer Usage, 11 July 1972, NARA, RG 166, U.S. Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 24, NA Nigeria 1972; Verbatim records of plenary meetings of the [FAO] council, 15 July 1974 (remarks of S. Békuré, Ethiopia), FAO, RG 7, Film 517, p. 42; paper by N.S. Randhawa, "Agricultural and rural development", 3 April 1973, FAO, RG 15, RAPE, Rural Development 1972–76.

71 FAO 1985, p. 52; UNCTNC, Fertilizer, pp. 4–5; Daberkow and Parks 1990, pp. 9 and 44 (report 37 million tons as only Asia's consumption for 1982–1983); Paulino 1988, p. 36; International

13 kilograms per hectare of permanent arable cropland but much lower in many of the region's countries; two-thirds of consumption was in just five states.⁷²

For many countries, fertilizer imports were a major burden on their foreign trade balance. Among the largest non-industrialized capitalist Asian importers were India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Pakistan. Fertilizer imports by non-industrialized countries were estimated to be US\$2 billion in 1974, of which India accounted for more than one quarter.⁷³ In 1980–1981, Bangladesh had to spend no less than 16 percent of its export earnings for fertilizer imports; India and Pakistan spent 11–12 percent each.⁷⁴

Only in some countries was fertilizer used to boost staple food production. In Indonesia, from two-thirds to nine-tenths was applied to rice while only 20 percent, especially potash, went to export crops.⁷⁵ By contrast, only 30 percent of Filipino farmers used fertilizers on 22 percent of the planted area in 1964; in 1969, rice and corn, the country's principal staple foods, which covered 63 percent of the total cultivated area, received only one-third of its fertilizer compared to 45 percent for sugar cane.⁷⁶ As late as the early 2000s, fertilizer was widely applied to staple crops in only small sections of Africa, such as Western Kenya and parts of Ethiopia.⁷⁷

From 1973 to 1975, amidst the commodities boom, there was not only an energy-and-food crisis but simultaneously a fertilizer crisis. To produce fertilizer is energy-intensive, and the most important sort, nitrogenous fertilizers, are based on natural gas as a raw material. Soaring prices worried consumers but enchanted producers, traders and exporters. The average price per ton rose by about 30 percent annually from 1971 (US\$52) to 1974 and almost tripled from 1974 to 1975 (\$357), reaching its peak in October 1974, for a sevenfold rise in total. Prices did not drop to their pre-1973 levels for several years.⁷⁸ Though prices for urea and phosphate fertilizers soared, the price of potash was almost stable.⁷⁹ As a result, non-industrialized countries paid US\$2 billion for imported fertilizers in 1974.⁸⁰

Fertilizer Industry Association, Fertilizer nutrient consumption, Africa (updated October 2002), www.fertilizer.org/ifa/statistics/indicators/ind_cn_afr.asp and www.fertilizer.org/ifa/statistics/indicators/tablepk.asp, both accessed 31 August 2005.

72 Juma 2011, p. 8 (cf. p. 14).

73 UN World Food Council, Report on the work of the third session, WFC/50, 28 June 1977, p. 9, FAO Library; Imfeld 1974.

74 FAO 1985, p. 52.

75 U.S. Agricultural Attaché, Indonesia: Fertilizer Report, 23 July 1979, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 79, ID-Indonesia 1979; "Transcripts [of CGFPI], 3, July 23, 1975", IBRD Archive, RG 48, A 1991 030 #2, p. 7.

76 Drilon 1975, pp. 69 and 81.

77 Jayne et al. 2003.

78 "World Food Conference, Draft resolution III/Discussion", 30 October 1974, Ford Library, Paul C. Leach files, Box 10, World Food, Nov 23–30, 1974; FAO/FIAC Seminar on Fertilizer Pricing Policies and Subsidies, Bangkok, 13–18 February 1978, Figure 1, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 4, FAO Contributions, II.3 (a)(b), Mr. Couston; Daberkow and Parks 1990, p. 15; Matzke 1974, pp. 139–149; Perelman 1977, pp. 173–176; Matzke 1974, p. 139. Mandel 1987, p. 54 argued that this fertilizer business cycle ended in 1976.

79 Brown and Eckholm 1977, p. 21.

80 World Food Council, "Agricultural Inputs", WFC/39, 31 March 1977, p. 9, FAO Library.

The price hike was explained by non-industrialized countries' increased demand, the rise in feed prices, the exhaustion of known mineral deposits, the energy crisis and higher transportation costs.⁸¹ As with grain, the increases accompanied considerable growth in global consumption throughout the 1970s (except in 1974–1975), followed by relative stagnation in market size.⁸² But demand started to level off in some countries in 1972, hurting food production, and in 1974–1975, there was the first global drop in fertilizer use after World War II, especially in industrial nations. Non-industrialized countries as a group still raised their consumption. Conversely, exporters increased their deliveries when prices surged in 1972–1973.⁸³

And as with grain, there were factual fertilizer export embargoes by industrial countries in 1973–1974, especially by the USA, where firms agreed to the ban once the government guaranteed them higher domestic prices. Japan reduced its exports by one-third, which Walter Mondale called the “Japanese embargo”.⁸⁴ In the perspective of U.S. fertilizer industrialists: “Nearly all companies have, or are establishing allocation systems which give preference to traditional customers”.⁸⁵

Non-industrialized countries' responses to the fertilizer crisis varied. Their fertilizer application slowed down or dropped in various years between 1972 and 1975. Overall, figures were still on the rise even in 1974–1975, but there was a decrease in the group of Most Severely Affected States.⁸⁶ In India and Bangladesh, high prices resulted in reduced fertilizer consumption. Many countries reduced imports and thus consumption, like India, Bangladesh, the Philippines or Algeria, or did not increase imports further, like Pakistan, Brazil and Mexico.⁸⁷ UN experts estimated that over 85 percent of poor countries' unmet demand was in South Asia. Other states still raised consumption, like Iran, South Korea, Morocco and smaller Central American states.

Some reduced their costly fertilizer subsidies; the Philippines, among others, tried to end some of them but plantation owners found ways to bypass the new

81 UN World Food Conference 1974b, p. 41.

82 Daberkow and Parks 1990, p. 5; World Food Council, WFC/17/Rev. 1, 7 June 1976, p. 12, FAO Library.

83 ERS, USDA, “Price Controls and the Fertilizer Situation”, September 1973, Table 7, FAO, RG 9, V (Misc.), Preparation for the Round Table; UN World Food Council, Report on the work of the third session, WFC/50, 28 June 1977, pp. 5–6, and UN World Food Council, WFC/17/Rev.1, 7 June 1976, p. 12, FAO Library.

84 Sobel 1975, p. 75; Perelman 1977, pp. 174–175; Martin 1979, p. 12; Victor McElheny, “Rising World Fertilizer Scarcity Threatens Famine for Millions”, *New York Times*, 1 September 1974, in: *Food and Population* 1975, pp. 17–18; Brown and Eckholm 1977, p. 27; “Oil and Starvation”, in: *New Republic*, 2 February 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/5 USA; Lowenstein (“World Bank”) memo to Picciotto, 10 January 1974, FAO, RG 9, V (Misc.), Preparations for the Round Table; see also Hopper 1975, p. 185. Quote: Mondale 1975, p. 245.

85 FAO, ICP, “Emergency Measures in Regard to the Supply of Fertilizers and Pesticides”, 12 July 1974, FAO, RG 9, Misc. DDI.

86 Mai 1977, pp. 43–44, 48, 51, 139, 236–237.

87 UN Special Fund, Board of Governors, “Current and Prospective Situation of the Developing Countries Most Seriously Affected by the Economic Crisis”, March 1976, FAO, RG. 12, Commodities Division, FA 4/25, I.

regulations that limited state support to food production.⁸⁸ However, most non-industrialized countries, having introduced fertilizer subsidies in the 1960s, raised these in the fertilizer crisis of 1973–1974 or soon afterwards in sum or by rate.⁸⁹ India established major fertilizer subsidies in the early 1970s, from 1975 to 1976 also for domestically produced substances.⁹⁰ The crisis also served governments and farmers as a reminder to use organic material as soil nutrients.⁹¹

But the fertilizer crisis in non-industrialized countries was as much one of production as it was one of imports of finished products. Rising oil prices led to lower energy allocation to domestic fertilizer industries, causing production to drop for short periods, like in the Philippines. Nonetheless, facing embargoes and skyrocketing import prices, non-industrialized countries turned to expanding their own production. In Pakistan and elsewhere, producing at home was not only more reliable but also cheaper than imports.⁹² Several large non-industrialized countries had started to build fertilizer industries in the 1960s, mostly under state ownership. Capital “commitments for fertilizer plants” in non-industrialized countries increased from US\$90 million in 1973 to \$472 million in 1974 and to \$844 million one year later. (The ‘World Bank’ financed roughly half of this and committed three quarters of its projected requirement of \$5 billion in investments to Asia.) Inflation explained this almost tenfold increase in spending only to a lesser degree.⁹³ By 1975, the IBRD stated that it alone “provided capital for 4.4 million tons of installed capacity, or about 13% of total LDC [Least Developed Countries] capacity”.⁹⁴

For example, Brazil, which imported US\$950 million worth of fertilizer in 1974, announced a \$700 million plan to become fertilizer self-sufficient by 1980, but according to one observer, “a possible source of capital remains uncertain”.⁹⁵

88 U.S. Agricultural Attaché, Annual Conference of the Kenyan Farmers’ Union, 23 March 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 19, KY Kenya 1973; Drilon 1975, pp. 62–70 and 78–79; U.S. Agricultural Attaché, Philippines report, 10 December 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 43, PH Philippines 1974 DR; Mai 1977, p. 137. For subsidies outphased in Chile and Sri Lanka, see Mai 1977, p. 69.

89 Mai 1977, p. 23; U.S. Agricultural Attaché report, 6 March 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 40, ID Indonesia 1974 DR.

90 Siawalla 1988, p. 214.

91 For example, see Saouma to Aziz, 24 July 1974, and Saraf to Joseph, 12 February 1974, both in FAO, RG 12, UN-43, 2B Divisional Contributions – Gen.; ECAFE, Project for organic manures, 30 August 1974, FAO, RG 12, ES, FA 8/3, vol. II.

92 Mai 1977, pp. 73–74.

93 UN World Food Council, Report on the work of the third session, WFC/50, 28 June 1977, p. 9, FAO Library; draft of item 9(a): “Fertilizers” for the World Food Conference, June 1974, FAO, RG 12, Comm. Div., UN-43/2A WG on the Preparation of the WFC.

94 Abbreviated Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the CGFPI, 21–23 July 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. III (remarks by Sheldrick, IBRD).

95 This would double phosphate production, quadruple nitrogen production, and create a new potash industry: U.S. Agricultural Attaché, Brazil: July Agricultural Highlights, 8 August, and November agricultural highlights, 5 December 1974, and report of 5 December 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 37, BB Brazil (Brasilia) 1974.

Indonesia's government planned to turn the country into a major urea exporter. By 1975, it had received US\$200 million in loans from Iran to build a urea plant in West Java and loans of \$115 million from the 'World Bank' for a "floating fertilizer plant", which was built in Belgium and Britain and installed off the coast of East Kalimantan, to produce urea and ammonium sulfate. A giant urea factory in southern Sumatra had been earlier built with Japanese capital. The government owned and ran these plants, which increased Indonesia's production from 147,000 tons to 1.609 million tons from 1972 to 1978.⁹⁶ UN agencies saw Indonesia as a strategic source of fertilizer for neighboring countries. In addition, Toyo Engineering, a subsidiary of Mitsui, built ASEAN's first joint fertilizer factory in Indonesia's Aceh province on the basis of a study by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency.⁹⁷ Soon Indonesia exported fertilizer to India and the Philippines.

As with the grain trade, efforts for international economic integration also included the penetration of the socialist countries. In April 1973, Armand Hammer signed a US\$8 billion contract in Moscow for Occidental Petroleum Corporation to build fertilizer factories and supply the USSR with over 1 million tons of superphosphate in return for Soviet urea and ammonia.⁹⁸ New factories were also set up elsewhere in Eastern Europe, China and the (non-socialist) Persian Gulf States.

Increasingly, the capital in fertilizer factories in non-industrialized countries was held by domestic public companies, whereas transnational corporations reoriented their interest to the design, engineering, construction and initial operation of plants, which they also sometimes managed and maintained minority ownership in.⁹⁹ Factories were usually constructed by U.S.-based, Western European and Japanese engineering companies. Some of them had links to agrochemical corporations, for example, the West German Uhde to Hoechst, the Dutch Stamicarbon to DSM, and the Italian Technimont to Montedison. ICI was involved as well.¹⁰⁰ Especially Western European companies welcomed these business opportunities and took part lively in UN meetings on the topic.¹⁰¹ By contrast, representatives of the fertilizer industry (except potash producers) emphatically lobbied against the construction of new capacities during the crisis, as they had before, pointing to their slow business and the low utilization rate of existing plants in non-industrialized countries.¹⁰²

96 U.S. Agricultural Attaché, Indonesia, reports of 27 March and 28 February 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975 DR; ditto, Indonesia: Fertilizer Report, 23 July 1979, *ibid.*, Box 79, ID Indonesia 1979.

97 UNCTNC 1982, pp. 59 and 68.

98 Trager 1975, p. 91.

99 UNCTNC 1982, pp. 37–39.

100 UNCTNC 1982, pp. 33, 83.

101 For the relative lack of interest by U.S.-based firms causing concern among government officials in Washington, see Minutes of the March 4, 1975 meeting of the Interagency Fertilizer Task Force, Ford Library, Paul C. Leach files, Box 3, Fertilizer. Cf. Minutes of the Eighth Meeting of the Task Force on Fertilizers, 25 March 1976 (about a recent meeting of FAO/UNIDO/IBRD Working Group on Fertilizers), FAO, RG 9, DDI, PR 7/2; E. S. Finley, International Commodities Export Company, division of ACLI International, Inc., "Position paper" [1974], AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, World Food Conference 1974.

102 CGFPI, Report on the First Meeting, 21–23 July 1975, p. 9, IBRD Archive, RG 48, A 1991-030 #1 (probably a U.S. representative's remarks, cf. draft of this report, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69 III);

In case of doubt, however, where major fertilizer companies controlled firms that constructed fertilizer plants, these jumped onto offers to build new ones, as did the Dutch *Verenigde Machinefabrieken*, favoring short-term profit over longer-term one.¹⁰³ And some consulting firms, alongside international development experts and UN organizations, expected shortages in the world fertilizer market to continue until at least 1977–1978.¹⁰⁴

In the UN, demands by non-industrialized countries led to hot debates and moves in two directions: one (largely aborted) was international fertilizer supply, through ‘aid’ or otherwise, as emergency measure. To this end, the International Fertilizer Supply Scheme (IFSS) was established.¹⁰⁵ IFSS was supposed to receive fertilizer (subsidized or as grants), money and technical help. But its activities remained limited with less than 300,000 tons channeled through this scheme in 1975–1976, about 20 percent of all fertilizer ‘aid’ to the Most Seriously Affected Countries. Requests were much higher, and 87 percent of the shortfall was in South Asia. Much of what was coming through IFSS was actually priced at market rates.¹⁰⁶ In 1976, the IFSS merged with FAO’s Fertilizer Programme, which represented interests of the international and particularly the Western European fertilizer industry.¹⁰⁷ Later calls of the Group of 77 for larger deliveries, especially to the poorest countries, and for price stabilization were in vain.¹⁰⁸ There was little emergency help, reflecting interests of the fertilizer industry.

The second, more substantial move in the UN was support for building fertilizer factories in non-industrialized countries, in tune with demands for expanding their food production. Because experts believed that a huge investment of US\$4 billion annually was necessary to double non-industrialized countries’ fertilizer

Finley (ACLI International) to Bishop, 9 April 1974, AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO World Food Conference; various correspondence in FAO, RG 12, UN-43/6 Com. with Int. Org. – Gen.; “Industry – an effective partner in implementing the World Food Conference recommendations: Summary Report of the ICP General Committee, 11–12 February 1975”, 28 February 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22–4; Matzke 1974, pp. 147–148. See Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Chemische Industrie, “Bemerkungen zu einem Symposium in Athen vom 29. November bis 20 Dezember 1967”, AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO UNIDO 1967 (O.23).

103 Letter of C. de Ridder, *Verenigde Machinefabrieken*, no date (May 1974), FAO, RG 9, ICP, UN 43/1 I.

104 “Fertilizer and the World Food Shortage” with cover letter by Research Council, Division of Baird, Patrick & Co, Inc. to Butz, 12 November 1974, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr., Box 5847, Food 2, Oct 1–Nov 26, 1974, 2.

105 Talbot 1994, pp. XXIII and 46; UN World Food Conference, Assessment, p. 26; Abbott to Fischnich, 6 November 1973, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., SF, FAO/IBRD Round Table, on an FAO Ad Hoc Government Consultation on Fertilizers in October 1973.

106 UN World Food Council, “Assessment of the World Food Situation and Outlook”, WFC/34, 30 March 1977, pp. 1 and 11, FAO Library; “Progress Report on the International Fertilizer Supply Scheme”, November 1974, CL 64/11, FAO, RG 7, Film 517; “World Food Conference, Draft resolution III/Discussion” (see note 6/66). Mai 1977, p. 139 gives higher figures of 1.5 million tons distributed through the IFSS in 1973–1974 and 1.3 million in 1974–1975.

107 Couston to Perrin de Brichambaut, 4 February 1974, FAO, RG 9, V (Misc.), Preparation for the Round Table. The ‘World Bank’s’ International Finance Corporation and UNIDO also made some efforts for fertilizer aid.

108 UN World Food Council, Report on the work of the third session, WFC/50, 28 June 1977, p. 4, FAO Library.

production to 30 million tons, a number of non-industrialized countries demanded the creation of a World Fertilizer Fund, which would distribute US\$1 billion per year, half provided by the industrialized nations and half by the OPEC countries. Although an observer called this the “likeliest baby to be born in Rome” at the World Food Conference,¹⁰⁹ West Germany (a major fertilizer-exporting country) and other industrial states blocked the plan.¹¹⁰ Instead, the International Fund for Agricultural Development was set up, a much smaller organization that did little in terms of financing fertilizer production. FAO’s newly created Commission on Fertilizers was left to look for such funding, and there were efforts by UNIDO. Existing bodies, the ‘World Bank’ and the Asian Development Bank, became the most important financiers for new fertilizer factories.

Another international initiative was the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), which was established in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, USA, in 1974 and at first financed by U.S. and Canadian public funds. The IFDC was set up to research the fertilizer requirements (especially for nitrogen) of tropical and subtropical soils and to find ways to improve fertilizer production from ores with low nutrient content.¹¹¹

Up to at least the mid-1980s, the technological expertise for the construction of fertilizer factories remained in the hands of a few European, Japanese and U.S.-based companies.¹¹² By producing fertilizer themselves, poor countries exchanged one kind of dependence for another, at least until they developed a technical expertise of their own.

But the construction of factories in non-industrialized and socialist countries resulted in the decline of Western European and North American dominance that many in the industry had warned of. So, the embargoes backfired, eroding trust as did the 1973 soybean export embargo in other ways. Nobody could rely on such ‘partners’. Fertilizer scarcity was a passing event, but the crisis led to long-term changes. The glut and low prices returned. In parallel with the rise of Eastern European and non-industrialized countries’ production, the world market share of state-owned enterprises increased from 1967 to 1986 from 30 percent to 64 percent for ammonia, from 40 percent to 65 percent for potash, and from 10 percent to 46 percent for phosphoric acids. Nitrex, the Western European nitrate cartel, failed due to the “collapse of demand in countries outside its area”. Under world market pressure, several mergers reshaped the Western European fertilizer industry. Firms in the USA (agreeing on production cuts coordinated with the government) and the

109 Gamani Seneviratne, “Fertilizer Fund – Conference’s Likeliest Baby?”, *PAN*, 5 November 1974, p. 6; see Proposal by Sri Lanka: The Establishment of a World Fertilizer Fund, 4 June 1974, FAO, RG 22, WFC Docs., Docs. of the Preparatory Committee, fourth file.

110 Adel A. Bershai, “An edited resumé of the points made by all delegates” (of the second session of the Preparatory Committee to the World Food Conference, 4–8 June 1974), FAO, RG 22, 4A.

111 “Minutes: First meeting of the Task Force on Fertilizers”, 21 August 1975 and “Minutes: Fifth Meeting”, 6 November 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDI, PR 7/2. Within the first five years, the IFDC received US\$29 million in U.S. government aid: Comptroller General, World Hunger, part 2, pp. 14–15.

112 UNCTNC 1982, pp. 33, 41–42, 45 and 51–54.

five leading Japanese companies, which were more export-oriented, did better but still suffered from a slowdown in business and lack of investment.¹¹³ Regional self-supply grew, but production capacity increased primarily in Asia, not Africa, where it remained on a low level, like consumption, too.¹¹⁴

As a result of the crisis, fertilizer became even more highly regulated in terms of production, external trade and subsidies. Imports to India, for instance, were exclusively handled by the public Food Corporation. In some Indian states and the Pakistani province of Punjab, domestic trade too was nationalized again during the 1973–1975 fertilizer and food crisis.¹¹⁵

Though fertilizer use for staple foods made little progress in Africa, it spread widely and became the most common technical input in large parts of South and Southeast Asia. But this growth slowed after 1973 for a long time, which seemed to indicate that certain limits were reached to involve more small farmers in ‘modernization’. Locally, wealthy farmers and poor peasants competed for access to fertilizer, especially where it was subsidized. Many of them could simply not afford fertilizer – high prices caused this slower diffusion, with prices rising when governments struggled to finance subsidies especially after the energy crisis of 1973–1974. The combination of intense competition among manufacturers, the rise of domestic production in Asia, and great political efforts for facilitating fertilizer use could not prevent the deceleration.

Agricultural machinery

While fertilizer use became widespread in the 1970s, mechanization formed the other extreme of agricultural inputs – its use in African and Asian staple food production in the 1970s was restricted to larger farms and a few hiring centers. But it is precisely this failed expansion that is worthy of an inquiry here. Tractors made up more than half of the world market for agricultural machinery. The fundamental microeconomic problem lay in the fact that even smaller farms, from a certain size on, required an amount of labor – rising if new seeds and technologies were applied – that could hardly be provided by one family. At the same time, such farms of less than 10 hectares did not generate an income that afforded the types of tractors common in Europe, let alone North America, of over 20 horsepower (hp). Consequently, it was hard for development planners to introduce mechanization to small farms and thereby tackle hunger there. In 1990s Zimbabwe, for instance, 4,500 large-scale (usually white) commercial farmers owned 20,000 tractors, and 8,600 medium-scale (i.e., 15 hectares on average) farmers owned another 4,500 while the rest had very few. In India in the mid-1970s, the 4 percent of all farmers who held more than 10 hectares possessed 96 percent of the tractors.¹¹⁶ Since tractors raised

113 Aftalion 1991, pp. 324–325.

114 UNCTNC 1982, pp. 10, 23.

115 U.S. Agricultural Attaché, Pakistan: Annual Situation Report, January 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 42, PK-Pakistan 1974 DR.

116 Gebre Selassie 1995, p. 103; Collins and Moore Lappé 1980, p. 180.

the output per worker, not necessarily per unit of area, their use made sense where labor was scarce or too expensive. Thus, acquiring heavy machinery had no priority for many smallholders in non-industrialized countries, whereas others could actually have benefited from them.

From the industry's point of view, it was not only production facilities that required massive investment, but servicing networks did too. In 1966, Massey Ferguson had no less than 98,799 different parts in stock in North America. Similarly, Indonesian tractor and bulldozer companies maintained inventories of 80,000 spare parts.¹¹⁷ This was unprofitable at least in smaller non-industrialized countries. Five foreign tractor companies entered the Philippines market in the early 1970s, and all failed due to servicing shortcomings.¹¹⁸ “[S]ervicing is almost non-existent”, reported the U.S. agricultural attaché about tractors in Nigeria.¹¹⁹

As a result of high capital intensity, the capitalist world market of the 1970s for agricultural machinery (1980: US\$22.2 billion) was highly concentrated. Ten companies controlled 70 percent of it, namely, John Deere, International Harvester, Massey Ferguson, Ford, New Holland, Fiat, Kubota, J. I. Case (a subsidiary of Tenneco), Allis-Chalmers and Klöckner-Humboldt-Deutz,¹²⁰ with Caterpillar, Yanmar and Renault among the other major players. Soviet and other Eastern European state companies were also large exporters.

Most of these firms focused their activities on North America and Western Europe. Of a total of 16 million tractors sold worldwide in 1974, one-third operated in the USA compared to 1.7 percent in South and Southeast Asia and 0.33 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa.¹²¹ In 1972, there were only about 500 tractors in Ethiopia. The year before, Uganda had 620 in a tractor rental scheme, regarded as insufficient for agricultural expansion. A group farm scheme initiated in 1967 with 900 tractors had failed, like in neighboring Kenya and Tanzania.¹²² In all of Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of operating tractors was very low in 1980 but dropped further until around 2010.¹²³

What seemed necessary in the 1970s was to produce small, low-cost tractors suitable for African family farms. The fate of this project was symptomatic. Confronted with the world food crisis, some African representatives demanded “action proposals for intermediate technology, agricultural mechanization” specifically for the rapid development of small tractors.¹²⁴ The ICP resumed its earlier discussions

117 UNCTNC 1983a, p. 69; Butler 2002, p. 103.

118 Drilon et al. 1975, p. 55.

119 U.S. Agricultural Attaché Lagos to USDA, 4 November 1976, NARA, RG 166, U.S. Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 61, NA Nigeria 1976 DR.

120 UNCTNC 1983a, pp. 2 and 56.

121 FAO Supporting Paper for the World Food Conference Preparatory Meeting, Rome 23 September–4 October 1974, “Agricultural Mechanization in Developing Countries”, with reference to the 8th FAO Regional Conference for Africa, 1–17 August 1974, AGS:Misc./74/7, FAO Library.

122 “Ethiopia report 1972”, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, February 1970–November 1973; U.S. Embassy Kampala to State Dept., 28 September 1971, NARA, RG 59, SF, Economic, Box 477, AID 6; Anthony 1988.

123 Juma 2011, p. 13.

124 Programme and Policy Advisory Board, Summary Record: Meeting 1092, 1 October 1974, of 11 October 1974, FAO, RG 12, Nut. Div., UN 43/2; FAO Supporting Paper (cited in footnote 6/121);

of the subject and briefly reactivated its working group in 1974–1975. Yet members largely settled for market exploration, longer-term studies and the establishment of a test center.¹²⁵ Companies' persistent passivity concerning the small tractor design (including that of market leader John Deere) provoked sarcastic comments inside FAO. The mentioning of the "production of small farm equipment in Pakistan" by companies organized in the ICP drew the marginal note "dead!" Deere's reasoning in 1976 led Charles Weitz, FAO's conversant representative at the UN Headquarters, to the remark: "Is FAO back on the small tractor design kick? We have seen little effort in this field".¹²⁶

Such skepticism turned out to be justified, for none of the major European or U.S. companies ever developed a small, low-cost tractor. This disinterest was reflected in the minutes of a meeting of UN officials with companies in June 1974 which stated: "With some reservations it appeared that there is a real need for low priced low-powered tractors". A long list of preconditions for such an engagement was added, such as "reliable market demand forecasts at agreed prices", "favorable fuel price and supply", infrastructural measures, credit facilities for end users and a favorable investment climate. Only two corporations were at all represented at the meeting: Massey Ferguson and Fiat.¹²⁷

Small tractors below 20 hp were developed, though, by Japanese and local manufacturers.¹²⁸ Some of these models had limited national or regional success, but the only one that really took off was the *Swaraj* from Punjab Tractors Ltd., in India, which it promoted in 1970 as "India's first large-scale, totally indigenous project to commercialize [the] country's first truly Indian tractor" (according to the company website).¹²⁹ In 1975, it sold 589 *Swarajs*, which climbed to 5,984 in 1983 and to 45,712 (20 percent of the Indian market) in 2001. (Only about 50,000 of the total were the original low-powered model; the rest were new, more powerful types.¹³⁰) In Thailand, domestic manufacturers developed the "Iron Buffalo" and other two- and four-wheel models in the 1960s and early 1970s. Remarkably, domestic companies thrived there as long as they were sprinkled over the countryside, providing for cheaper, less sophisticated tractors – though driven by Japanese or British

CL64/INF/9 "Summary and Recommendations of the 1974 Regional Conferences" about the 8th FAO Regional Conference for Africa in Mauritius, FAO, RG 7, Reel 518.

125 [ICP], Quarterly Review of Activities – July–September 1974, 18 October 1974, FAO, RG 9, Misc., DDI; W.W. Simons, "Implementing World Food Conference Decisions – A Role for Agro-Industry" [March or April 1975], FAO, RG 9, ICP, UN 43/1 II; ICP, First Meeting of the Steering Group on Farm Mechanization, 21 June 1974, Summary Record, AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, World Food Conference.

126 Simons to Friedrich (ICP), 2 April 1976 and Weitz's comments to Yriart, 21 April 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDI, ICP, PR 15/49; FAO, "The Events of 1970", 28 January 1971, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/10 general, vol. I; cf. Broehl 1984, p. 740.

127 ICP, First Meeting of the Steering Group on Farm Mechanization, 21 June 1974, Summary Record, AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, World Food Conference.

128 For the following, see UNCTNC 1983a, pp. 3, 47, 49.

129 www.swarajenterprise.com (accessed 11 August 2005).

130 Harish Damodaran, "Punjab Tractors: 'Swaraj' to Raj?", *The Hindu Business Line* (internet edition), 29 July 2003 (accessed 11 August 2005); UNCTNC 1983a, p. 3. Most tractors assembled in India in the early 1970s were too big for peasants to afford: Dunham 1982, p. 157.

engines – that were easier to service and better adapted to local conditions than their main Japanese competitors (Mitsubishi, Yanmar and above all Kubota; Ford and Massey Ferguson had local tractor assemblies since the 1960s but did not produce small tractors). When bigger, Bangkok-based companies emerged in the 1970s, the national products lost their innovative edge based on constant adaptation to customers' needs. Eventually, they turned to the government for protective measures and lost much of their market share to the Japanese companies in the 1980s. Sure enough, even here, smallholders bought few of their tractors. Because Thailand had many medium-sized commercial growers of rice and other commodities, its tractor market was exceptionally big with 40,000–70,000 units sold annually. By contrast, the Philippines had fewer medium-scale producers, and the growth of its tractor market had leveled off in the late 1960s, although many Filipino tractor users also grew rice either alone or with other crops.¹³¹

The most amazing tractor innovation was the 16 hp US\$2,000 *Tinkabi*, which was developed in an unlikely joint effort of Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana. Around 1980, the producer had an annual capacity of 3,000 units,¹³² but it lacked the capital to expand the market much. For example, *Tinkabis* were first introduced in Tanzania in 1978, where it sold about 100 units. (Tanzania also imported 610 Indian *Swarajs*.) Plans for a locally produced Tanzanian adaptation emerged in 1982–1983 but never took off.¹³³ Transaction, Inc., a small company in Vermont, USA, developed the versatile 8 hp Quadractor in the late 1970s.¹³⁴ However, it seems that the firm produced no more than a few hundred vehicles before it closed in 1982 due to its insufficient advertising, distribution and service network and interruptions in its supply of parts from abroad.

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines, which also designed agricultural implements, and companies in Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda also made efforts to develop a small tractor, and Uganda approached East Germany about a joint production venture.¹³⁵ But all of these efforts resulted in few vehicles. The fact that servicing and distribution networks did require considerable capital did not mean, however, that the world market leaders could not have made it. Yet only Japanese companies, who were used to the needs of small family farms at home, entered such markets, chiefly in Asia.¹³⁶ Africa and Asia each quintupled their imports of agricultural machinery from about US\$200 million in 1970 to over \$1 billion in the mid-1980s, but most of it was employed for cash crops and large-scale commercial food production.¹³⁷

131 My discussion of Thailand relies on an interesting chapter in Titterud 1994. Cf. Drilon et al. 1975, pp. 42–47, and pp. 51–56, for the Philippines.

132 UNCTNC 1983a, pp. 51–52.

133 Makungu et al. 2005.

134 Overly optimistic: UNCTNC 1983a, pp. 49–50; see Gallagher n.d.

135 Ibid., pp. 86 and 92; FAO Supporting Paper (cited in footnote 6/122) and U.S. Embassy Kampala to Secretary of State, 4 January 1973, RG 59, SF, Economic, Box 485, AID U, 1/1/70.

136 In Japan, 92 percent of all tractors had engines with less than 10 hp: UNCTNC 1983a, p. 49.

137 Daberkow and Parks 1990, pp. 49–50 and 75.

The story of the industry's only truly "global corporation", Massey Ferguson, illuminates the background of this failure. In the mid-1960s, it "was selling its products in 165 countries and territories". Other companies were present in a small number of non-industrialized countries, but Massey Ferguson was the market leader in many of these. More than half of its sales had already been outside North America since 1954, and the firm initiated a strategy of international expansion in 1958. In the 1970s, North America and Europe each accounted for 40 percent of its sales and the rest of the world for the remainder. Massey Ferguson had opened its East African branch in 1930, and it had licensing agreements with Pakistan; owned subsidiaries in South Africa, Brazil, Thailand, Malawi and Kenya; and held minority ownership in companies in India and Morocco. In Africa and Asia, it relied more on sales than local production.¹³⁸ Building on a decentralized structure and on local staff in operations abroad, the company sold equipment in virtually every state of the world, and its products were made or assembled in 30 countries.¹³⁹ After increasing its sales in Africa by half in 1980 alone, the company supplied one out of every four tractors on the continent. But in India, where it had license contracts with several major manufacturers, its market share dropped in the 1970s.¹⁴⁰ Massey Ferguson had planned to balance any crisis in one territory with business in others. But as the firm was spread so widely, business could not easily be trimmed, and the company, having taken out huge loans, was chronically short of cash. Its inventories piled up.¹⁴¹

What had seemed to be a brilliant strategy did not work in part because the national business cycles of industrial agriculture were more interdependent than anticipated. In 1972, sales surged simultaneously in the USA, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, South Africa and Brazil, and the company experienced strong growth in the first half of the 1970s. In 1976, it reported record earnings of US\$118 million, and in February of that year, *Business Week* titled a report "Massey-Ferguson's success story", but it was followed only 16 months later by one titled "Massey-Ferguson's pile of problems". After 1976, business stagnated almost synchronically in North America, Western Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. Medium-acreage commercial farms – Massey Ferguson's principal customers for its mid-sized tractors – everywhere fell into crisis after the commodities boom and subsequent overinvestment of 1972–1975, sometimes in conjunction with the budgetary problems of states suffering from the economic crisis. For example, Brazil could no longer afford its large credit scheme for middle-size farmers. Moreover, the firm's new, huge tractors designed for the North American market did not sell well. In one way, the "global corporation" had not worked; in

138 Neufeld 1969, pp. 166, 302, 324, 346–347, 357, and 378; Cook 1981, pp. 159, 168–72, 184 (quote), 284; UNCTNC 1983a, p. 60.

139 Massey Ferguson press release, 20 December 1972, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 13, Massey-Ferguson I; "Massey-Ferguson's Success Story", 2 February 1976, *Business Week*, 2 February 1976, ditto, Massey-Ferguson III; address of Powell, 13 December 1976, p. 7, *ibid*.

140 Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 40; Neufeld 1969, pp. 324 and 333–336.

141 Cook 1981, p. 184.

another way, it was not “global enough”, for it ignored small tractor development and diversification.¹⁴²

The entire industry was hit by crisis in the early 1980s. The North American market shrank by more than half between 1979 and 1986, and the contractions in Western Europe, Latin America and Africa were not much less. Fierce competition spurred further concentration: International Harvester, hamstrung, like Massey Ferguson, by a lack of investment and low-profit margins, was forced to sell its farm equipment business to J. I. Case (Tenneco) in November 1984, and Ford purchased New Holland a year later.¹⁴³ Other mergers followed later.

“We do have an interest in this kind of market primarily on a sales basis rather than a contribution” to manufacturing or assembly, stated a public relations manager of Ford’s Tractor Operations in reference to the non-industrialized world.¹⁴⁴ This preference was typical for many companies. International Harvester, for instance, produced and assembled only 5 percent of its tractors in non-industrialized countries in 1979. More diversified conglomerates also moved into selling agricultural equipment, like Lonrho who acquired shares in Nigerian and Kenyan companies in the late 1960s.¹⁴⁵

Generally speaking, the growth of the tractor industry in Asia and Africa in the 1970s was a two-part process. International firms wanting to enter the sizable markets of larger countries established subsidiaries or negotiated joint ventures, and national governments fostered indigenous production.¹⁴⁶

India, for example, started the 1970s with a dearth of tractors: each year farmers filed 65,000 applications for 15,000 units supplied (which doubled by 1974–1975 and again by 1979). And most that it had were geographically concentrated within a 400 km radius of Delhi. India imported US\$100 million worth of agricultural machinery.¹⁴⁷ Massey Ferguson, Ford, International Harvester, Klöckner-Humboldt-Deutz and Eicher all had joint ventures in the country, side by side with manufacturing under license from Motokov (CSSR), Motoimport (Poland) and Pommash (USSR). By 1979, a very competitive market had developed in which seven companies each controlled at least 9 percent and Massey Ferguson was still the leader. The state-owned Punjab tractors and the first private indigenous company (Pittic) emerged.¹⁴⁸ India restricted its annual imports in the mid-1970s to a

142 Massey Ferguson, Press release, 20 December 1972, FAO, RG 9, DDI, Box 13, Massey-Ferguson I; *Business Week*, 2 February 1976, pp. 40 and 44, and 20 June 1977, *ibid.*, Massey Ferguson III; Broehl 1984, p. 820; Cook 1981, pp. 186, 212–273 and 278–279; Mandel 1987, p. 210.

143 Marsh 1985, pp. 5, 162, 164, 182; Broehl 1984, p. 728; Krebs 1992, p. 80.

144 Marc J. Parsons, PR Manager, Ford Tractor Operations, to Latour (ICP), 26 June 1970, FAO 9, DDI, IP 22/10 general, vol. I.

145 UNCTNC 1983a, p. 76; Cronjé et al. 1976, pp. 48 and 95.

146 In about 1980, 90 percent of all tractors built in non-industrialized countries came from Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Iran, Mexico, and Turkey: UNCTNC 1983a, p. 3.

147 Thirty million of the imports were from the USA, 16 from Japan, five from the USSR and four from Czechoslovakia. Memo Donald W. Born for John W. Donald, 26 August 1970, NARA, RG 59, SF, Economic, Box 457, AGR 3 FAO 8/14/70; U.S. Consul Calcutta, “Agriculture in Eastern India: The Tortoise Moves”, 24 June 1970, *ibid.*, Box 470, AGR I; UNCTNC 1983a, p. 91.

148 *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 96 and 123–128.

few million dollars. In contrast, Nigeria began to increase its imports in 1974 to over \$100 million.¹⁴⁹ This was typical for both continents, with India nurturing homegrown production and virtually banning imports. (In 1994, the Indian firm Mahindra, nowadays the best-selling company worldwide, began to export tractors to and produce them in the USA.)

In Pakistan, which encouraged the use of tractors and offered credit to buy them, an estimated 45,000–50,000 tractors were in use in 1976. The assembly of 10,000 per year (a number greater than annual imports) had begun under license from Massey Ferguson, which also submitted a proposal to build a factory in the province of Punjab.¹⁵⁰ However, Kubota and International Harvester invested in the Philippines and Kubota and Yanmar in Indonesia by purchasing minority interests in domestic firms.¹⁵¹ In Sub-Saharan Africa, only Massey Ferguson (in Sudan) and Fiat (in Nigeria and Sudan) were producing tractors by 1981. Slightly more than half of the 206,000 tractors sold in Asia in 1978 were assembled locally; in Africa, it was only 12 percent of 34,000 tractors sold.¹⁵²

Still, the comparatively small size of Asian farms worked against the widespread use of tractors. The Indian village of Rasoolpur in Uttar Pradesh, India, was typical. Between 1942 and 1976, the village economy became much more monetized, but by the end of that period, only three of the 160 households owned a tractor and 12 owned a thresher while 70 percent had purchased a water pump.¹⁵³ Residents bought only the machinery that was absolutely essential, given the low cost of labor. (In most of Africa, this did not include irrigation equipment.) By comparison, the use of technology was still much lower in areas of South and Southeast Asia where irrigation was relatively widespread. In 1976, only 11 percent of the farms in Bangladesh had electricity, 10 percent had installed tubewells, and 6.2 percent had power pumps, most of which the government had provided.¹⁵⁴

Unfortunately, little is known about who built these pumps. Italian brands seem to have led the market in South Asia around 1970. In Thailand, about 300,000 pump sets were purchased annually in the late 1970s, of which 85–90 percent were imported and the remainder made by ten domestic producers. Domestic production was substantial with nearly 400,000 in India and around 60,000 in the Philippines, in contrast to Indonesia.¹⁵⁵

Planners discussed several large-scale irrigation projects, the realization of which would have benefitted machinery producers in industrialized countries. The costs for irrigation were high. One FAO estimate of US\$980 to build irrigation

149 Daberkow and Parks 1990, p. 50.

150 U.S. Agricultural Attaché, PK-6003 of 20 February 1976, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 61, PK Pakistan 76 DR.

151 UNCTNC 1983a, pp. 92 and 96.

152 In addition, John Deere had a subsidiary in South Africa. UNCTNC 1983a, pp. 45, 98–99.

153 See Verma 1980, p. 24.

154 Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Report on the Pilot Agricultural Census 1976, pp. 20–21.

155 Born memo to Donald (see note 6/148); Titterud 1994, pp. 126–127, 130, 146; UNCTNC 1983a, pp. 86, 90. Pumps were also produced in Brazil, the PRC, Pakistan, Mexico, South Korea, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

facilities for 1 hectare was far too optimistic.¹⁵⁶ ‘World Bank’ president McNamara envisioned a multi-year US\$130 billion program in his speech in Nairobi in September 1973, and a report for the Trilateral Commission, a think tank representing North American, Western European and Japanese political and business interests, co-authored by Umberto Colombo, a manager of the Italian agrochemical company Montedison, called for an 18-year US\$52 billion irrigation-construction program in South and Southeast Asia.¹⁵⁷ Committed to the interests of big business and to the Japanese development model, this group argued that according to the UN’s projection of non-industrialized countries’ future shortfalls in imported grain, much of it would be in rice, and most rice was grown in these regions.¹⁵⁸ An US\$89 billion land improvement program (\$59 billion for the improvement or extension of irrigation and, unusually, \$30 billion for the development of 153 million hectares of rainfed land) was discussed in preparation for the World Food Conference.¹⁵⁹ None of these proposed projects materialized, but there were national efforts for more irrigation. Both facts left great national and international imbalances in irrigation in place. In around 2010, 39 percent of South Asia’s cropland was irrigated, but merely 3.6 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa was.¹⁶⁰ And in Africa, most of the irrigated land was planted with export crops in the late 1960s, when close to 80 percent of the irrigation in India was for cereals.¹⁶¹

The case of the agricultural machinery industry demonstrates causes and consequences of multinational companies’ lacking readiness to supply adjusted technology. In North American and European corporations, the conviction was common that ‘Third-World’ customers were best served with their existing products. Governments’ import subsidies, as in Thailand and Nigeria, encouraged this arrogance. The firms preferred to import as many parts as possible, and rarely modified their designs.¹⁶² In Bangladesh, Massey Ferguson ran misleading advertisements (“RICE. Plan the surplus yield today”, “New MF Tractors and Rotavators will yield some extra million tons of rice and possibly 730 days will be just enough to be self-sufficient in food”), irrelevant to the vast majority of small peasants, while most of the country’s few – exclusively imported – tractors were ill suited to rice paddies flooded with one meter of water and, consequently, needed frequent repairs.¹⁶³ Companies also did not offer customers much assistance in using their

156 Address by Sayed Marei, 18 July 1974, CL63/PV, Verbatim Records of the plenary meeting of the [FAO] council, p. 154, FAO, RG 7, film 517.

157 See Matzke 1974, pp. 60–61; Colombo et al. 1977.

158 Colombo et al. 1977, esp. pp. xiii, 10, 13, 15–35.

159 Report of the Preparatory Committee for the World Food Conference on its Third Session, p. 16, FAO, RG 22, WFC Documents – E/Conf.65/Series.

160 Juma 2011, pp. 8, 14.

161 J. Kanwar, “Water Management and Crop Planning in India”, n.d., FAO, RG 15, RAPE, India, 1974–76.

162 UNCTNC 1983a, pp. 1 and 73–74; examples of subsidies: U.S. Agricultural Attaché, NA 7011, “Nigeria: Agricultural Policy”, 25 April 1976, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 69, NA Nigeria 77 DR; Titterud 1994, pp. 147–149.

163 See Gerlach 2002a, pp. 81–82; advertisements from 1974 in NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974.

products. Training workshops as by Caterpillar in Zambia and Nigeria in 1976–1977 and the establishment of a joint agro-mechanical training center in Tanzania with support of multinational companies were isolated efforts.¹⁶⁴ A greater effort would have required bigger investments. The firms calculated that the return on a low-cost tractor did not justify the cost of establishing and maintaining a large distribution and servicing network. In a capitalist framework, mechanization bypassed the small farmer in non-industrialized countries, which remained out of reach for multinationals.

Pesticides

The global chemical industry entered a period of stagnation in 1973. There had been few discoveries or new products in the previous two decades, and in the early 1970s, fewer pesticide compounds were invented than before. With markets in industrialized countries saturated, the industry looked to the non-industrialized parts of the world for expansion.¹⁶⁵ Covering on a conference of agrochemical business consultants, one journalist commented that “for the survival of the companies, an expansion into the Third World is [. . .] necessary”.¹⁶⁶ The pesticide industry was also hit by environmental concerns in industrialized countries and, so, dumped substances on non-industrialized nations where their use was not outlawed.

Pesticide exports were growing strongly. In the 1970s, world production grew 5 percent annually, but international trade increased eightfold from roughly US\$500 million to \$4 billion (\$5 billion in 1985) with Western Europe accounting for two-thirds of exports and North America for almost 20 percent. West German firms like Bayer, the market’s leaders, exported one-third of their production to non-industrialized countries in the mid-1980s. Africa accounted for 14 percent (\$91 million) of all pesticide imports in 1970, 16 percent (\$353 million) in 1975, 13 percent (\$569 million) in 1980, and 10 percent (\$495 million) in 1984; in Asia, the figures for the same years were 18 percent (\$117 million), 15 percent (\$330 million), 18 percent (\$722 million) and 21 percent (\$1.078 billion). Non-industrialized countries used 20 percent of all pesticides but 43 percent of all insecticides, which were more poisonous.¹⁶⁷ Though most of the substances used in Asia were insecticides, the application of herbicides also rose with the spread of high-yielding seed varieties.¹⁶⁸

164 FAO, RG 9, ICP, IP 22/8, Box 10, Caterpillar Tractor Co., vol. I and II; *ibid.*, Box 12, Deere & Co.; Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 40.

165 Aftalion 1991, pp. 241 and 319–373, especially 320; Boardman 1986, p. 37; Knirsch 1987, pp. 38–39.

166 Quoted in: Knirsch 1987, p. 39 (my translation from German).

167 U.S.-based companies had a market share of 20–25 percent of Asian imports but much less in Africa. ICI held strongpoints in former British colonies such as Malaysia and some African countries; Swiss corporations in Indonesia and Bangladesh. Bull 1982, p. 6; Daberkow and Parks 1990, pp. 15, 21–22, 32 and 52; Farah 1994, p. 4; Schumann 1986, p. 79.

168 Furtick, “The Pesticide Problem”, 21 May 1974, FAO, RG 15, RAPE, World Food Situation-Fertilizer 1973–76; for the Philippines, see James G. Unti, *Agricultural Economist* [of USAID in

That said, the world pesticide market was limited with a size of US\$4 billion in 1970, \$25.5 billion in 1990–1991, and \$31 billion in 1998 (adjusted, for inflation, it less than doubled in 1970–1998).¹⁶⁹ And non-industrialized countries consumed relatively little of the total, between 7 and 8 percent in 1975.¹⁷⁰ International trade was only a fraction (although a growing one) of the total: \$0.5 billion (12.5 percent) in 1970, \$4.9 billion in 1986, and \$11.6 billion (37 percent) in 1998.¹⁷¹ Even in the USA in the 1970s, 20 percent or less of cropland and pastures were treated with insecticides, and half of all the pesticides used were applied to gardens, parks and golf courses.¹⁷² In 1993, an observer noted a “stagnant and stable market in the major pesticide consuming regions, and lack of novel chemicals”.¹⁷³

The use of plant ‘protection’ in non-industrialized countries rose 11 percent annually in the 1960s (reaching 160,000 tons in 1970–1971) and 23 percent in 1971–1973, but it was only 9 percent per year in 1975–1977, reflecting, among other factors, the slower spread of grain HYVs.¹⁷⁴ Likewise, pesticide imports to Central America quadrupled from less than US\$40 million in 1972 to \$160 million in 1980 and then stabilized.¹⁷⁵ Throughout the 1980s, imports in many non-industrialized countries stagnated.

The expansion in pesticide use was regionally uneven. In the mid-1970s, India’s use sometimes exceeded its planned targets, reaching more than 47,000 tons in 1974–1975, to remain at 68,000 tons almost 20 years later. Non-industrialized countries, especially in Africa, often failed in the first few years to reach the growth rates the FAO proposed in its “Indicative World Plan” of 1970. In East Pakistan/Bangladesh, consumption from 1964 to 1965 for the next four years stagnated at around 3,000 tons and then rose by a quarter up to 1971–1972, but it stayed at around 5,000 tons until 1977.¹⁷⁶ Periods of stagnation were often the result of low demand, but unreliable supplies sometimes contributed, as during the world food crisis, against which countries like India and Bangladesh tried in vain to get the UN to establish international trade regulations.¹⁷⁷ Shortages and high prices of pesticides during the

Pakistan], “Pesticide Distribution and Use in Selected Asian Countries”, 12 May 1971, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 25, PK Pakistan 1971 (second file).

169 George 1981, p. 71; Moore Lappé et al. 1998, p. 51; “The Facts” 2000. Cf. Krebs 1992, p. 83.

170 George 1981, p. 71.

171 Daberkow and Parks 1990, pp. 15, 21.

172 Collins and Moore Lappé 1980, p. 67.

173 “Review” 1993.

174 UN World Food Council, WFC/39, “Agricultural Inputs”, 31 March 1977, FAO Library; Paper by W. Furtick, Chief, Plant Protection Service, FAO, 15 July 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN 43/2B Divisional Contributions-General; UNIDO’s Contribution to World Food Conference (Assessment and action paper), revised draft, 29 May 1974, p. 10, FAO, RG 12, Nut. Div., Reg. Files UN 43/1.

175 Murray 1994, p. 65.

176 Government of India, Planning Commission, Annual Plan 1975/76, p. 34; “Longer-Term Outlook on World Food Supplies”, 15 February 1974, FAO, RG 9, SF, III, FAO/IBRD Round Table; Adam 1976, p. 120; Simon 1999, p. 194; “Agricultural situation in Bangladesh” (by Joint Secretary of Agriculture, Government of Bangladesh), 26 April 1974, enclosure 2 to BD-4027, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974 DR; ditto, report BD-5002, 20 January 1975, *ibid.*, Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975 DR; Government of Bangladesh, Planning Commission, “Two-Year Plan 1978–80”, p. 83.

177 See Solomon 1977, pp. 77–78; Boardman 1986, p. 144.

simultaneous energy crisis slowed pesticides' spread, although experts considered that the lack of availability was not yet widespread in 1973–1974 – despite spiraling prices – but that it was a potential danger for the following year.¹⁷⁸

Slack periods and uneven distribution were largely consequences of the fact that most of the pesticides in non-industrialized countries were not used by small producers on food crops but by large landholders on cash crops, though rice production in Asia was an exception. In Sub-Saharan Africa (particularly in Sudan, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya) in the early 1980s, most pesticides were applied to crops for export and industrial use; only about 15 percent was for corn (chiefly in East Africa), and no more than 3 percent went to other grains. In Senegal, two-thirds of pesticides were used on cotton, peanuts and sugarcane. In Asia, one study found that Indonesian plantations used 20 times more pesticides than small farmers though the latter cultivated an area seven times larger than the former, and in neighboring Malaysia, plantations purchased 70 percent of all pesticides.¹⁷⁹ By contrast, in the Philippines – a former colony of the USA where U.S. companies had a strong market position, and Stauffer Chemicals worked closely with the IRRI based in Los Baños – 55 percent of all pesticides were applied to rice. Overall consumption figures suggest that, in the Philippines, it was medium-sized rice producers who took up the use of pesticides, whereas in Sri Lanka, it was smallholders.¹⁸⁰

In the mid-1970s, Indian use reached a modest 50 grams of active ingredients per hectare; in Sri Lanka, the figure was 145 grams; in the Philippines, it was 27 grams. In Kenya, which was one of Africa's largest consumers, the amount was 11 grams. (This compares to 1,233 grams in Japan and 214 grams in South Korea.)¹⁸¹

Leading executives in the industry, like Ciba-Geigy's Victor Umbricht, were looking for new ways to help sell their products to smallholders in non-industrialized countries, such as through collaboration with domestic credit institutions, contract farming, new storage facilities, and package deals with other inputs, but apparently they were undecided whether they should rather pursue capital-intensive or labor-intensive production.¹⁸² One channel through which the industry tried to increase its influence was 'development aid', as the case of Ciba-Geigy in Bangladesh shows (see Chapter 7). Companies also tried to market their products by dispatching their own experts into development schemes, as Ciba-Geigy did in Indonesia and Hoechst in Tanzania.¹⁸³

Corporations also profited in other ways from the 'development aid' of their own countries' governments. In the second half of the 1980s, foreign 'aid' financed

178 Furtick, "The Pesticide Problem", 21 May 1974, and "ECOSOC resolution on fertilizers and pesticides. Report of the Working Party", 22 May 1974, FAO, RG 15, RAPE, World Food Situation-Fertilizer 1973–76; FAO Council, 36th Session, "Emergency Measures in regard to the Supply of Fertilizers and Pesticides", note of the Director-General, June 1974, AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, World Food Conference.

179 Bull 1982, p. 81; Farah 1994, p. 13; Weir and Schapiro 1981, p. 33; Knirsch 1987, p. 37; Repetto 1985, pp. 1 and 16; Drilon 1975, p. 94; Collins and Moore Lappé 1980, p. 68. For Indonesia, see also Chapter 8 of this study.

180 Weir and Schapiro 1981, pp. 55 and 84–85; Bull 1982, p. 80.

181 Adam 1976, p. 121; Farah 1994, pp. 26–27.

182 Victor Umbricht, "World Food Conference – Some suggestions about contributions by industry and science", June 1974, FAO, RG 22, UN 43/6, vol. 1.

183 *Multinationals' training practices* 1981, p. 37; Weir and Schapiro 1981, p. 53.

between 75 and 100 percent of pesticide procurement for Sudan, Senegal, received considerable amounts of insecticides as Japanese ‘aid’ for the protection of food crops, and for the African Locust Program, West Germany provided as much as DM700 million within three years despite a very low likelihood of an outbreak.¹⁸⁴ ODA for pesticides varied by country. From 1969 to 1974, the USAID supplied US\$17.4 million in pesticides on average, one-eighth of U.S. pesticide exports (in 1979, the figure was 6 percent), much of which was reputedly for public health uses such as combating malaria. But given that only a fraction of the international trade involved non-industrialized countries, these figures indicate that in the early 1970s as much as one-third of U.S. exports to these countries may have been publicly funded. The USAID also provided \$4 million to export 6,300 tons of domestically banned substances between 1971 and 1976.¹⁸⁵

Companies also drew massive benefits from public support at the other end. Many governments in non-industrialized countries directly or indirectly subsidized the retail price of pesticides from 19 percent in Pakistan to 89 percent in Senegal, which a 1985 study found was up to US\$3 per capita of the country’s population annually. The government of Indonesia paid 82 percent of the costs for pesticides in subsidies in 1982–1983, which equaled \$128 million or \$0.80 per capita of all citizens, compared to \$1.50 for water supply and \$2.50 for health services. Ghana spent \$20 million (\$1.70 per capita). Bangladesh distributed most pesticides for free until April 1974. In the Philippines, it was particularly chemical plant ‘protection’ for rice that was subsidized (by half of the real price).¹⁸⁶ Once subsidies were withdrawn, as in Bangladesh in the spring of 1974 and in Indonesia in 1986, demand dropped and pesticide use stagnated for years. Studies showed that public financial support could determine whether pesticide use was financially viable for farmers or not.¹⁸⁷ If not much further growth of pesticide application – namely herbicides – materialized in the 1980s, this was chiefly owing to the debt crises, the ‘structural adjustments’ that international lending institutions imposed on governments and the consequent withdrawal of subsidies. As long as they existed, pesticide subsidies encouraged the excessive use of toxic chemicals, favored large landowners and worked against domestic pesticide production.

Like the fertilizer industry in the mid-1970s, big pesticide producers in the late 1960s maintained that “the production of modern, highly qualified pesticides should be left to states that possess a developed and research-intensive chemical industry”.¹⁸⁸ But they changed their view and started to invest in non-industrialized

184 Farah 1994, pp. 15–16; Repetto 1985, p. 21.

185 Bull 1982, pp. 74–75; cf. “World Food Conference, Draft resolution III/Discussion”, 30 October 1974, Ford Library, Paul C. Leach files, Box 10, World Food, Nov 23–30, 1974; Weir and Schapiro 1981, pp. 23, 51.

186 Repetto 1985; cf. Farah 1994; U.S. Agricultural Attaché, “Bangladesh – Agricultural Situation”, 14 January 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974.

187 See Repetto 1985, pp. 12–15 and 19–21; Farah 1994, pp. 13 and 25.

188 Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Chemische Industrie, “Organisation der Vereinten Nationen für industrielle Entwicklung, Bemerkungen zum Symposium in Athen vom 29. November bis 20. Dezember 1967”, AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, UNIDO 1967-.

countries. Around 1980, multinationals operated agrochemical factories in Latin America, especially in Brazil (which accounted for one-third of non-industrialized countries' imports), Mexico and Argentina. U.S. companies more than tripled their investment in the 1970s. Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) increased its overseas investment in that decade so much that *The Economist* dubbed it "International Chemical Industries". In 1977, the Swiss firm Ciba-Geigy had 13,695 employees in non-industrialized countries (though business was in decline in Indonesia and Bangladesh), and ICI had a little over 10,000 in each of Africa and India by 1980.¹⁸⁹ Companies opened new plants to expand their growing markets. Local formulation could also help bypass export bans on certain substances in countries like the USA.¹⁹⁰

India and Nigeria again are contrasting examples. Because of its domestic production, Indian imports never increased beyond US\$34 million (in 1980, compared to \$7 million in 1970) before 1984, and, consequently, the country became virtually self-sufficient. But Nigeria imported \$139 million worth of pesticides in 1980 (compared to \$9 million in 1970).¹⁹¹ Other countries, such as Indonesia, where Bayer, ICI, Dow Chemical and Chevron controlled 70 percent of manufacturing, strove to develop their own pesticide industries. However, the FAO predicted in 1974 that, although several states would be capable of formulating products from imported basic feedstocks in the medium term, only a few would manage to produce the basic materials in the long run. India was an exception. In the Philippines, for example, just one domestic company produced pesticides from scratch in 1980 while about 20 firms formulated or imported.¹⁹²

The chemical industry, and many bureaucrats, downplayed the environmental harm of the increased use of agrochemicals. "What is the effect on food production of the banning of a number of herbicides and insecticides (which have very minor side effects)?" warned Victor Umbricht.¹⁹³ The Nobel Prize-winning plant geneticist Norman Borlaug was among those who most aggressively opposed ecologic concerns. In a letter to a pro-DDT activist, he snapped:

Thank God some courageous volunteers are getting into the act fighting back against the propaganda campaign against pesticides and fertilizers, which is based on emotion, mini-truths, maybe truths and downright falsehoods and launched by full bellied philosophers, environmentalists and pseudo-ecologists.¹⁹⁴

189 Grosse 1989, pp. 213 and 218; Clarke 1982; *Multinationals' training practices* 1981, p. 41.

190 Weir and Schapiro 1981, p. 41.

191 Daberkow and Parks 1990, p. 52.

192 U.S. Agricultural Attaché, Indonesia, "Agricultural situation", 6 March 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 40, ID Indonesia 1974 DR; Weir and Schapiro 1981, pp. 43 and 84-85; "Emergency Measures" (see note 6/178).

193 Umbricht, "World Food Conference" (see note 6/182).

194 Borlaugh to Betty Chapman, Volunteer Secretary, Sponsors of Science - DDT, Madison, Wisconsin, 4 October 1971, FAO, RG 15, LUNO, Reg. Files UN 10/16.

However, growing public concern led to the passage of much stricter environmental legislation in Western Europe and particularly the USA in the 1970s. Not accidentally, it was the EEC Commissioner for Agriculture, Sicco Mansholt, who responded publicly to Borlaug's allegation that pesticide critics were "hysterical environmentalists" by avowing sternly that he was himself one of the hysterics.¹⁹⁵ The new laws had ramifications for non-industrialized countries. For example, Malawi banned the importation of Lindane after West Germany stopped its imports of Malawian tobacco because of Lindane contamination.¹⁹⁶

The consequences of growing pesticide use were indeed serious. In 1972, the WHO estimated half a million cases of pesticide poisoning and 5,000 deaths worldwide, and a WHO/UNEP study in 1989 put the figures at up to one million cases and 20,000 deaths. The first number may have been understated. In 1970, 1,200 people died from pesticide poisoning in Thailand alone although it was rumored that half of them committed suicide. Pesticides killed between 900 and 1,100 Sri Lankans each year from 1975 to 1978.¹⁹⁷ Suicide by ingesting pesticide in India became European and North American headline news in the 2000s, with most of 183,000 farmers' suicides committed by such poisoning 1997–2007. Apparently this method was especially often chosen by women.¹⁹⁸ In 1970s Bangladesh, there was the case of one union (a small administrative unit, often with less than ten villages) reporting five persons killing themselves by drinking pesticide on the same day.¹⁹⁹ Environmental consequences of pesticide application included the death of fish and crabs in Indonesian and Philippine rice paddies, a traditional source of protein,²⁰⁰ and the increased resistance of pests.

The FAO adopted Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies for the (allegedly) safe use of pesticides when it tried to take the lead in pesticide matters from the WHO and the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) in the 1980s, but it never changed its view, which was between approval and unqualified endorsement, on their use.²⁰¹ For years, the big companies set hopes in FAO of achieving an international harmonization of safety rules to make exports even easier, although there was no breakthrough for these efforts in the late 1970s and early 1980s.²⁰² Other international organizations were hesitant to appear too pesticide-friendly, put under pressure by the equally international Pesticide Action Network, founded in 1982 by NGOs.

In practice, safe-use seminars by FAO or companies such as ICI and Bayer reached few participants. The same was true for Ciba-Geigy's plant protection

195 FAO Press Release 71/70-C/71/13, 10 November 1971, about the 16th FAO Conference, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., SF, E.E.C. 1969–76.

196 Central and Southern Africa – General Review, July–June 1972, Oxfam Archive, African Field Committee, February 1970–November 1973.

197 Unti, "Pesticide Distribution" (see note 6/168); Farah 1994, p. 1; Bull 1982, p. 44.

198 Möllhof 2010; Gentleman 2006; Patel 2007, p. 28.

199 Stepanek 1978, pp. 64–65.

200 Collins and Moore Lappé 1980, pp. 72–73.

201 Murray 1994, pp. 119–20 and 132; Bull 1982, pp. 124–142.

202 Boardman 1986, pp. 103–110. Despite promoting such harmonization, companies exported pesticides that were banned in their home country to non-industrialized states.

seminars to “train the trainers” in Pakistan, Bangladesh, North and West Africa, and Central America. Demonstrations to farmers, if they were offered at all, were not conducted by company specialists.²⁰³ Other than the Integrated Pest Management programs for rice in Indonesia and cassava in some African countries, few have been judged successful.²⁰⁴ Few governments of non-industrialized countries were capable of running such programs. According to an FAO inquiry in 1993, most could not adequately train program participants and collect data for assessments. Fifty-seven percent of the governments surveyed instituted no quality control measures, and 70 percent collected no data on imports and domestic formulation. Eighty percent or more lacked information about safety, experimental trials, or companies’ cooperation with governments’ efforts to advertise safety rules.²⁰⁵ If countries adopted IPM programs at all, this had also something to do with pesticides’ ever-decreasing contribution to yield increases in the 1980s; fertilizers and HYV seeds were much more effective.²⁰⁶

The enormous dangers caused by companies’ improper advertising and denial of hazards, by insufficient labeling and information, often in languages not understood in the local countryside (let alone explained to illiterates), and due to the lack of research and knowledge about tropical crops and conditions like necessary protective measures or waiting times for harvesting after spraying,²⁰⁷ can be interpreted as another case of unadapted technology. Interested only in sales, they did not care much about the safety of their customers. In an apparent effort to control labeling and advertising, they seem to have striven to sell their products in privately owned stores rather than through public distribution channels. When India rejected Ciba-Geigy’s CHF60 million proposal for such a sales scheme in late 1966, its executives tried to get FAO’s Director-General Sen, an Indian national, to change officials’ minds. Under foreign pressure, India began to privatize the distribution of pesticides in 1966; five years afterwards, 70 percent of sales were private.²⁰⁸ But conditions of storage and the lack of customer information made private distribution extremely hazardous.

Moreover, companies engaged in little product development despite repeated complaints about the lack of innovation. Apparently, Asian and African markets were not important enough to tailor products for them, perhaps because production was so capital-intensive. In the 2010s, one leading company considered only one out of 100,000 tested formulae marketable, and it had needed eight years and US\$260 million on average to find it.²⁰⁹

Contrary to industrialized countries’ fertilizer industry, the big chemical corporations expanded their markets in the non-industrialized parts of the world without

203 Murray 1994, p. 121; Plant Protection, Training Activities of Ciba Geigy, AC Division, with cover letter of 28 September 1976, AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, FAO, ICP, März 1972.

204 Farah 1994, p. 3.

205 Farah 1994, pp. 6–7; see Bull 1982, pp. 146–148.

206 Repetto 1985, pp. 12–15; Farah 1994, p. 21; Bull 1982, pp. 76–77.

207 Bull 1982, pp. 87–123, is groundbreaking; see also *ibid.*, p. 59.

208 Ciba AG, India/Pesticides, 31 August 1967, AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, FAO Projects 1966–1972; Unti, “Pesticide Distribution” (see note 6/168).

209 See Hofmann 2015 on Syngenta.

generating much local competition, which further concentrated an already oligopolistic market, especially in the 1990s. In 1998, the top five companies accounted for 60 percent of worldwide sales.²¹⁰ However, much of the industry's growth since the 1990s has been depending on the expansion of markets in industrialized countries and parts of Latin America. The penetration of pesticides into non-industrialized countries' staple food production in the past five decades has remained patchy, focused on certain regions (parts of South and Southeast Asia), social groups (medium, but only in some regions small growers) and crops (rice and corn, but much less wheat, sorghum, millet, cassava or other root crops). And its use corresponded to the extent of irrigation and to government policies and their limits set by public debt.

Seeds

Beginning in the early 1970s, huge chemical corporations went for two decades on a global buying spree for seed companies, acquiring firms of the medium-sized, specialized sort that had long prevailed in the seed market. Among the ten largest seed producers at the end of the 1980s were Pioneer, Sandoz, Shell, Dekalb, Upjohn, Linagrain, Cargill, Volvo, ICI and Ciba-Geigy. Newly introduced legislation protecting and in fact facilitating licensed seeds in a number of industrialized countries, such as Great Britain (1964), the USA (1970) and in the EEC (1980), promised a great business potential. The new seeds, replacing genetic variety on the fields by monoculture, were highly susceptible to pests. Corporations intended to produce a concerted package of resistant seeds and matching pesticides and fertilizers also using their extensive marketing and distribution networks for selling seeds. Inheritance taxes faced by heirs of old seed companies, forcing them to sell, and the sudden overflow of liquidity in petroleum-related business in the 1970s, which required investment, may have contributed to this capital concentration.²¹¹ Some observers were puzzled by the industry's concentration process though it remained limited by comparison.²¹²

210 In the mid-1980s, Bayer, Ciba-Geigy and Monsanto were the market leaders; in 1992, Ciba-Geigy led ahead of DuPont, Bayer, Rhone Poulenc, Zeneca (formerly ICI), and Monsanto; in 1998, the leaders were the German firm Aventis (the merger of Hoechst, Schering and Rhone Poulenc), the Swiss firm Novartis (the merger of Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz), Monsanto, DuPont, and the British-Dutch firm AstraZeneca. "Review of the Global Pesticide Market", in: *Pesticide News* 22, December 1993, p. 11, www.pan-uk.org/pestnews/pn22/pn22p.11.htm, and Rural Advancement Foundation International, "World Seed Conference", 3 September 1999, www.etcgroup.org/article.asp?newsid=117, both accessed 22 August 2005. See also Young 1997, p. 54; Knirsch 1987, p. 35; Krebs 1992, p. 82.

211 Fundamental: Mooney 1981, especially pp. 69–77; see Fowler and Mooney 1990, pp. 122–128; Weir and Schapiro 1981, pp. 44, 86–87; for Tenneco, see George 1978, p. 14.

212 Interview of Dr. W. Oltmann of Kleinwanzlebener Saatzzucht AG by Rüdiger Stegemann, 8 January 1981, in Mooney 1981, p. 139. The ten biggest corporations controlled no more than 21 percent of the global seed trade in 1988, 33 percent in 1998, and 50 percent in 2005 (when the market generated US\$21 billion): Young 1997, p. 54; Rural Advancement Foundation International, "World Seed Conference", 3 September 1999, www.etcgroup.org/article.asp?newsid=117 (accessed 22 August 2005); Clapp and Fuchs 2009, p. 5.

Farmers needed substantially lower investments in seeds than in fertilizers or pesticides. Consequently, the global market for ‘improved’ seeds was comparatively small, about US\$10 billion in around 1980 (and \$23 billion in 1998). Non-industrialized countries consumed \$3.8 billion worth of ‘improved’ seeds by the end of the 1980s.²¹³ Between 1982 and 1987, African seed imports from the USA were a mere \$10 million to \$15 million, while Asia constituted a sizable U.S. market of \$63 million to \$88 million. Both continents together accounted for about 30 percent of U.S. seed exports, and these were still much smaller until 1981.²¹⁴

Corporate profiles suggest that the primary markets which such acquisitions targeted were for animal feeds such as corn, sorghum, lucerne and various oilseeds and that they aimed above all at vertically integrating meat production for consumption in industrialized countries. Ciba-Geigy’s engagement in seed business, which focused on corn for the North American and Western European markets (including sorghum, lucerne, oats, soybeans, and forage formulae), exemplifies this.²¹⁵ In other words, integrated supplies for staple food production (above all, rice) in non-industrialized countries were in this period merely an interesting side business for the expansion of these internationally operating corporations. Its potential significance was greater than its contemporary one.

Private firms did not play much of a role in the “emergence stage of the seed industry life cycle” in non-industrialized countries.²¹⁶ In 1978, the FAO noted that private industry “has not been very active” in seed development in such countries.²¹⁷ Rather, the state directed the breeding of high-yield seeds.²¹⁸ For example, India, which operated under a policy of self-sufficiency in seeds, ran large and diverse development programs for new wheat, rice, corn, sorghum and millet seeds. Governments had smaller programs nearly everywhere else, including in Africa, where Kenya was developing new wheat strains and Niger worked on new strains of sorghum and millet. Beginning in the mid-1970s, more (usually highly centralized) programs were devoted to such crops and cassava. But as late as 1978, U.S. observers considered even India’s seed industry as “in its infancy”.²¹⁹

213 Weir and Schapiro 1981, p. 44; Fowler and Mooney 1990, p. 124; Rural Advancement Foundation International, “World Seed Conference” (see note 6/212); US\$12 billion in 1983, of which one-third was in the USA: UNCTNC 1983b, p. 220. However, figures vary. Korfmacher 1987, p. 139, estimates the global seed market at \$30 billion in 1984; Krebs 1992, p. 77, puts it at \$13 billion around 1990; Cromwell 1996 values it at \$4 billion in the late 1980s, 12 percent of which was non-industrialized countries; and Pfister 2016 puts the value at \$51 billion.

214 Daberkow and Parks 1990, pp. 34, 39, 84.

215 Mooney 1981, pp. 73, 143–154; press reports of the mid-1970s in FAO, RG 9, ICP, IP 22/8 Ciba Geigy, vol. II. For the world feeds market, see Schumann 1986.

216 Morris 1998b, p. 357 (concerning corn).

217 Quoted in Maaß 1981, p. 240.

218 See Skorov 1973, pp. 14–15.

219 “Status of Seed Industry in Developing Countries and its Investment Requirements”, first draft, November 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. IV; U.S. Agricultural Attaché, IN 8056, “India – Seed seminar”, 11 August 1978, NARA RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 78, ID – India (New Delhi) 1978; Harwood 2015, pp. 51–53. For rice programs in various countries, see Dalrymple 1986.

Though large corporations did try to enter the seed market in non-industrialized countries, they saw three difficulties: a lack of patent rights, state management of existing research, and the low priority of seed development in such countries. Companies demanded “minimum security for the foreign company’s property”. One of the models they envisioned was contractual bilateral seed industry projects with governments similar to the USAID’s programs that had, according to an ICP official, “used universities as their contracting vehicles in the past”.²²⁰ Yet corporate optimism faded. According to one industry leader, Kenya was the only non-industrialized country that had licensing-protective legislation in 1974.²²¹ Even this country also had substantial public seed development programs, supported by West Germany’s Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the UN Environment Programme and the Ford Foundation. African and Asian countries usually started with large seed imports, but they soon tried to establish their own production. To sum up, the investments of private seed companies or integrated seed-input multinationals in non-industrialized countries and their exports were limited. Their share of non-industrialized countries’ US\$3.8 billion market in the late 1980s was no more than 5–10 percent.²²²

The efforts of national governments were supplemented by a growing number of international programs, which recognized a relative neglect of tropical and, especially, rainfed food crops. These institutes bred many higher-yielding seeds, some of which non-industrialized countries’ research agencies later modified. After the earlier-founded Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maíz y Trigo (CIMMYT) in Mexico and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Los Baños, Philippines, a number of new institutions followed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) was founded in 1967 in Ibadan, Nigeria, and the Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT) in 1968 in Cali, Colombia. In 1971, both started to work on improved seeds for cassava, an important staple otherwise ignored by international development agencies.²²³ The West African Rice Development Association (WARDA) was established in 1971 by 11 West African states with support by FAO, UNDP and the Economic Commission for Africa in Liberia. The International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in Hyderabad, India, and the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) in Aleppo, Syria, were added in 1973 and 1977. All three worked under the auspices of the 1971 established Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) co-sponsored by the ‘World Bank’, FAO and UNDP. ICRISAT, for instance, embarked on a millet research program.²²⁴ And in 1973, the FAO started the Seed Development and Improvement Programme (SIDP), whose

220 Letter by J. I. Hendrie (Shell), ICP Spokesman for the Seeds Industry, 1 July 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8; quotes from Simons to Friedrich, 15 January 1976, FAO 9, DDI, PR 4/69, vol. I.

221 “History of Breeders’ Protection”, annex to “Plant Breeders’ Rights”, discussion paper by J. Hendrie (Shell), Consultation with Agro-Industrial Leaders in Preparation for World Food Conference (1974), AfZ, NL Umbricht, UNO, World Food Conference.

222 Fowler and Mooney 1990, pp. 124 and 129 (for Kenya).

223 Cock 1985, pp. 72–91.

224 Rachie and Majmudar 1980, pp. 220–231; see also Woodhouse 1988, p. 14.

annual budget, which averaged nearly US\$6 million in the first five years, was provided by various UN agencies, the African Development Bank, several governments and some charities.²²⁵ The USAID supported seed programs in 57 countries in 1957–1987; the SIDP did so in 60 countries in 1972–1984.²²⁶ This growth in the number of institutions, their activities and networking mirrored a global endeavor to intensify agricultural productivity, particularly of food crops. Today, the CGIAR group has grown further to comprise 15 institutions. Yet there was no guarantee that the findings of all this research would be put into worldwide practice. From 1974 to 1976, average yields of wheat and corn per hectare increased two and three times, respectively, faster in industrialized nations than in non-industrialized countries. Only for rice was this trend reversed.²²⁷

The regions planted with HYVs confirmed this limited impact. The first round of the industrialization of agriculture in Asia in the late 1960s mainly affected wheat farming in India and Pakistan and rice in the Philippines. In 1968–1969, HYVs were reportedly grown on 40.2 percent of Pakistan's and 25.4 percent of India's wheat acreage. The figures for rice were 31.6 percent in the Philippines (home of the IRRI) but only 7.1 percent for India, 4.2 percent for Pakistan (1.6 percent for East Pakistan), 3.8 percent for Burma, and 2.0 percent for Indonesia.²²⁸ Later rice followed suit, but selectively. India's HYV rice acreage grew continuously from 26.1 percent in 1973–1974 to 40 percent in the late 1970s to 49.4 percent in 1982–1983. Aggressive state promotion and legislation propelled Indonesia's HYV use to 47.7 percent in 1973–1974 and 82.9 percent in 1982–1983, and the pattern in the Philippines and Sri Lanka was about the same. But in Pakistan, HYV rice had already reached 50 percent by 1971–1972 and then declined a little over the next decade. In Bangladesh, it increased rapidly from 1972 to 1974 and then began to level off, reaching 24.8 percent in 1982–1983. The level in China 1984 was similar, but Thailand reported a mere 13 percent in 1981–1982.²²⁹ High-yielding wheat in India, much of which was grown in Punjab, reached 59.3 percent in 1973–1974 and grew to about 70 percent by the end of the 1970s.²³⁰ By 1974, even optimistic observers noted that the "green revolution" had become "highly concentrated in Asia, and within Asia it has been heavily concentrated in a few countries", with India and Pakistan accounting for 81 percent of all HYV wheat cultivation and India, the Philippines, Indonesia and Bangladesh accounting for 83 percent of HYV rice of the continent's capitalist countries. In Africa and Latin America (except Mexico), however, the spread of new seeds was very limited.²³¹

225 "FAO Brief for World Bank Meeting on Follow-Up of the Mexico Declaration of the World Food Council" revised draft, 2 February 1979, p. 20 and Annex 3, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 6, World Bank.

226 Cromwell 1996, p. 9.

227 Warman 2003, p. 230.

228 ACC Functional Group on the "Green Revolution", draft report to FAO Director-General Boerma, 21 January 1971, Table 3, FAO, RG 9, SF, III, UN-Green Revolution.

229 Dalrymple 1986, pp. 38–64.

230 Dalrymple 1986b, pp. 28–30, 34–38.

231 The World Food Situation 1974, p. 67. The report gave inflated figures for the use of HYVs of rice.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, only the small area under wheat in 1982–1983 (500,000 hectares) included sizable parts under “improved varieties”: 83 percent in Kenya, about 35 percent in Ethiopia and 20 percent in Tanzania. A similar process took place in the limited African rice cultivation, chiefly based on expensive development schemes.²³² But there was very little HYV corn grown in the early 1970s even in countries like Ghana and Kenya, and the “green revolution” hardly affected staples like sorghum, millet and cassava in the 1970s and 1980s. According to Norman Borlaug, a pioneer of seed technology, most HVYs in Africa in 1985–1987 were still confined to experimental and demonstration plots.²³³ But by 1992, 37 percent of Africa’s corn was grown from improved seeds and 40 percent in 2005. (The figure in 1992 for South, Southeast and East Asia was 42 percent.)²³⁴

“The green revolution has so far made a limited impact on agricultural production in India”, the government in New Delhi commented as late as 1973. “This is largely so because the green revolution has so far been essentially a wheat revolution”. And even in South Asia, HYVs had essentially succeeded on irrigated fields only.²³⁵ This was also the reason why little was achieved in terms of yields of coarse grains in Pakistan that were overwhelmingly rainfed.²³⁶ While comparatively large sums of money were poured into research on wheat, corn and rice, international programs for sorghum and millet – crops feeding 400 million mainly poor producers in semi-arid areas of South Asia and Africa – experienced slow progress and their funding was in jeopardy.²³⁷ In India, the HYV targets of the Fourth Five-Year Development Plan (1969–1974) were surpassed for wheat and even more ambitious ones reached or almost reached for rice and *bajra* (spiked millet) but missed for corn and *jowar* (sorghum) by far. Until 1973, the amount of quality seed potatoes was also grossly insufficient.²³⁸ By the crop year 1975–1976, 68 percent of India’s wheat acreage and 33 percent of its rice land were sown with HYVs but only 23 percent of the spiked millet, 15 of the corn and 14 percent of the sorghum fields were.²³⁹ In Bangladesh, 54 percent of the rice acreage of the traditionally irrigated *boro* (winter) crop was planted with HYVs by 1974–1975, but the figures for the larger *aus* (monsoon) and *aman* (autumn) crops were no more than

232 Dalrymple 1986b, pp. 56–58, 60 and 84; Dalrymple 1986, pp. 70–79.

233 U.S. Agricultural Attaché, Accra, 17 January 1974, NARA RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 38, GH Ghana 1974 DR; ditto, KY 2008, Nairobi, 28 April 1972, Box 19, KY Kenya 1972 DR; Johnson 1979, pp. 39–40; Borlaug 1989, pp. 82–83.

234 Morris 1998a, p. 17; Juma 2011, p. 9.

235 Government of India, Economic Survey 1972–73, p. 14; Dalrymple 1986b, p. 28.

236 Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Agriculture Wing, “Meeting with Mr Sartaj Aziz [. . .] to discuss the scope of the study on feedgrains”, FAO, RG 12, Commodities Div., DP 9/1, vol. I.

237 “Need for a concentrated international research effort on sorghum and millets to serve Africa and Asia”, Lagos, 8 September 1970, FAO, RG 15, RAFA, IITA 1969/74.

238 R. C. Kamo, “Grain Situation in India”, *Agriculture Abroad* 29, 6, December 1974, p. 39; Government of India, Economic Survey 1972–73, p. 44.

239 U.S. Agricultural Attaché, IN 7037, 13 May 1977, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 67, IN India 1977 DR.

4 percent and 10 percent, respectively.²⁴⁰ A leading expert was still criticizing the neglect of seed technology for rainfed crops at the end of the 1980s.²⁴¹

Droughts were taken by industrialized nations as an opportunity to offer ‘improved’ seeds or HYVs to countries from the Sahel to Madagascar and Bangladesh, thereby introducing the technology – although hybrid seeds were especially vulnerable to deficient water supply.²⁴² Frequently such support was transformed into longer-term programs. For example, the USAID funded ‘improved’ seed multiplication schemes in Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta in 1974.²⁴³

Where it occurred, the international transfer of new seeds created great problems of adaptation and sometimes ecological and social catastrophes. For example, rice varieties developed by the IRRI in the Philippines such as IR-8 were poorly adapted to conditions in East Pakistan/Bangladesh, and yields were low for years. IR-20 for the *aman* crop required additional irrigation and carried multiple risks from pest infestation to too high waters.²⁴⁴ The rice varieties planted in the early 1970s notoriously succumbed to insects and diseases, which led to food supply crises if not outright famine. Among them were the *tungro* disease in the Philippines in 1971–1972 and stem borer infestations in Indonesia. The loss of short-stemmed rice crop in the floods in Bangladesh in 1973 and 1974 was apparently one cause of the tragic 1974–1975 famine (see Chapter 3). Deficiencies of new varieties were also blamed for massive crop failures in industrialized countries such as the losses to the corn crop in the USA in 1970 and the winter kill of the unadapted *besostaja* winter wheat crop in the southern Soviet Union in the winter of 1971–1972.²⁴⁵ In retrospect, the food crises of the early 1970s can be attributed to, among other factors, problems of adaptation in a global transitional period on the way to the industrialization of agriculture.

As the World Food Council noted in 1977, HYVs were widespread in only 25 of 140 non-industrialized countries.²⁴⁶ During the euphoria until 1970 over the first “green revolution”, experts in the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Agricultural

240 Islam 1978, p. 17; cf. Huq 1976, pp. 104–108 and 232–233.

241 “Reaction by Nurul Islam”, in Helmuth and Johnson 1989, p. 183.

242 See UNROD, Information paper no. 17: Bangladesh: A survey of the damages and repairs (as of 31 August 1972), AfZ, NL Umbricht, Bangladesh UNROD/UNROB, Information papers I, Information Paper No. 3, No. 11; reports of U.S. Embassy in Tananarivo, April and July 1973, NARA, RG 59, SNF, Economic, 1970–73, 150/66–67, Box 471, AGR M; regional registered varieties: “Multi-donor mission to the Sahelian zone. Report on Mauritania”, 1973, *ibid.*, AGR Mali.

243 “Future Planning for Sahel”, 30 July 1974, Ford Library, Stanley Scott Papers, Box 2, African Drought 1973–74 (4).

244 U.S. Agricultural Attaché, PK 1032, 14 May 1971, NARARG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 25, PK Pakistan 1971DR; a detailed account is in Refugio I. Rochin, “Farmer’s Experience with IR-20 rice variety and complementary production inputs: East Pakistan, Amon-1970”, *ibid.*, PK Pakistan 1971.

245 See reports in FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Div., FA 4/15, vol. II, and FA 4/16 Philippines; Pathak et al. 1976, pp. 133 and 135; Fowler and Mooney 1990, p. x; Mooney 1981, pp. 20–23, 46 and 54.

246 “Agricultural Inputs”, Report by the Executive Director of the World Food Council (WFC/39), 31 March 1977, p. 13.

Development Council had called the new hybrids “seeds of change”, which would break up traditional communities’ social and economic structures, including mutual help for food security.²⁴⁷ The transformation they envisioned – problematic as it was – did not depend only on the new seeds, but insofar as it did, it did not affect all parts of Asia and especially Africa even after decades, and its spread was uneven, depending on the crop, the social standing of the producer and the availability of irrigation.

Banking

The oil boom for OPEC countries that started in 1973 resulted in their depositing huge sums of money in U.S. and Western European commercial banks. Because of the lack of promising investment opportunities in the slowing economies of industrialized countries, many of these petrodollars flowed as credit to non-industrialized countries (from which billions flowed back to OPEC countries in payment for oil). Increasingly, these were short-term commercial loans, which would initiate non-industrialized countries’ national debt crises in the late 1970s. Much of the industrialized countries’ recovery between 1975 and 1979 is attributable to the exports that such loans financed.²⁴⁸

Some scholars have argued that this also led to commercial banks’ discovery of smallholders as loan recipients. For example, Continental Bank organized the conference *Feeding the World’s Hungry: A Challenge to Business* in Chicago in 1974.²⁴⁹ But there is actually little evidence for direct involvement of multinational private credit institutions. In fact, an FAO/Private Banks Programme – an equivalent to the ICP – was established in 1970 to facilitate commercial banks’ investments in non-industrialized countries. However, the number of private banks in that program (nine in 1973; 17 in 1978) and the scope of their activities was limited, so that it began to admit national development banks and international financial institutions in 1972, and the re-named FAO/Bankers Programme oriented itself to their operations. The new program was more project-oriented than the ICP, and it implemented eight projects worth US\$163 million between 1975 and 1977. “If ICP can identify a project, the Bankers Programme can finance it”, a representative of Barclays Bank was quoted as saying. But most of them failed to reach small staple food producers in non-industrialized countries.²⁵⁰

247 Perelman 1977, pp. 145–146; Brown 1970.

248 Mandel 1987, pp. 85–88, 297–301, 322; see also James Grant, “Energy Stock and Development Prospect”, 1974, pp. 9, 22 of the document, FAO, RG 9, ICP, UN 43–1, I.

249 George 1978, pp. 47–50; Perelman 1977, p. 122, note 52.

250 See FAO, RG 9, DDD, BK 51/1, especially “Note for the discussion on policy for the FAO/Bankers Programme” (May 1978) and address of R. Jackson, 26 May 1977; cf. FAO 9, V (Misc.), Private Banks 1972–73; ICP, 13th Session of the General Committee, 25 and 26 May 1977, Summary Report, FAO, RG 9, ICP, Summary Reports of the General Committee; FAO/Bankers Programme, List of Members (as of 14 March 1974), FAO, RG 9, Misc., DDC, lists only a total of 23 members;

Analyzing the financial flows involved in the economic processes described in this book would require a separate study. For example, private banks financed private grain-trading companies, which, as family businesses, lacked the assets to cover their enormous transactions and needed huge short-term loans.²⁵¹ Private banks also lent immense sums to non-industrialized countries. They financed about half of the US\$35 billion in deficits in the balance of payments of non-oil exporting countries in 1975.²⁵² Many of these loans went to a select group of Latin American and Asian countries, but the share for others, including African countries, mostly for their public institutions, was substantial, and financing rural development programs was among the purposes of such loans.

The grain trade

When Michel Fribourg, the French president of Continental Grain, inaugurated his firm's new European headquarters in a large new office building in Geneva on 7 February 1974, he declared, that "our ambition is to become a worldwide integrated food company", but he did so in a gloomy speech, "Reflections on the world food situation",²⁵³ in which he said that boom and gloom were inseparable, two sides of the same coin. When in June 1974, just before the onset of the disastrous famine, Bangladesh had trouble paying for scheduled shipments of 450,000 tons of wheat that it had arranged to purchase from Continental, Cargill and Cook Industries, a local representative of another grain trader, Bunge & Born, expected them to take the arrears as a pretext to sell the wheat elsewhere for 40 percent more.²⁵⁴ Among its other effects, the world food crisis led to the expansion, commercialization and restructuring of the world grain market, which included a strong integration of non-industrialized countries as importers (see Chapter 2). Many of these changes, of course, had consequences for the history of the leading companies in the international grain trade.²⁵⁵

Much of the trade was controlled by a handful of companies, namely, Cargill, Inc. (Minneapolis), Continental Grain Co. (Paris, Geneva and New York), Louis-Dreyfus Co. (New York), Bunge & Born (Buenos Aires), Cook Industries, Inc. (Memphis), André & Cie (Lausanne) and Alfred C. Toepfer (Hamburg). Except for Cook, they were family-owned companies known for their secretive business

The Times, 8 April 1976, Special report, p. II. See George 1981, pp. 295–305. The quote is from "How big business" 1977, p. 96.

251 NACLA 1976, pp. 66–67; Burbach and Flynn 1980, pp. 239–241.

252 Address of Henry Kissinger to the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of UNCTAD, Nairobi, 6 May 1976, p. 16, Ford Library, L. William Seidman files, Box 189, Kissinger, Henry A, 5/6/76 UNCTAD speech.

253 In NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5848, Food 2, January–May 1974, 2. Continental also established new headquarters in New York in 1975, demonstrating its growth, as did its competitor Louis-Dreyfus in Paris: Morgan 1980, pp. 33, 253, 274.

254 U.S. Agricultural Attaché, "Bangladesh: Foodgrain situation", BD-4058, 26 June 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 36, Bangladesh 1974.

255 This section borrows from Gerlach 2005, pp. 572–576.

practices.²⁵⁶ They all grew rapidly in the bonanza of the 1970s. In the speeches of Alfred C. Toepfer's chief economist, the world food crisis usually figured as "the boom" (*die Hausse*).²⁵⁷ His firm's turnover increased from DM2.06 billion in 1968–1969 to DM 13.4 billion in 1976–1977; it was nearly US\$3 billion in 1974. Bunge & Born reported sales of more than \$10 billion in the mid-1980s.²⁵⁸ Cargill embarked on a new growth path in 1971 with the grain trade forming the basis for expansion and surpassed Continental to become the market leader in the 1970s, making \$1.5 billion in profits in 1973–1981.²⁵⁹

Table 6.1 Expansion of Cargill, Inc. since 1970 (sales in billions and earnings in millions of U.S. dollars)²⁶⁰

	1969– 1970	1971– 1972	1972– 1973	1973– 1974	1974– 1975	1975– 1976	1976– 1977	1977– 1978	1978– 1979	1982	1989	2011– 2012
Sales	2.0	3.5	5.3	9.1	10.9	10.8	?	?	?	29	43	134
Earnings	24	40	108	212	218	179	110	121	178	?	?	1,180

The companies used their profits to diversify and some to decentralize. Continental operated in pet food, food packaging, tourism and cattle raising in Argentina, among other interests. Cargill entered the finance and insurance sectors; was active in poultry production, salt production, shipping, animal/livestock feeds and the Peruvian anchovy fishery; produced cement and steel; made orange juice concentrate in Brazil; and traded in textiles and minerals in Mexico. (Its interest in anchovy was expropriated by the leftist-nationalist Peruvian junta in 1973 during the *el niño* that depressed the fishery.) Louis-Dreyfus ran restaurants and irrigation projects and was active in glass manufacturing, construction and wood products. Alfred C. Toepfer and Bunge & Born showed weaker tendencies to diversify further, although they had done so decades earlier. In the 1990s, Bunge & Born sold their industrial assets.²⁶¹

However, the boom led to the demise of two of the big companies. Cook had to pay heavy penalties for manipulating grain quality controls in the USA, and its soy

256 See Morgan 1980, pp. 16–22; Gilmore 1982, pp. 24–57; on the systematic destruction of company records, see Broehl 1998, pp. 142–144.

257 Various manuscripts of talks of Dr. Rudolf Stöhr, copies in possession of the author.

258 Toepfer 1991, p. 75; compare to *Die Welt*, 28 April 1978, HWWA, Firmenarchiv, A 9 T 36. See also Morgan 1980, p. 310; Green and Laurent 1988, p. 171.

259 Wessel and Hantman 1987, p. 135.

260 Also for the following paragraph: Trager 1975, pp. 22–23; Kneen 1995, pp. 10–12, 18–20, 30, 38, 124, 127; Broehl 1998, pp. 77–80, 177–178, 230–241, 293, 296, 350–353, appendix; Gmür 2012; Burbach and Flynn 1980, pp. 244–247; for other companies, see Morgan 1980, pp. 221–241; NACLA 1976, pp. 55–56, 64–82. Cargill's profits of \$107.8 million in 1972–1973 implied a 43 percent return on assets: Burbach and Flynn 1980, p. 251. Cargill's sales reached \$63 billion in 2003–2004 (with net earnings of \$1.28 billion) and \$114 billion in 2016: Daniel 2004; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 12 April 2017, p. 27.

261 For Louis-Dreyfus, Toepfer and Bunge & Born: Gerlach 2000; Sywottek 2000; Toepfer 1991; Schwarzer 1989, pp. 21–24, 28, 47–52; Green and Laurent 1989, pp. 39–54, 87–102; Kasakoff 1999, p. 101; Morgan 1980, pp. 221, 224–227.

pellet business suffered losses. It withdrew from grain trading in 1976–1977, and the Japanese general trading and production firm Mitsui bought it in 1978. Alfred C. Toepfer had been suffering severe losses in its grain operations since 1975, its Brazilian soy pellet business, and because it had acquired an oversized merchant fleet. It also suffered from the fierce competition of U.S.-based companies in the European market, including in socialist Eastern Europe, the company's specialty. It sold most of its assets in 1979.²⁶² Bunge & Born did not go out of business but suffered from a peculiar type of redistribution. The leftist group *Montoneros* kidnapped its owners, Juan and Jorge Born, in Buenos Aires in September 1974, at the peak of the world food crisis, and released them only after a US\$60 million ransom was paid. The fact that this was possible relatively easily and swiftly shows how well their business was doing at the time. Later the firm's headquarter was moved to Brazil.²⁶³

Table 6.2 Growth and crisis of Alfred C. Toepfer since 1968 (sales in billions, earnings in millions of German marks and trade volume in millions of tons)²⁶⁴

	1968– 1969	1970– 1971	1971– 1972	1972– 1973	1973– 1974	1974– 1975	1975– 1976	1976– 1977	1977– 1978
Turnover	2.06	3.1	3.8	5.5	10.1	11.1	12.1	13.4	11.9
Earnings	?	?	22.7	19.3	33.3	14.7	42.3	–24.8	–40
Volume of trade	?	?	10.1(?)	13.0 (12.1?)	16.7	15.6	17.4	19.0	?

In the 1970s, the concentration of the international grain trade intensified further.²⁶⁵ Until 1972, grain traders, especially the big five, made many profits from U.S. export subsidies for food aid with over \$6 billion in sales by 1970. In 1967 alone, they earned \$90 million profit this way. And food aid opened the door for them to non-industrialized markets.²⁶⁶ Brewster Kneen has argued that in the different context of U.S. export subsidies in the competition with the European Community in the 1980s, Cargill had “become a subsidized de facto state trading company”.²⁶⁷ Though that may be an exaggeration, in the early 1970s, there were, despite commercialization, close connections between private grain traders and the U.S. government. Two of the three major accusations in connection with the ‘Great

262 Morgan 1980, pp. 405–441; Gilmore 1982, pp. 41–45; news clippings in HWWA Firmenarchiv, A 9 T 36; Toepfer 1991, pp. 74 and 96; interview with Rudolf Stöhr. Alfred C. Toepfer International was controlled by a consortium of U.S. cooperatives since 1979; in 1982, it was taken over by Archer Daniel Midlands. For the 1974–1975 inspection scandal, see Robbins 1974 and NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5980, Grain.

263 Green and Laurent 1988, pp. 111–113; Morgan 1980, pp. 220–225, 242–243.

264 Calculated from press reports and financial statements in HWWA, Firmenarchiv, A9 T 36.

265 However, the share of big multinational companies of grain exports from Argentina declined from 1968 to 1980 by half from 74 to 36 percent: Green and Laurent 1988, p. 157.

266 NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1972, Box 5626, Wheat 3 (Foreign Trade), Jan 1–Sept 20, 1972, especially Mair to Senator Harris, 2 June 1972; 8, pp. 121–122; Morgan 1980, p. 173; Burbach and Flynn 1980, p. 236.

267 Kneen 1995, p. 109.

American Grain Robbery' (the massive Soviet grain purchases of 1972) pertained to inappropriate export subsidies and federal preferential treatment of the big traders. According to protesters, the companies and the U.S. government concealed the full scope of planned deliveries from U.S. farmers who thus sold their harvests for less profit than they could have. Similar allegations were made in 1973.²⁶⁸ Just before companies had signed the big contracts in 1972, the USDA had held a "grain trade seminar" with 20 companies.²⁶⁹ By contrast, the EEC's and Japan's measures favoring certain grain traders, though criticized by other grain traders such as Toepfer, were limited (the EEC normally paid wheat export subsidies, but they were converted into export levies because officials wanted to shield domestic consumers from international food price hikes by restricting wheat and rice exports).²⁷⁰

Close personal connections help explain the amazing events in the USA. Most of those in the Nixon administration with influence in the grain sector either came from agribusiness, often from grain traders, or had used their positions in the Department of Agriculture as a stepping stone to get a position there. Before Earl Butz became Secretary of Agriculture in December 1971, he had sat on the boards of Ralston Purina and IMC. In turn, his predecessor, Clifford Hardin, became the vice president of Ralston Purina after leaving the government. The *Washington Post* labeled Butz an "Agribusiness Man" whose domestic policies could best be described with the slogan "adapt or die". The U.S. Congress had approved his appointment by only a small margin. Big grain traders were said to have lobbied for Butz. The most striking case of this sort was Clarence Palmby, the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for International Affairs and Commodity Programs. He entered the department from the U.S. Feed Grains Council, an organization sponsored by the grain trade; he quitted his government job on 7 June 1972, to become Continental Grain's vice president for market development (having supposedly had offers from eight to ten grain-trading companies). In between, he engineered the huge grain exports to the USSR, 62 percent of which were handled by Continental. On 5 July, the firm finalized one of these deals with the Soviets for over 4 million tons of wheat and 4.5 million tons of feed grains, which was arguably the "largest single commercial transaction in history" to date. Palmby stood out by renting an apartment in the city where his new company's headquarters were located when he was still negotiating with the Soviets as a high-ranking government employee. Carroll G. Brunthaver, his even more aggressive successor, who assumed office just before the start of the feverish exports, had joined the Department of Agriculture in 1969 after having served at a subsidiary of Cook Industries since 1966 and as

268 Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, *Weekly News Bulletin*, vol. 58, no. 33, 21 August 1973, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1973, Box 5719, Grain 6, Aug 6, 1973-. For 1973, see Trager 1975, 186–189, 206–209.

269 On 31 May 1972, see NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1972, Box 5571, Grain.

270 Telegram U.S. mission at EEC to U.S. Secretary of State, 26 July 1973, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. 1973, Box 5720, Grain 3, 11 August 1973; U.S. Agricultural Attaché, Report GY 3015, 21 June 1973, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, 170/73/17/2, Box 11, GY West Germany (Bonn) 1973; U.S. Agricultural Attaché Tokyo, report JP 3044 of 11 October and 3021 of 7 May 1973, *ibid.*, Box 19, JP Japan 1973 DR, and JP 5040 of 17 August 1975, Box 51, JP Japan 1975; Johnson 1978, p. 552; Gerlach 2009.

Director of Research for the Grain and Feed Dealers National Association. He left the administration in late January 1974 (when grain prices reached their peak) of all jobs for producing a controversial study for the liberal Brookings Institution on international grain reserves. This fact provoked bitter comments at FAO. He later returned to Cook.²⁷¹ As Assistant Secretary, Brunthaver suggested to the U.S. tax authorities, in contradiction to existing legislation, to grant the grain-trading companies involved 50 percent tax breaks on their earnings from the Soviet grain deal in 1972. Richard Bell, one of Brunthaver's successors, made a similar effort in 1976.²⁷² Clifford Pulvermacher, General Sales Manager of the USDA's Export Marketing Service, left the Department in 1972 for Bunge & Born.²⁷³ For many years, Cargill maintained close ties to both of the influential Senators from its home state of Minnesota, Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale (presidential candidates in 1968 and 1984, respectively), and to President Richard Nixon.²⁷⁴

When the USDA tried to avoid more official export embargos during the greatest market turbulences, it activated its close relations with the industry to get companies 'voluntarily' to stop further grain deliveries and then publicly lauded firms like Continental and Cook for their "very generous and patriotic attitude".²⁷⁵ Some U.S. agricultural attachés also maintained close informal connections with U.S.-based and foreign grain-trading companies and the Canadian and Australian wheat boards.²⁷⁶ For their part, the companies kept the USDA up to date on new export contracts to avoid formal export licensing regulations. But Michel Fribourg, the president of Continental Grain, who liked to present himself in a responsible attitude, once urged the U.S. government, in vain, to introduce grain export controls in order to prevent domestic shortages and the harsher measures they would require. Cargill supported the Republican Party, which came under fire in the Senate hearings over the grain deals with the Soviet Union, with the assertion that the company, instead of the publicly denounced huge profits, had even suffered losses in these transactions. Secretary Butz thanked Cargill's president immediately after the Presidential elections for this help during the campaign.²⁷⁷

271 NACLA 1976, p. 15; Trager 1975, pp. 12 and 21 (quote); Palmby to Nixon, 19 May 1972, NARA, Nixon, EX FG 20/A, 1969–1974, and additional correspondence; *Washington Post*, 11 May 1971; *Courier Journal*, Louisville, Kentucky, 5 October 1972; Morgan 1980, p. 432; Broehl 1998, pp. 191–92, 200. Cf. Binder to Aziz (January 1974) and short biography of Brunthaver, FAO 12, Comm. Div., UN-43/5 USA.

272 News clipping from *Washington Post*, December 1972, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. Box 5571, Grain 3, October 1972–. Cargill allegedly paid a normal amount in taxes at that time: Broehl 1998, pp. 312–313; Morgan 1980, pp. 226, 295–296.

273 Krebs 1992, p. 330, also with other examples like Kneen 1995, pp. 68–69 and Frundt 1975, p. 277 (also about Louis-Dreyfus); Broehl 1998, p. 194.

274 NACLA 1976, pp. 78–81; Kneen 1995, pp. 65–71.

275 Butz's remarks in *The Sunday Pantagraph*, Bloomington-Normal, Illinois, 6 October 1974, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr. Box 5853, Grain 4 (Jan–Oct 1974). For the reporting systems, see Broehl 1998, pp. 250–251; Sobel 1975, pp. 80–81.

276 See various reports in NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974.

277 Butz to F. M. Seed, President, Cargill, Inc., 9 November 1972, NARA, RG 16, USDA Gen. Corr., Box 5626, Wheat 3, Sept 21–Oct 1972; Fribourg to Butz, 31 July 1973, *ibid.*, Box 5720, Grain 3 (Jan 1–Aug 10, 1973).

William Pearce, vice president of Cargill, illustrates the almost symbiotic relationship between grain-trading companies and the U.S. government. By 1970, he had already played a leading role in the Williams Commission, which proposed changes in international trade and investment policy to President Nixon. In these suggestions, agricultural exports were of crucial importance as agriculture was considered one of the few sectors where the USA still had a comparative advantage. In early 1972, Pearce was appointed the U.S. President's Deputy Special Representative for International Trade Negotiations in charge of agricultural trade.²⁷⁸

The U.S. government wanted to expand grain exports quickly, beginning in 1972. Aside from the amalgamation of personal and public interest, close cooperation with the big grain traders seemed the most promising way to proceed. The companies in turn encouraged the government to continue on its path to export expansion and supported the Republican Party as its guarantor. In a situation when collecting information, establishing discrete contacts and delicate negotiations, the organization of transports despite shortages in shipping capacities and handling record volumes of exports were required more globally than ever before, the leading grain traders had decisive structural advantages that grew even stronger during the world food crisis.

Companies in the 1970s had the most political influence in the USA. The monopolistic public commodity boards in other exporting countries like Canada, Australia and Argentina were, if at all, only somewhat diluted in the 1970s (see Chapter 2).²⁷⁹ Some in the USA opined that "perhaps we need an American Wheat Board" to fix prices.²⁸⁰ In non-industrialized countries, government or parastatal companies often handled grain imports. In Western Europe, the leading grain companies (with the exception of Continental), fearful of the damage that Great Britain's entry into the EEC would do to their business, launched a major public relations campaign in 1970 to undermine the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy. Still, the "big five" handled 90 percent of the Community's external wheat and corn trade in 1974.²⁸¹

Conclusion

What came of the grandiose vision of economically integrating non-industrialized countries' 'subsistence' producers for eliminating hunger, the spread of technology and a global expansion of capitalism? Not much.

278 William Pearce, born in 1927, studied at the University of Minnesota, joined Cargill in 1953 and became its vice president in 1963. See material in NA, Nixon Papers, FG 6-10, Box 1, EX FG 6-10, 1971-72, und EX FG 6-10/A, 1971-72; NACLA 1976, pp. 11-13; Morgan 1980, pp. 148-149, 186-189, 212-213. Papers about the Williams Commission are in NARA, Nixon papers, FG 263, Box 1, EX FG 263, 1/1/1, files 1-5.

279 However, Cargill also exchanged personnel with the Canadian agricultural administration: Kneen 1995, pp. 68-69.

280 Letter of Myron Just, Commissioner of Agriculture, State of North Dakota, 18 December 1975, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5980, Grain 3, Nov-Dec 1975; see contribution of C. W. Cook, Chairman, General Foods Corp., in Ross 1974, p. 39.

281 Green and Laurent 1988, p. 132; Morgan 1980, p. 309.

All of the industries I have discussed experienced strong growth, yet the use of new inputs grew more for export and industrial crops than for staples, was more intensive by bigger farmers than small producers and was more widespread in Asia than Africa.

Something close to the envisioned changes took place in only a few agricultural sectors. The use of fertilizers became common in Asia, and grain imports in African and many Asian countries reached new levels. The latter process, though, indicated the inclusion of urban dwellers, particularly the better situated, not peasants, in world markets. By contrast, the adoption of high-yielding seeds was largely restricted to rice and wheat in the irrigation areas of southern Asia; pesticide use was concentrated on the same geographical areas and more common among medium-size farms than small owners; and because virtually no smallholder could afford a tractor, the only new machinery was irrigation pumps. And smallholders rarely owned them either.²⁸²

Continental comparisons are a blunt instrument, but for whatever it is worth – Sub-Saharan Africa imported and applied far less fertilizer and used much less irrigation than Asia, but their imports of machinery and pesticides were at similar levels.²⁸³ However, the latter two were primarily used in Africa for export crops but in Asia often for staples.

If I have any fans, this chapter may have cost me many, in various political camps, because I have argued that the power of transnational corporations was limited. Far from being omnipotent, they could, for the most part, not penetrate the countryside in non-industrialized countries.

Huge investments did not materialize as envisioned, despite the explosion in capital exports by U.S., British and Japanese firms in 1972–1978 and ‘World Bank’ President McNamara’s praise in 1978 that non-industrialized countries’ markets “serve as locomotives or stimulants to our own sluggish economy”.²⁸⁴ Large companies from northern nations preferred selling them their products over spending capital on new production sites there. Among their reasons were the large initial investment and long wait that sizable profits required; countries’ restrictions on their operations and in particular the movement of goods and capital; the delays caused by required government approvals and slow deliveries of spare parts; the lack of local services and infrastructure; the limited size and thus profitability of markets; and the fear of expropriation.²⁸⁵ Only Japanese firms made a large part of their investments in non-industrialized countries.²⁸⁶ Those companies that did invest tended to put their money into sectors other than agriculture, into export crops or processed foods rather than staples and into a handful of bigger or more urbanized

282 For the neglect of rainfed areas, see also Islam 1989, p. 165.

283 See Daberkow and Parks 1990, pp. 9, 14, 17, 20, 23.

284 For this explosion, see Harris 1983, pp. 125, 127. For growing investment levels in the 1980s, see Tavis 1997, pp. 30, 35. McNamara is quoted in Moore Lappé et al. 1980, pp. 91–92.

285 Answers to a circular letter of Orville Freeman, Business International, to ICP members of 1975, and W. Simons, “Implementing World Food Conference Decisions” (see note 6/13), FAO, RG 9, DDI, UN 43/1 II; FAO/Industry Cooperative Program, Report on FAO/Industry Mission to India, February 1966, AfZ, NL Umbrecht, UNO, FAO Projects 1966–1972. See also Niedermayer 1979, pp. 40, 104, 124–125, 137.

286 See Nuscheler 1990, pp. 22–23.

countries. Multinational corporations with sales operations in non-industrialized countries, for example, Swiss chemical firms, frequently tried to prevent the emergence of local competition by patenting their products without the intention to start any production.²⁸⁷ Arguably, this spirit of secrecy also prevented great educational efforts by these companies.²⁸⁸

In general, firms in industrialized countries (especially Japan and the USA) redirected some exports to non-industrial countries in 1973–1978.²⁸⁹ And while international trade in general grew a bit faster than global GDP between 1982 and 1999, foreign direct investment increased three times as fast. And yet, in 1999, transnational corporations controlled no more than 10.1 percent of global economic production.²⁹⁰ Unlike grain traders and some food-processing companies, corporations in some industries were even reluctant to *sell* their products in non-industrialized countries. While the conquest of these markets was vital for pesticide and grain companies, and still strategic for the crisis-stricken fertilizer industry, seed firms missed plant patenting rights in non-industrialized countries and expected bigger profits in the feeds sector (unrelated to the poorest countries), whereas agricultural machinery companies feared overextension and avoided to build global distribution, promotion and service networks because of the financial risk. At best targeting the rural middle class in non-industrialized countries, they found designing small tractors unnecessary.

For one, this failure to penetrate resulted from structural failures of global capitalism.²⁹¹ Capital, of course, knows no conscience. To help end hunger was not a sufficient objective for corporate operations. Though staple food production promised some profit for big agribusiness in the 1970s, other areas promised more, and corporate money went there: for example, providing the inhabitants of rapidly growing cities with processed foods and the burgeoning middle class with consumer goods, that is, into consumption rather than agricultural production. Also, more than half of all private capital exports went to just a few non-industrialized countries: Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore.²⁹² So the uneven spread of capital was reproduced. Extreme socio-economic differences deepened, instead of being balanced. In addition, corporations lacked the capital to penetrate large regions quickly, as was also the case after the breakdown of Eastern European socialism in 1989–1991.

But at the same time, the limits to expansion into non-industrialized countries were also due to a failure of international capitalists, who did not exhaust existing business opportunities. Though smaller firms, especially in the capital-intensive fertilizer, pesticide, agricultural machinery, and grain-trading industries, were usually in no position to take advantage of such opportunities, multinationals were. They did not, not necessarily because they lacked the vision but the courage,

287 Gerster 1980 (see especially pp. 28, 38, 42, and 53).

288 Eze 1977, p. 461.

289 Frank 1982, pp. 114–115.

290 Herkenrath 2003, pp. 31–34.

291 The limitations sketched here are only loosely related to those mentioned in Harvey 1982, pp. 316–317.

292 UNCTNC 1983b, pp. 3, 17.

ingenuity, flexibility, and willingness to innovate. Timidly avoiding risks, they followed established routines, distrustful of the idea that banking the poor or selling them machinery could pay off. Moreover, and contrary to the usual rhetoric, their structure and resources permitted only few companies to embark on a truly global strategy. (Grain-trading companies and giant food processors like Nestlé and Unilever were exceptions, but even Unilever's chief economist, Dan Stone, "ridiculed global selling as 'globalooney'"²⁹³) The peculiarities of capital concentration that can be observed in most of the industries I have discussed²⁹⁴ confirm this. Companies preferred to expand by buying out their competitors or through partnerships with similar firms, thus strengthening their core operations, instead of acquiring many smaller foreign firms. This broadened their capital base but not their expertise to reach into the countryside of non-industrialized countries. Last but not least, many firms did not respond to demand and desires; rural customers in non-industrialized countries had to adapt to the products they offered rather than vice versa.²⁹⁵ In part, this was the result of racist arrogance: their technology had to be good enough for customers in the Global South and modifying it for local conditions compromised modernity, in managers' view. On the other hand, knowledge about (varying) tropical soil conditions for tilling, fertilizer requirements of local crops, or protective periods needed to avoid pesticide poisoning all lagged behind – companies were certainly not providing for it. Adapted technology tended to be left to locals: to tractor companies or to public or international seed developers.

The expansion of elements of capitalism in the staple food sector in non-industrialized nations depended heavily on national authorities. States provided much of the necessary resources by providing for subsidies in a wide sense and credit. They spent less on domestic input production and committed most public investment to the fertilizer industry and seed development (the latter did not require much capital); hardly any was devoted to machinery and pesticides. Few governments cut such spending, which had mostly been built up between about 1965 and 1975, in the 1970s, but in the 1980s, given high debt and interest rates, subsidies for and public investment in staple food production widely shrank, which was one cause of stalled growth, especially in the use of machinery and pesticides. Also, less public credit was available, and food subsidies for urbanites were reduced.

However, subsidies and other public financial support often reached rural (and urban) middle classes, not the rural poor, as I demonstrated earlier for spending on machinery, pesticides and grain and to a lesser extent on other inputs. Thus, one can expect that the government policies of non-industrialized countries in the 1970s and early 1980s fueled rural class differentiation. To analyze this matter further, it is necessary to study the transformation of rural capitalist structures in specific countries.

293 Rubner 1990, p. 261.

294 I refer to machinery, pesticides, seeds (to a lesser extent), and the grain trade. The high degree of concentration in the world fertilizer market was diluted in the 1970s and 1980s.

295 Fadiman 1994 makes the same point. According to Mooney 1981, p. 61, this also applied to seed producing companies.



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7 Bangladesh

Impoverishment, hunger and credit

Bangladesh belongs to the world's ten most populous countries with over 70 million people in 1971 and about 165 million today. Only slightly larger than Greece but smaller than Uruguay, it is the most densely populated country in the world except for city states, which prompted one foreign scholar to call it "Malthusia".¹ But most Bangladeshis, over 90 percent in 1971² and now about two-thirds, are rural dwellers, most of whom lived, and live, on very small farms or are landless villagers. Through hard work, cultivators eked out a meagre existence from their tiny farms, the land of which was often divided into from seven to ten plots.³ Most of Bangladesh is a flat, huge river delta with fertile lands usually blessed with an abundance of water by rainfall and flooding, especially during the monsoon season (July to September), but it has few mineral resources. Each year, one-third of the country is inundated during the monsoon. Rice was and is the dominant crop and the most important part of the diet, which pulses, vegetables, fruit and fish supplement. There are three rice-growing seasons: *aman* (summer to winter), *boro* (winter to summer) and *aus* (summer to fall), of which the deepwater rainfed *aman* crop generated about 60 percent of production in the early 1970s.

Bangladesh is of special interest to this study for several reasons. First, it is in the core zone of what has been perceived as the world hunger problem as well as in the 1972–1975 world food crisis. Second, it experienced a further increase in rural inequality after the early 1970s because of 'development'. Third, it pioneered a number of development strategies that were praised internationally and 'exported' to other countries – although none of them solved the problem of mass hunger.

What is also particular about Bangladesh is the especially low social position of women. Given its patrilocal system and big dowries paid by brides' families, girls and women (women at least before they have given birth to a son) have a low status, and girls clearly receive less medical attention than boys after the age of one.⁴ Therefore, females of many age groups and across social groups had a

1 Austin Robinson (1974), quoted in Siddiqui 1980, p. 82.

2 Akanda 1985, p. 33.

3 See Jansen 1983a, p. 37; Hossain 1988, p. 23; Ahmed 2004, p. 4043; Sadeque 1986, p. 104.

4 See Kabeer 2003, pp. 146–147. See Chen 1986, pp. 54–60 for the position of women. However, the practice that the bride's (rather than the groom's) family had to pay dowry emerged only in the

higher mortality rate and a lower life expectancy than men, which was unusual by international standards.⁵ This blatant discrimination is relevant to chronic hunger, and not only in the distant past: in 2008, Bangladesh's women had the lowest body-mass index of their sex in the world. Especially adult women get much less to eat than men.⁶

Eastern Bengal had once been wealthy with one of the world's largest textile industries in the world. Living standards in the 18th century (and even in the late 19th century) were probably considerably higher than in 1980.⁷ Deindustrialized and impoverished under British colonial rule, it became the eastern wing of independent Pakistan in 1947. Close to 90 percent of the population were Bengali Muslims, about 10 percent were Hindus, and the rest members of small ethnic and religious minorities. The minorities faced repeated persecution and many fled the country. Known for their militant politics, East Pakistanis came to have major cultural and economic grievances toward the Pakistani state which, they claimed, neglected the east, exploited it as a provider of raw materials and excluded easterners from elite positions. In the 1950s and 1960s, when many countries experienced rapid economic growth, East Pakistan's economy stagnated on a per capita basis.⁸ Jute, the only major export product, was in decline in the 1970s. The discontent led to a movement for autonomy or independence, and its military dictatorship's bloody repression beginning in late March 1971 resulted in a war of independence that Bangladesh won with the help of a massive Indian intervention, in late 1971, at the cost of widespread destruction of infrastructure, hundreds of thousands killed and many more made refugees. Ten million (primarily Hindus) temporarily fled to India, 15 million or more (mostly Muslims) were displaced internally.

At first, Bangladesh was a secular republic ruled by the Awami League, the party led by Mujibur Rahman that had spearheaded the independence movement. After he was killed together with many family members in a coup, the country was essentially a military dictatorship from 1975 to 1990 under Generals Ziaur Rahman and Ershad, both of whom moved it closer to an Islamic state. Since then, civilian governments of the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party have alternated with one brief interruption. The main clientele of both – and the juntas – were the urban middle class and rural elites. By name, Bangladesh was initially a socialist state, but this had little bearing on agriculture. The government controlled most foreign trade. Major industries, banks and insurance firms were nationalized in 1972 (but expropriations affected mainly Pakistani capital, less Bengali and

mid-20th century, first among Hindus: White 1992, pp. 102–107; Siddiqui 1980, p. 282; Hoque 1987, p. 149 and *ibid.*, pp. 150, 195.

5 Bairagi 1986, p. 307; Lovell 1992, pp. 13, 15. Exceptions were girls in their first month and women over 45. See also Chen et al. 1981, pp. 57, 67; Harriss 1990b, pp. 365, 367.

6 See Finucane et al. 2011, and for food intake Chen et al. 1981, pp. 60–61. But 1975–1991 data on child malnutrition and food intake are not unequivocal concerning a gender discrepancy; Chowdhury 1995a, pp. 90, 96–97; Harriss 1990b, pp. 372–374, 384. See Chowdhury 1993, pp. 200, 202 for the gender differentiation of food intake among adults.

7 Jansen 1983a, pp. i, 206 with note 12.

8 Stepanek 1978, p. 7.

not at all other foreign firms), and there was a low ceiling for private investment, domestic or foreign, later raised in 1974, 1975 and 1982.⁹ Bangladeshis debated about socialism but had no clear ideas about it.¹⁰ The system of the 1970s, which has been called “a kind of ‘state capitalism’”, primarily served the interests of the intelligentsia and, to a lesser degree, the urban petty bourgeoisie, who gained control of many resources, and arguably of whatever bourgeoisie there was, whereas urban workers had a hard time and peasants were on their own.¹¹ Privatization and liberalization began slowly but intensified under General Ershad (1982–1990). Before, nationalization left room for accumulation only in “trading, construction, and very small-scale manufacturing”, informal money-lending and in agriculture where investment was not very profitable.¹²

Because of its poverty, some foreign politicians and ‘development experts’ regarded Bangladesh as a hopeless case, a non-viable country.¹³ The state seemed as weak as the economy with its lack of industry and major trade deficit. There were few doctors and hospital beds. Few people had access to clean water and sanitation. The conditions led to major famines in 1971–1972 and 1974–1975 (see Chapter 3). The majority of Bangladeshi adults was illiterate, even in 1997.¹⁴ The country lacked infrastructure. Out of 70,000 villages, only 2,000 were connected to the rest of the country by paved roads, and only 200 had electricity in 1973–1974.¹⁵ Many roads were built in the 1990s, but as late as in the early 1990s, only 12 percent of sub-districts (*thanas*) were connected to the electricity grid. This rose to almost 70 percent by 2008–2009, and most villages by 2017.¹⁶ There was little traffic on the growing networks of country roads in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁷

Bangladesh was a country of small peasants without latifundism, but this masked striking rural inequality. The countryside’s economy was dominated by

9 See Sobhan 1974; Maniruzzaman 1975, pp. 119–120; Islam 1985, p. 189; Feldman and McCarthy 1984, p. 18; “Die Entwicklung der Volksrepublik Bangladesh seit der Erringung der Unabhängigkeit”, 25 July 1972, PA AA, MfAA C1052/77, Bl. 114; Riaz 1993, pp. 185, 311; Islam 2005, pp. 203–219; Feldman 2006; van Schendel 2009; Hossain 2017, p. 42.

10 F. Kutena, “Some Notes on Agriculture and Related Factors in Bangladesh”, 15 November 1974, FAO, RG 15, RAFF, Bangladesh 1972–76; comments by René Dumont in Robinson and Griffin 1974, p. 177.

11 The analysis in Islam 1985, pp. 196–202 (quote p. 202), is somewhat contradictory. Entrepreneurs could benefit from becoming state-employed managers of their former firms, being relieved of financial risk in an economically volatile situation and by the state taking over debts of nationalized private companies. See also “Die Entwicklung der Volksrepublik Bangladesh seit der Erringung der Unabhängigkeit”, 25 July 1972, PA AA, MfAA C1052/77, Bl. 114–115; Riaz 1993, pp. 172–181.

12 Sadeque 1986, p. 157 (quote), 191; Islam 2005, pp. 215–217.

13 For example, see “European Report: The EEC’s Developing Links with Asia”, March 1976, FAO, RG 15, EUR, IL 8/30, vol. III.

14 Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, p. 157; see also Smillie 2009, p. 158.

15 Martius 1977, p. 50; Hossain 1987, p. 18; Ahmed and Rustagi 1987, p. 112. World Bank 1987, p. 211 mentions 85,650 villages.

16 Khandker et al. 1995, p. 55; Ahmed et al. 2012, p. 6; Berger 2019. For small electrification projects by foreign ‘aid’ agencies, see Jessen 1990, pp. 79–85; Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 273; de Vylder 1982, p. 82. For roads, see Mannan 2015, p. 23.

17 Étienne 1979, pp. 74, 79; Étienne 1985, p. 183, 188; Hossain 1987, p. 19.

minor landlords (*jotedars*) who rose to power after Hindu *zamindari* (large landowners and tax collectors) were expropriated and expelled in 1947–1951.¹⁸ *Jotedars* (people with over 3 hectares of land) took a strong influence on local politics and administration, and the taxation system – following Pakistani policy – with next to no direct taxation and low tax rates was in their favor. Farms up to 3.7 hectares were exempted from taxes in 1972.¹⁹ According to one study in the 1980s, the average rate of rural income tax was just 0.4 percent, and rich farmers defaulted without consequences.²⁰

Though 1974–1975 saw what many call the last major famine in Bangladesh, there were further food crises. The next came in 1978–1979, when poor rains hit the *aman* and *aus* crops and shortages of fertilizers, pesticides, diesel and spare parts of irrigation pumps hurt the *boro* crop. In early 1979, the USA (again) temporarily suspended their food aid shipments and grain import arrivals were low. Traders hoarded rice, prices climbed 150 percent, “and the landless were at the verge of starvation”. Meanwhile 10,000–12,000 Rohingya refugees from Burma, from where 200,000 were expelled in 1978, died in camps in Bangladesh.²¹ The hardship for Bangladeshi villagers lasted until 1980. The government organized large food deliveries to the cities, but it ignored villages, where wealthy farmers, businessmen and officials reaped most benefits of the food-for-work programs.²² Left to fend for themselves, villagers pawned or sold movable possessions, some also sold their land (again there were crowds at registry offices), people committed suicide, other sold their children (though some village communities prevented this with donations), women turned to prostitution, men to crime or selling themselves into bonded labor, and need undermined family relationships – all clear signs of famine, the existence of which officials and pro-government media denied.²³ Large landowners took advantage, lowering wages, selling hoarded grain at high prices, and buying land cheaply, but the main way of appropriation was through mortgaging land. Within large families, conflicts intensified over money, inheritances and taking destitute relatives in.²⁴ Starvation was reported from seven northern and central districts. There were also food emergencies in 1977 and 1981–1982.²⁵ 1984

18 Ghulam Kabir 1980, pp. 33–36.

19 Radio broadcast by Mujibur Rahman, according to the *Hindustan Standard*, 10 March 1971, in: Tewary 1971, p. 106; Elkington 1976, p. 82; Faaland and Parkinson 1976, p. 44; Sobhan 1982, p. 217; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 207; Islam 1985, p. 199; Faaland and Parkinson 2013, pp. 89–90. For modifications of the system, see World Bank 1990, p. 140.

20 Rahman 1986, pp. 226–227; Sadeque 1986, p. 169.

21 David Campbell’s report in Oxfam, Minutes of the Field Committee for Asia, 8 August 1979, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, November 1976–January 1980; for the Rohingya, see “Bangladesh Annual Report for 1978–79”, 3 April 1979, *ibid.*; see Ruxin 1996, p. 290; Jackson and Eade 1982, p. 13. See also Cutler 1985.

22 Currey 1984, pp. 187, 191; Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee 1984, p. 12.

23 Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee 1984, pp. 5–12; see also BRAC, “Peasant Perceptions: Famine”, July 1979, Oxfam, file Miscellaneous Reports – India; Cutler 1985, pp. 213–215. For the crowds, see “Report on Situation of Jamadpur district”, 11 July 1979, Oxfam, AG/2/1–5, Bangladesh, Bangladesh-Drought 1979. Sobhan 1979, p. 1979, calls the situation in 1978–1979 a famine.

24 BRAC, “Peasant Perceptions: Famine”, July 1979, Oxfam, loose file Miscellaneous Reports – India.

25 See Cutler 1985, pp. 208, 215. Significant rises in mortality for 1977 are shown by Osmani 1991, p. 313 and for 1982–83, Chowdhury 1993, pp. 219–220, 223. Currey 1979, p. 131 mentions a local famine in northern Mymensingh district because of an insurgency in 1976.

saw another food crisis, severe child malnutrition on the rise and distress sales of cattle, but relatively modest price increases and little domestic migration. Scholars ascribed this mild impact to better government management and food aid.²⁶

This matches a narrative of success that has been influential in Bangladesh's bourgeoisie and intelligentsia. Their proponents have pointed to a significant increase in life expectancy, linked to the state's and NGO's accomplishments in the health sector, to improvements in infrastructure, the development of the world's second largest textile and ready garment industries and the existence of a large proletariat of 13 million in the two major economic sectors – over four million (mostly women) in the urban, export-oriented ready garment industry and more than eight million (mostly men) Bangladeshi migrant workers abroad. Some achievement, given the working and living conditions of these workers! A national bourgeoisie emerged as well.²⁷ The connection between the urban industries and the rural ones, which provided 70 percent of industrial employment in 1979, does not seem to have been close. Industrialists in the textile and garment sectors emerged from among civil servants, intelligentsia, military and wealthy merchants (i.e., urban backgrounds), although some hired preferably women from their rural areas of origin, following the international custom of female garment workers, despite the fact that tailoring was traditionally a male occupation in Bangladesh.²⁸ The argument of Bangladesh's success story can also be made this way: once the backwater of Pakistan, more populous, with less industry, infrastructure, lower levels of education and more misery than West Pakistan, Bangladesh now has a higher life expectancy, a smaller population, more industry, fewer illiterates and less Islamic radicalism than Pakistan. And improvements in basic health have led to fewer childhood deaths and a much higher life expectancy.²⁹ However, as this chapter will show, it is precisely with the issues of inequality, poverty and chronic hunger where this success story does not work³⁰ – and they are tied to the emergence of new social classes.

Rural development policies

Bangladesh's government spent a comparatively large proportion of its development budget on agriculture, 25–30 percent in the late 1970s. Agriculture's share of total government spending – though then low at 11–12 percent – was higher

26 Clay 1985, p. 202; Sobhan 1982, pp. 43, 75; see also Devereux 1993, p. 138 and Osmani 1991, pp. 329–331 who unduly extend this praise to 1979, as do Longhurst 1987, p. 2, and Cutler 1985, p. 217, who credits success to critical media's influence on the authorities.

27 Hossain 2017, esp. pp. 3–4, 6, 45–47, 154–157, 176–181, presents this kind of argument. The statements in van Schendel 2009, pp. 233, 235 and 250, are more cautious.

28 See von Allmen 2014, pp. 13–19; Chuta and Liedholm 1990, p. 330; Feldman 1992, pp. 112–114, 118, 123; Islam 2005, p. 207. Minority capital from South Korea and Singapore was also involved: Feldman 2006; von Allmen 2014, p. 16.

29 Hossain 2017, pp. 154–157.

30 See Hossain 2017, pp. 4, 47, 54, 136, 147, but see her dubious claim on p. 16 that “fifty million have been pulled out of poverty”. For the impact of the economic crisis in 2008, see Raihan 2015, pp. 235–236.

than in the other countries discussed in this book, and it rose in the 1980s.³¹ The government carried on with many of Pakistan's subsidy policies for agricultural inputs: 100 percent for large irrigation projects, flood protection, and pesticides, 50 percent for fertilizers, and 20 percent for high-yielding seed varieties.³² Its largest agricultural expenses were subsidies for irrigation, flood control and fertilizer. In the first Five-Year Development Plan, outlays for tubewells far surpassed those for every other input.³³

Bangladesh's constitution called for a "radical transformation in the rural areas through the promotion of an agricultural revolution".³⁴ Agricultural policies were determined by a number of agencies with vaguely delineated competences, including the National Planning Commission, which was set up in 1972, manned with people trained in Karachi and abroad. Initially, it was dominated by leftist liberals grouped around Nurul Islam, who left in 1975, but it continued to advocate a line of poverty alleviation through high-yielding foodgrain varieties and 'modern' inputs, expanding farmers' cooperatives and creating employment through rural public works programs.³⁵ However, its main emphasis remained industrial development.³⁶ It drew from Pakistan's famed Planning Commission.³⁷ One former member of Bangladesh's Planning Commission, Muhammad Yunus, who later founded Grameen Bank and won the Nobel Peace Prize, complained that he had nothing to do there and left in frustration in 1972.³⁸ As was usual internationally, plan targets were not met.³⁹ As B. Jahangir summed it up: "Rural development in Bangladesh is primarily concerned with 1) modernisation and 2) monetarisation of rural society and 3) its integration with the national economy".⁴⁰

The core of Bangladesh's rural development policies consisted of cooperatives of the Comilla model. Here, too, Bangladesh built on Pakistan's policies. The town of

31 Hartmann and Boyce 1981, p. 195; Jazairy et al. 1992, pp. 442–443; Jessen 1990, p. 15; de Vylder 1982, p. 30. Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 205–206 give a total budget share of 20 percent for 1982.

32 For Pakistan's rates, see Elkington 1976, p. 80; Mai 1977, p. 69.

33 Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 202–206; Bangladesh Ministry of Agriculture, "Bangladesh Agriculture in Statistics" (1974?), p. 99 of the document, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975 DR.

34 The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 4 November 1972, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh General, General I.

35 Islam 1985, pp. 188, 192, 194; Herbon 1984, pp. 8–9; uz-Zaman (Planning Commission) to Schwarzwalder (USAID Bangladesh), 10 June 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974; contribution by Amirul Islam, FAO Conference, 19 November 1973, FAO, RG 6, film 538, pp. 305–306; Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, "The Two-Year Plan, 1978–80", March 1978, *ibid.*, Box 73, BD-Bangladesh 1978; de Vylder 1982, p. 9. For Nurul Islam and others, see Riaz 1993, pp. 170, 197, 202; Islam 2005, pp. 135–160, 176, 191–202. For Nurul Islam in search of a job with the UN, see note of conversation by Umbricht, "Nurul Islam" (ca. August 1974), AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh, General VI. For training, see Elkington 1976, p. 66.

36 Lawo 1984, pp. 91–115, 232–233.

37 See Elkington 1976, pp. 60, 66–67; ul Haq 1976; and Chapter 4 of this book.

38 Yunus with Jolis 1998, p. 85.

39 Faaland and Parkinson 2013, p. 77.

40 Jahangir 1985, pp. 95–96.

Comilla was the site of the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD). When it was still the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, a team led by Akhtar Hameed Khan – and partly financed by the Ford Foundation – developed cooperatives both at the village level and at the level of *thanas* to provide better education and agricultural extension services. In addition to cooperatives and credit societies, the Comilla approach included *thana* training and development centers, *thana* irrigation programs and a rural works program.⁴¹ This came close to what was later called integrated rural development.

These cooperatives aimed at increasing agricultural production through pooling members' financial resources and preventing small and medium farmers from falling prey to moneylenders. Members met weekly and had to make weekly deposits.⁴² The landless and sharecroppers were denied membership, few smallholders owning less than 0.4 hectares joined, and a sizable number of surplus farmers did not join either.⁴³ The program offered women basic education, instruction in household economics and minor income earning activities.⁴⁴ The cooperative strategy served "capitalist accumulation".⁴⁵ As A. H. Khan said of the cooperatives' members, "we were teaching them the principles of capitalism – thrift, saving and investment".⁴⁶

Many studies in the early 1970s found these cooperatives a failure. Rice yields did increase there. However, larger and medium farmers, including absentee landlords, who were all initially kept in check by the project organizers, began to dominate the management of the cooperatives after the expansion of the project in the late 1960s,⁴⁷ corrupted inspection officers and received from the cooperatives far more credits and agricultural inputs, including irrigation water, than others got.⁴⁸ Repayment rates dropped, with the better-off as the main defaulters, and the result was that few members got credit around 1970 because many were not eligible.⁴⁹ There was little benefit for poor peasants.⁵⁰ In fact, many of them lost their land to rich neighbors in the early 1970s.⁵¹ Thus, this development program aggravated social problems. Internal conflicts also surfaced in the "endless bickering", about which members complained.⁵² The problems were the same in the Rural

41 Rahman Khan 1979b, p. 398; Hye 1989, p. 12.

42 Jessen 1990, p. 40.

43 Eger 1982, pp. 36, 48; Stevens 1976b, pp. 131–132; Rahman Khan 1979a, pp. 128–129; Blair 1978, p. 78 note 6.

44 Stevens 1976b, pp. 116–118.

45 Feldman and McCarthy 1984, p. 19.

46 Quoted in Rahman Khan 1979a, p. 129.

47 See Blair 1978, esp. p. 74, and Steve Jones, "Bangladesh: a critical evaluation of rural development programmes", draft, n.d., Oxfam, Bangladesh General 1978. See also data in Stevens n.y. (1972), pp. 11, 13, 42.

48 Bose 1974, pp. 25–26; Stevens 1976b, p. 140; Rahman Khan 1979a, p. 139; Blair 1978, pp. 78–79 note 15; see also Lipton 1976, pp. 549–550.

49 Rahman Khan 1979a, pp. 140–141; Rahman Khan 1979b, p. 410; Blair 1978, pp. 69, 73.

50 Huq 1976, p. 11; Wahidul Haque et al. (UN Development Institute), "Toward a Theory of Rural Development", December 1975, pp. 41–42 of the document, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Rural Development 1972–76.

51 Rahman Khan 1979a, pp. 130–132.

52 Malek 1976, p. 365.

Works Programme, the Thana Irrigation Programme and local pump groups.⁵³ As Bangladesh's Planning Commission famously stated in 1974, the Comilla-style cooperatives had turned into a "closed club of kulaks".⁵⁴ Khan himself wrote a scathing criticism of his brainchild in 1972, bemoaning the "absence of equality and shared goals". The attempt to integrate, rather than exclude, the well-to-do had failed.⁵⁵ Already in December 1970, he had written a report that "reads like a Chinese-style confession in front of a People's Court", an observer said – quite a statement during the Cultural Revolution.⁵⁶

Critics of these cooperatives also noted, on the one hand, their low level of capital formation and members' persistent credit-dependency.⁵⁷ According to some, the reason why members had higher yields was not credit, but their preferred access to irrigation and other subsidized inputs.⁵⁸ On the other hand, neighboring peasants who were not members were almost indistinguishable from members in their use of 'modern' inputs and yields after a few years.⁵⁹

Although, or rather because, it was clear by the early 1970s that the Comilla approach spurred inequality and capital concentration, its village cooperatives and credit societies were replicated elsewhere in the country in the integrated rural development program with the support of the 'World Bank'. By the early 1980s, this program covered almost all corners of the country. This "diluted version of Comilla" did not focus on irrigation and rural works.⁶⁰ Few landless and sharecroppers joined. In some places, all members were better-off.⁶¹ Only initially did these 'new' cooperatives have a better record of loan repayment.⁶² Especially wealthy members defaulted.⁶³ Bangladesh's IRD program was restructured and renamed several times in the 1970s and 1980s. By 1988, there were more than three million participants (half of them inactive), which implies that the majority of peasants did not join, so that the program was a bit hollow. The wealthy and better-off continued to monopolize resources, poor members' assets declined, and the management was poor in quality and dominated by large farmers, as even the Planning Commission acknowledged. But members' wages increased, compared to other ruralites.⁶⁴ Even if one includes credit society members and other

53 Blair 1978, pp. 75–76.

54 Kulak was a derogatory term for wealthy mid-sized farmers in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. Quoted in Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 205.

55 Quoted in Lipton 1976, p. 550; see also Rahman Khan 1979b, p. 414; Jessen 1990, p. 43.

56 Remark by Daniel Thomer in Robinson and Griffin 1974, p. 179.

57 Bose 1974, p. 26; Rahman Khan 1979a, pp. 136–138; Rahman Khan 1979b, p. 413.

58 Rahman Khan 1979a, pp. 120, 145; Rahman Khan 1979b, p. 401.

59 Stevens 1976b, pp. 134–138; Rahman Khan 1979a, pp. 118–119.

60 Wood 1994, p. 177.

61 Rahman Khan 1979a, pp. 144–151; Stevens 1976b, pp. 105–106, 121–122; de Vylder 1982, p. 148; Hye 1989, pp. 37, 72, 107–108; Jessen 1990, p. 44; Siddiqui 1980, pp. 331–339.

62 Eger 1982, p. 60; but see Herbon 1984, pp. 110–115, 301.

63 Siddiqui 1980, p. 337

64 Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, "The Two-Year Plan, 1978–80", March 1978, p. 130 of the document, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD-Bangladesh 1978; Riddell and Robinson 1995, p. 19; Bhuiyan et al. 2005, pp. 360–361; Islam

organizations, rural membership was 6.5 million in 1981.⁶⁵ Beginning in the late 1970s, there were numerous similar “intensive” regional IRD programs, usually run by one foreign ‘donor’. This was also known as “Rent-a-Thana-Approach”.⁶⁶ These foreign-managed programs, which had high administrative costs, also reported some successes in the use of technology, but they mainly benefitted the better-off and left many areas aside.⁶⁷

The state began a program for women’s cooperatives, combined with ‘population control’, in 1972. It sought the “full participation of rural women in the process of national development” and to enable them “to work for monetary gain”, but it had relatively few members and little success.⁶⁸ Staple food production was not its emphasis. In reality, the program seemed to benefit “primarily the better-off women”.⁶⁹ In the 1990s, there were also cooperatives for the landless with 1.5 million members.⁷⁰

If objectives of the cooperatives were state control and the imposition of “developmentalism” on all parts of society, neither was possible with the 3.7 million members they had by the late 1990s.⁷¹ In international fora, Bangladeshi representatives emphasized that some foreigners were wrong to think that IRD was the same as the 1950s community development approach because the former, unlike the latter, did not bypass the rural poor.⁷² But, one way or another, village cooperatives did, of course, assume the fiction of the village community. And programs allegedly to aid the poor that actually helped the mid-sized farms had been around since the late colonialism of the 1930s.⁷³

Another element of the Comilla model hijacked by the rural well-to-do was the rural works program. *Thana* officers, Union Council chairmen and secretaries channeled resources to influential friends.⁷⁴ Large-scale fraud by organizers and high costs for contractors, administrative staff, equipment and expatriates left only very low wages for the poor, hard-working ‘beneficiaries’, who fought for raises.⁷⁵ Roads, embankments and canals were constructed, drainage systems were installed and rivers cleared of silt. Supposedly done to help the rural poor, these were advantages for the rich and aggravated inequality.⁷⁶ “Roads and canals benefit you, not

1978, p. 26; Hye 1989, pp. 38–39; Blair 1978, p. 70; de Vylder 1982, pp. 150–151; Nebelung 1988, p. 224; Zaman 1984, pp. 67–69, 76; Herbon 1988a, p. 24; World Bank 1990, p. 77; Riaz 1993, p. 191.

65 Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 167.

66 See Hye 1989; Jessen 1990, pp. 45–59. Quote in Bhattacharya 1995, p. 134; de Vylder 1982, p. 51.

67 Hye 1989, pp. 114–146; Hartmann and Boyce 1983, pp. 271–272; Wood 1994, p. 130.

68 Westergaard 1983, pp. 95, 97, 109; Hye 1989, p. 73; Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982, pp. 109, 113 (quote).

69 Westergaard 1983, p. 110; Wood 1994, p. 406; but see Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982, pp. 148–152.

70 Bhuiyan et al. 2005, pp. 360–361.

71 This means to read Bhuiyan et al. 2005, esp. pp. 361–363, against the grain.

72 Report of the Government Consultation on the Centre on Integrated Rural Development in Asia (CIRDA), Bangkok, 22–26 March 1976, FAO, RG 15, RAPE, Rural Development.

73 See Étienne 1979, pp. 91–95.

74 Feldman and McCarthy 1984, p. 14.

75 See the analysis in Wood 1994, pp. 272–276, 329.

76 Franda 1982b, p. 14; Alamgir 1978, p. 29; Chaudhury 1981, p. 92; Jansen 1983a, pp. 270–271.

us”, a landless man was quoted saying to a wealthy local.⁷⁷ Similar phenomena were reported about many large foreign-run food-for-work projects, for example, some of those financed by the World Food Programme. Funds were misappropriated and little work was done, and where it was, land improvement benefited the wealthy through the provision of free labor and not the landless. Also, local elites provided their patrons with jobs.⁷⁸ The majority of those employed in rural works programs had no land.⁷⁹ Often, the working conditions were exploitative. In 1976, boys and girls were paid less than 3 kilograms of wheat for each ton of earth moved.⁸⁰ Because of exploitation, embezzlement and overbureaucratization, labor costs in rural works programs and food-for-works programs dropped as a proportion of total costs from 68 percent in 1962–1963 to 27 percent in 1969 and to just 16 percent in 1973.⁸¹

For some time, the Comilla model was internationally presented as a success story and recommended for replication.⁸² International experts continued to regard cooperatives favorably as a way to mobilize capital and ‘modernize’ agriculture.⁸³ In preparation for the World Food Conference in 1974, Bangladesh’s government in turn lobbied for establishing a World Food Bank or a fund along the lines of what became IFAD, in addition to a World Food Security Council.⁸⁴ The UN regarded Bangladesh as important enough for the integrated rural development approach that the Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) was established in 1979 as first of such continental centers at the symbolic place of Comilla. It grew out of the idea of an institution jointly managed by Japan and the FAO.⁸⁵ CIRDAP focused on the dissemination of ideas and the exchange of experiences as part of addressing ‘development’ for small farmers and other rural poor. Initially, six countries joined, at present there are 13 member countries.⁸⁶ CIRDAFRICA was established in 1982 in Arusha, Tanzania.

77 Quoted in Chen 1986, p. 137.

78 “NGO Country Paper for WCARRD”, draft, 22 November 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 27, RU 7/46.29 (a), vol. 3; *The Net* 1986, pp. 62–63, 66; Jackson with Eade 1982, pp. 23, 27–29, 78–79; Hartmann and Boyce 1983, pp. 202, 277; Siddiqui 1980, pp. 366–370; Hossain 2017, p. 88. A contrary interpretation is in Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 243–244. Food-for-work programs, always bigger, grew at the expense of the rural works category in the 1980s: World Bank 1990, p. 109.

79 Singh 1983, p. 390 with data for 1976.

80 Cleaver 1977, p. 35; see also Toni Hagen, “Bangladesh unter dem Militärregime”, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 11 March 1977, FAO, RG 13, GII, IN 2/1 Press Criticisms, vol. II (brown file).

81 Zaman 1984, pp. 92, 94; Wood 1994, p. 329.

82 For example, see ILO, “World Employment Programme: A Proposal for a Comprehensive Inter-Agency Country Programme for an Employment-Oriented Strategy of Rural Development”, February 1974, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/43; “Report by the Field Director for Eastern India, Nepal and East Pakistan” (1970), Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976; Stevens n.y. (1972); Donald 1976, p. 255 (a USAID study).

83 See Barraclough 1991, pp. 156–168

84 Preparatory Committee for the World Food Conference, draft provisional agenda of third meeting, 30 July 1974, FAO, RG 22/4a.

85 See the files FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., FAO Cooperation with Japan, RG 15, RAFF, Japan 1972–75 and RG 15, RAFF, Rural Development 1972–76. See also FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, RU 7/46. 1, Follow-up General, Box 15, vol. II, and Box 16, vols. III, IV and V.

86 [CIRDAP], “About CIRDAP”, <https://cirdap.org/about-cirdap/> (accessed 15 June 2020).

Given the highly unequal distribution of land, some Bangladeshi and foreign development experts called for land reform. A ceiling of 2 hectares would have affected just 13 percent of families and could have made much land available for the poor, as Nurul Islam, the former chief of Bangladesh's Planning Commission, argued in 1978. But nearly at the same time, two USAID experts found that this might create many farms that would not be "viable". They did call for tenancy reforms and even suggested that martial law be declared and troops deployed to the countryside to ensure implementation! (But according to their conception, village committees would have carried out the reform, whose proposed procedures would have ensured that large landowners dominated them.)⁸⁷ Of course, they envisioned the beneficiaries being given "water, seeds, fertilizers, implements, and credit".⁸⁸ However, all of the country's governments – including those led by the Awami League – were wedded to the interests of rural elites, who as "vote brokers" mediated between government and population, so the state could hardly get resources from them⁸⁹ and any such reform legislation remained limited and was hardly implemented, except for the redistribution of some land formerly owned by persons who had fled the country after independence in 1971.⁹⁰ New regulations set ceilings on land ownership in 1972⁹¹ and conditions of tenancy in 1978.⁹² On the contrary, large and medium landholders whose land had been occupied by poor villagers during the war in 1971 managed, with help of the Awami League authorities, to have them evicted in 1972.⁹³ It was in late 1971 and early 1972 when the moment for a potential violent large redistribution of land to the paupers passed. What really transpired later was a redistribution of another kind in which well-off peasants grabbed land from their poor neighbors.

For decades, Bangladesh relied on food aid and commercial grain imports. In the second half of the 1960s, foreign grain deliveries to East Pakistan had risen to more than 1 million tons annually.⁹⁴ During the 1970s, Bangladesh's annual imports often exceeded 2 million tons, or 15 percent of consumption. In the first half of the 1980s, they increased to almost 2.4 million tons on average. Recent imports are much larger; in 2019–2020, they were estimated to be 8.8 million tons.⁹⁵ Not all of this was food aid. In 1972–1973, in dire times for Bangladesh during the international price hike, its commercial imports were close to 1.2 million

87 Islam 1978, p. 37 note 39; Januzzi and Peach 1980, pp. 50–51, 67–70. See also Lifschultz 1979, p. 43.

88 Januzzi and Peach 1980, p. 70.

89 Sobhan 1982, p. 3.

90 Januzzi and Peach 1980, p. 14; For expropriations in 1971, see Sen 1999, pp. 634, 636, 638–639; for the Awami League, see Blair 1978, p. 70.

91 Sobhan 1993, pp. 57–58; Barraclough 1991, p. 120; Riaz 1993, p. 187 note 28.

92 Sheena Grosset, "Tour Report – Bangladesh, 15–29 November 1978", Oxfam, Bangladesh Tour Reports, 1972–1987.

93 "Toaha" 1972.

94 Elkington 1976, p. 63.

95 Étienne 1979, p. 132; Étienne 1986, p. 35; Feeding the World's Population 1984, p. 134; Ahmed 2004, p. 4050; "Bangladesh Grain and Feed Annual", 5 April 2019, www.fas.usda.gov/data/bangladesh-grain-and-feed-annual-3. See World Bank 1979, p. 26 for Bangladesh government plans for self-sufficiency in 1985.

tons (mostly wheat), nearly half of all grain imports.⁹⁶ Bangladesh's import bill for foodgrains in each of the years 1972–1973 to 1975–1976 was US\$230 million, 398 million, 476 million and 498 million – far more than for crude oil – which was from 29 percent to 44 percent of the value of all imports.⁹⁷ In the 1980s, the smaller grain import bill was still about at the level of the costs of oil and oil product imports.⁹⁸ Grain imports claimed a large part of Bangladesh's hard currency earnings, so it depended on food aid, which was not always sufficient.⁹⁹ The proportion of commercial imports was particularly high when prices were high in the world food crisis; in the longer run, it was 20–33 percent.¹⁰⁰

Bangladesh inherited a peculiar system of food rationing from Pakistan (and from the British who introduced it during the Great Bengal Famine in 1943¹⁰¹). The government sold food at reduced prices to state employees (civil servants, the military and the police), certain other groups (such as university students, prisoners, orphanage inmates and hospital patients), the inhabitants of major cities and towns (the rich and the poor), but few rural dwellers (in the categories of seasonal “modified rationing” and “relief”). In 1977, the system covered about 20 million out of a population of 80 million.¹⁰² In minor shifts in the system, “relief” temporarily increased in the mid-1970s and “food for work” in the late 1970s at the expense of “modified rationing”.¹⁰³ During the mid-1970s, urbanites, who made up less than 10 percent of the population, officially received 55 percent to 67 percent of all rationed foods.¹⁰⁴ The ration provided many poor city dwellers with 90–100 percent and wealthy urbanites with 60 percent of their foodgrain; for the former, this was like a subsidy amounting to 12–15 percent of their income.¹⁰⁵ As a result of fraud, which ruralites regarded as a major source of income for local dignitaries, only a tiny proportion of the rural poor received rationed goods (and often in small amounts), despite the solemn but knowingly false affirmations of government officials to the contrary.¹⁰⁶

96 Winberg to USDA, 29 June 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 3, Bangladesh 1973 DR.

97 Khondker 1985, p. 126; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 16. Contradictory data are in Sobhan 1979, pp. 1974–1975.

98 World Bank 1987, p. 223.

99 A UN officer's account of food aid in 1972–1973 is in Oliver 1978, pp. 142–158.

100 Atwood et al. 2000, p. 149 show average data for five-year periods.

101 Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, “The Two-Year Plan, 1978–80”, March 1978, p. 88 of the document, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD-Bangladesh 1978.

102 Winberg to USDA, 29 June 1973, 20 January 1975 and 14 January 1977, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 3, Bangladesh 1973, Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975, and Box 64, BD Bangladesh DR, respectively. See also US AID Bangladesh, “The Food Ration System of the Bangladesh Government”, 7 August 1975, *ibid.*, Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975 DR.

103 Ahmed 1988, p. 221; Sobhan 1982, p. 41; Khondker 1985, pp. 151–153; Jessen 1990, p. 122.

104 Ahmed 1988, p. 226; Ahmed 1979, p. 12; Riaz 1993, p. 236 note 8.

105 Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 140; Ahmed 1988, pp. 226, 228.

106 For government representations, see IBRD, Bangladesh Aid Group, Paris, 4 and 5 June 1975, Chairman's Report of Proceedings, AFZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh Aid Group, Meetings. For fraud, see Hartmann and Boyce 1981, p. 197; Siddiqui 1980, pp. 372–376; Herbon 1984, p. 299; *The Net* 1986, pp. 62–66; BRAC 1986, pp. 114, 120; Ravallion 1987, p. 94; Jessen 1990, pp. 124–126; Smillie 2009, p. 44.

At least 1.5 million tons of grain were annually distributed through the rationing system.¹⁰⁷ Given that procurement (domestic food purchases by state authorities) was at only about 100,000–400,000 tons, or 1–3 percent of the harvest,¹⁰⁸ imports – and food aid in particular – were the main source of the rations. This means that foreign food ‘aid’ essentially fed the rich, the state apparatus and the army of a military dictatorship (as it was from 1975 to 1990) and, as a pacification measure, the urban poor at subsidized prices. Through local counterpart fund mechanisms, food aid also provided up to 10 percent of Bangladesh’s state revenue (exceptionally high by international standards), although the state’s rice subsidies cost it even more than these earnings because of the costs for commercial imports and procurement.¹⁰⁹ The redistribution to the better-off (and the urban poor) through the rationing system was substantial, at about 1.3 percent of GDP in 1980–1981.¹¹⁰ Nominally, its costs peaked at over US\$300 million in 1990, or 17 percent of government expenditure.¹¹¹

Since the 1970s, foreign governments and international organizations pressured Bangladesh’s governments to reduce or abolish its food subsidies – which the former after all made possible – but to little avail.¹¹² This pressure seems to have included threats to withhold U.S. food shipments to Bangladesh once more in 1975, still at famine times. It was not the last time.¹¹³ After a meeting on U.S. food aid on 18 August 1975, the agricultural economist G. Edward Schuh noted:

Countries like India and Bangladesh are written off with side (& snide) comments by people who don’t know what they are talking about [. . .]. To see a bunch of middle-level bureaucrats cynically playing God with such arrogance is hardly palatable”.¹¹⁴

In 1978, Food Minister Abdul Momen travelled to Jakarta to study Indonesia’s staple food pricing system without rationing, without immediate effect on Bangladesh’s procedures.¹¹⁵ The rationing system was slightly modified a few years later. In the 1980s, public distribution measured as a percentage of available foodgrains

107 J. Stepanek and Z. Huq, “Bangladesh: The Subsidy Burden of the Bangladeshi Government’s Ration System”, 31 December 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 56, BD Bangladesh 76.

108 Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 135; Ahmed 1979, pp. 13, 50.

109 Ahmed 1979, pp. 11–12, 26; Valdés 1988, p. 84; Ahmed 1988, p. 223; Goletti 1994, p. 19; Uvin 1994, p. 167; J. Stepanek and Z. Huq, “Bangladesh: The Subsidy Burden of the Bangladeshi Government’s Ration System”, 31 December 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 56, BD Bangladesh 76; Sobhan 1982, pp. 31–32.

110 Sobhan 1982, p. 218.

111 See Ahmed and Haggblade 2000, p. 2; Ahmed et al. 2000a, p. 131.

112 See Crow 1990, pp. 36–38; Jessen 1990, pp. 131–132; “Minutes of the Programme Committee Meeting, IFPRI”, 28 June 1977, FAO, RG 12, ES, IL 3/445, I; Chowdhury and Haggblade 2000b, pp. 169, 174. Crow and Murshid 1992, p. 37 present a somewhat different interpretation.

113 McHenry and Bird 1977, p. 84. For similar U.S. extortion in 1974, although for different reasons, see Chapter 3 in this book. For another case in late 1977, see Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 105.

114 Quoted in Jachertz 2015, p. 441.

115 Fejfar to USDA, “Bangladesh: Food Minister Returns from Indonesia”, 13 October 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD-Bangladesh 1978.

was reduced a bit, domestic procurement remained low, but the privately marketed surplus grew.¹¹⁶ Also, from 1982 on the price of rationed food was raised closer to market prices (the proportion between the two was very low in the lean years of 1972–1975 but already raised in 1975–1977), to levels similar to the 1960s, so that in the mid-1980s food subsidies temporarily were a much smaller share of the government budget than before. But the system continued, and so did the urban focus.¹¹⁷ In the 1990s, the rationing system was only abolished in name but public foodgrain distribution went on, primarily in the categories “relief”, “food for work” and “essential priorities” (for military and police).¹¹⁸

Because the state did not buy much domestic rice and did not set rice prices (except within the subsidized rationing system based on imports), there was not much government intervention in the rice market. It became quite integrated after 1976, when regional and probably also seasonal price differences were low.¹¹⁹ Rice prices were higher in Bangladesh than they were internationally during most of the 1970s and in the early 2000s, but they were lower in 1973–1975, 1981–1991 and from 2004–2005 to at least 2008–2009, that is, also during the two global food crises. In the late 2000s, consumers were to some degree shielded against international price hikes, even though domestic demand was high.¹²⁰ Rice farmers received a relatively high percentage of the consumer price, compared to other countries. Some have attributed this to an intentional government policy,¹²¹ but if there was such a policy and it was effective, this was but favoring surplus farmers, whereas perhaps a majority even of rural dwellers made net food purchases so that such a policy would not have been in poor ruralites’ interest. Peasants were not united. In the same village, some rice farmers might favor high prices and others low prices.¹²²

Some limited changes of the rationing system were part of a “Food Security Plan”, which a National Committee on Food announced in 1980, together with and under considerable pressure from foreign ‘donors’. ‘Food security’ can mean different things (see Chapter 4); here it meant less rationing, more reliance on markets with the government stepping in only in emergencies and price incentives offered to agricultural producers.¹²³ Allegedly, Bangladesh had already asked the

116 Goletti 1994, p. 19.

117 Crow and Murshid 1992, p. 38; Ahmed 1979, pp. 23, 27; Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 140, 202; Hossain 2017, pp. 133–134; World Bank 1990, p. 118; Ahmed et al. 2000b, p. 131.

118 Chowdhury and Haggblade 2000b, pp. 166–168, 172–176; Ahmed 2000c, pp. 216–217, 223.

119 Goletti 1994, p. 27, 38, 41; Hossain 1987, p. 82; Shaw and Clay 1993, p. 42; but see Ahmed and Rustagi 1987, pp. 107, 111 and Ahmed 2004, p. 4047. See also Dyson 1991, p. 287 for seasonal patterns and Chaudhury 1981, p. 90 for increasing price variances in 1968–1976.

120 Goletti 1994, p. 67; Ahmed 1979, p. 70; Raihan 2015, p. 233.

121 Abbott 1992, p. 133; von Braun 1988, p. 100; Ahmed 1979, p. 22; Ahmed and Rustagi 1987, p. 110; for the policy, see Barraclough 1991, pp. 93–94.

122 Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 192.

123 Franda 1982b, p. 12; for the pressure, see “Meeting on National Food Security Programme, Dacca, 23 April 1979”, FAO, RG 9, DDF, FA 13/10 Asia vol. I (FSAS) Asia 1978–79.

FAO for assistance to drafting a national food plan in 1976.¹²⁴ Large food stocks also belonged to many food security concepts. After the 1974–1975 famine, the country’s grain reserves were above 800,000 tons in 1976, a third of the level recommended by the FAO and the ‘World Bank’, which intended to build storage space for further half a million tons. But in late 1982, Bangladesh was still far behind plans, which seems to have remained the case until the end of the century.¹²⁵ In 1994–1996, public stocks were even reduced to below 1 million tons.¹²⁶

In 1987, a ‘World Bank’ study noted with regret that the country still lacked a nutrition program worth mentioning.¹²⁷ ‘Food security’ programs in a wider sense in Bangladesh from the 1980s to the 2000s focused on raising food production, in combination with generating employment (through food-for-work programs) and, increasingly, providing relief for vulnerable groups, especially women.¹²⁸ Often, the local rich continued to use these work and relief programs to channel resources to their clientele.¹²⁹

Resettlement projects

There is not much space in Bangladesh, yet there were two huge projects for rural resettlement (not counting the recurrent expulsions or waves of refugees, especially Hindus), and both were variants of the planned introduction of ‘modern’ farming methods for small peasants. The first had to do with flood protection, particularly those caused by cyclones, which killed over 100,000 people in coastal areas in each of 1970, 1985 and 1991. There were several such programs over the decades.¹³⁰ Planners preferred concrete shelters for the population in elevated locations as the solution, but Mahbub Alam (a shady figure who was once a deputy director of the BARD and later involved in the bloody August 1975 coup) and politicians around him wanted to combine this in the early 1970s with resettling the population, who in many parts of the country lived in scattered settlements, into cluster villages built on elevated platforms with grain storage, schools, government offices and Comilla-type cooperatives that would supply high-yielding rice seeds and chemical inputs, which would enable agricultural development. Providing the inputs for

124 Bhattacharjee, “Note to the Files: Discussion with Mr. Mensah [. . .]”, 5 October 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. VI.

125 Winberg to USDA, 4 August 1976 and “Remarks by Secretary Murshed at IBRD Donor Meeting, July 12, 1976”, both in NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 56, BD Bangladesh 76. See also “National Cereal Stock Policies”, no date (1977), FAO, RG 12, ES, IL 3/445, vol. II, and for various storage projects, report by Müller and Rashid, 9 May 1978, FAO, RG 9, DDF, FA 13/10 Asia vol. I (AFSAS) Asia 1978–79; Goetz to Leeks, 9 November 1982, FAO, RG 12, UN 44/1, WFC Follow up, vol. III; and Ahmed 2004, p. 4047. According to Goletti 2000, p. 210, the ‘World Bank’ recommended a level of 1.5 million tons in 1979.

126 Chowdhury and Haggblade 2000b, p. 177.

127 World Bank 1987, p. 192.

128 Siddiqui 2015, pp. 116–117, 123; Hossain 2017, p. 88.

129 See Datta 1998, pp. 215–217.

130 Datta 1998, p. 24 for a program in 1967–1969; Hossain 2017, p. 27.

free would induce locals to move.¹³¹ Alam proposed to foreign agencies to create no fewer than 30,000 cooperative cluster villages throughout Bangladesh (where about 70,000 villages existed). An Oxfam paper called this a “whole new vision of a happier, more secure and more productive future for the millions of rural families in Bangladesh”.¹³² In one variant of the plan, ‘World Bank’ officer S. Allison proposed land terracing for a large part of Bangladesh (17,500 square kilometers) by employing two million people for 25 years, and to move the villages on the highest thus created levels.¹³³

The cluster village ideas involved land consolidation, that is, some redistribution (the government spoke even of land reform). This technocratic mega project – which “postulates planned rehousing”, as one document stated – would have changed the face of rural Bangladesh and had the potential to cause a lot of harm. It failed due to peasants’ resistance; they did not want to resettle, were concerned because of potentially endless conflicts over land with powerful landlords and already entangled in fierce conflicts with their neighbors.¹³⁴ In other words, this project was also based on the idea of local communities with shared interests that did not exist in the real world. Oxfam, Brot für die Welt and a Mennonite organization were all involved in the cluster villages “disaster”, as was the ‘World Bank’.¹³⁵ But the program never had a chance anyway, given its estimated costs of US\$4,000 per family.¹³⁶ 30,000 villages would thus have cost more than US\$10 billion.

Institutional memory was short, though. A re-edition of the cluster villages plan under President Ershad (1982–1990) was incorporated in numerous NGOs’ rehabilitation plans after another major cyclone.¹³⁷ Cluster villages were also

131 Oxfam, Field Secretary’s Report [1972], Jerome Lewis, “Self-Help Project Proposal Co-operative Rural Development”, 27 January 1971 and “Proposals for assistance in the rehabilitation of the cyclone damaged areas of East Pakistan” (cover letter of 3 February 1971), all in Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976; “BAN 18: Cluster Villages: Integrated Co-operative Development Programme, Char Alexander, Noakhali District”, no date, Oxfam, Project files, Box 1013, BD18. For Alam, see Lifschultz 1979, pp. 101, 117; Islam 2005, p. 130.

132 “BAN 18 Cluster Villages: Integrated Co-operative Development Programme, Char Alexander, Noakhali District”, no date, Oxfam, Project files, Box 1013, BD18.

133 Faaland and Parkinson 1976, pp. 150–151.

134 Philipp Jackson, “Report on a Month in Bangladesh”, 21 July 1972, part III, pp. 11 ff., Oxfam, Bangladesh Tour Reports 1972–1987. Quote in: “Proposals for assistance in the rehabilitation of the cyclone damaged areas of East Pakistan” (cover letter of 3 February 1971), Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976. See also “Cluster Villages in Bangladesh”, no date (April 1973?), *ibid.*; “BAN 18: Cluster Villages: Integrated Co-operative Development Programme, Char Alexander, Noakhali District”, no date, and “Hurdles in the way of developing Swadhurgram Clustered Co-operative Village” (no date), both in Oxfam, Project files, Box 1013, BD18. For land reform, see Government of Bangladesh, Planning Commission, Annual Plan 1975–76, no date, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 56, BD-Bangladesh 76.

135 Frank Field, “Annual Report of the Field Director, Dacca”, July 1973, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976.

136 Government of Bangladesh, Planning Commission, Annual Plan 1975–76, n.d., p. 35 of the document, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 56, BD Bangladesh 76.

137 Riddell and Robinson 1995, p. 105.

planned for cooperatives of landless people settled on *khas* (government) and *char* (alluvial) land.¹³⁸ Like in the 1970s, only some of the internationally financed elevated shelters planned after 1985 were built, while the rest of the money was corrupted away.¹³⁹

The second mass resettlement program affected the Chittagong Hill Tracts, a hilly area in southeastern Bangladesh inhabited by various non-Bengali peoples, many of whom were Buddhists. The special status of this area from colonial times was first undermined during Pakistani rule by the construction of the Kaptai dam completed in 1963, for which more than 10,000 farming families, up to 100,000 people, were displaced from submerged lands. Many of them were resettled on pineapple farms that were only initially successful, others became laborers or sharecroppers. Still others moved to hillsites in the region, which caused deforestation and erosion.¹⁴⁰ In addition, tens of thousands of local shifting cultivators were forcibly settled in model villages in the years after 1976. Financed by international agencies like the ADB and capitalist countries with close to US\$40 million, roads, schools, industry and mosques (for Muslims) were built.¹⁴¹ This program was to quell local armed resistance against Bangladesh's policies in the region which started in 1976. Between 1979 and 1984, the government sent 400,000 Bengali settlers to the region, supported and in part financed by the USAID, WHO, UNICEF and ADB, which coordinated the foreign involvement. These settlers were also put into cluster villages, and their hopes for plenty of land on which to earn a decent living standard were often disappointed by the area's unsuitability for rice farming. The government pitted settlers against locals, which often contributed to violent clashes.¹⁴² The insurgency in the region – in which between 15,000 and 20,000 people died and 500,000 residents were displaced – lasted until 1997, after which conflicting claims of ownership prevented the return of many original owners to their land. Not all of over 90,000 displaced families came back.¹⁴³ Despite its military, financial, political and human costs, neither did the operation increase the country's agricultural production, nor did it relieve the population pressure in the rest of the country or much improve the lives of those involved.

The role of NGOs

What was the role of Bangladesh's famous NGOs in the fight against hunger and the small peasant approach? They became very important for the country's development policies. Many were founded as relief organization in the wake of

138 Mannan 2015, pp. 82–83.

139 Nebelung 1988, pp. 125, 127.

140 Dutta and Mazifur Rahman 1998, esp. pp. 313, 317, 320; Mey 1984b, p. 102; Levene 1999, pp. 351–352; Gerlach 2010, pp. 171–172.

141 Bangladesh Groep Nederland and Wolfgang Mey 1984a, pp. 163–164, 169–170; Levene 1999, p. 354; Ahmed 1993, pp. 47–48.

142 Levene 1999, p. 360; Ahmed 1993, pp. 46–47; Gerlach 2010, pp. 173–174.

143 The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission 2000, pp. 22, 28, 45.

the independence war or during the 1974 famine by highly educated, young members of the urban elite with moderately leftist leanings who managed to attract the support of foreign funding institutions.¹⁴⁴ Initially, many of their field workers – called “motivators” at the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) – had a similar urban middle class background (as did many agricultural extension officers), although this may have changed.¹⁴⁵ The fact that their lifestyle and existence differed from their clientele influenced their outlook. “Privately many NGO leaders tend to be networked into certain areas of the state through kinship and through their class background”, David Lewis noted.¹⁴⁶ Lamia Karim has argued that NGO workers in the 1990s constituted a new rural elite commanding considerable resources and infusing new values to the countryside.¹⁴⁷ And they tended to look down on whom they regarded rather as microfinance beneficiaries than as customers.¹⁴⁸

Essentially, Bangladesh’s large NGOs came to pursue an approach to “anti-poverty programmes” that represented a turn from “HYV-induced agriculture oriented programmes to non-farm activities [. . .] promoting self-employment” (later also adopted by the government and foreign ‘donors’).¹⁴⁹ Their road to this end was through teaching conscientization and offering “credit, income generation, and group formation” to the poor, which coincided with wishes of international ‘donors’ and creditors who funded the NGOs, since none of them worked profitably.¹⁵⁰ Many NGOs followed this approach, including the Grameen Bank and BRAC that I discuss here in some detail.¹⁵¹

Credit was at the heart of these NGOs’ activities, which served to foster capitalism, not unlike in the Comilla approach. Credit provided by private organizations was a perfect match for the neoliberal thinking of the time.¹⁵² According to Naomi Hossain, “microcredit brought a population into regular market relations”.¹⁵³ “Improving managerial and entrepreneurial capabilities of the poor” is how Ponna

144 See, for example, Lewis 1997, p. 34, Nebelung 1988, pp. 115, 119; Wood 1994, p. 485 (on Proshika); Streeten 1997, p. 198; Mannan 2015, pp. 72–74 and Hossain 2017, pp. 139–140, 184–185.

145 Nebelung 1988, p. 149; for the “motivators”, see Chen 1986, p. 7; for change, see Streeten 1997, p. 209 but see Islam 2005, p. 400; for extension workers, see Sulahuddin Ahmed, Secretary for Agriculture, Bangladesh Ministry for Agriculture, “Jottlings on agricultural policy and education in Bangladesh”, August 1972, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Bangladesh 1972–76; for female project officials, see Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982, p. 124. Early critics said that many NGOs were ineffective, their staff badly trained and working “largely for reasons of personal gain”: Oxfam, “Bangladesh Annual Report for 1978–79”, 3 April 1979, Oxfam, Field Committee for Asia, November 1976–January 1980. A list of 56 NGOs active in Bangladesh (many Christian organizations among them) is in UNROD Information Paper No. 26, 1972, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh, UNROD/UNROB Information Papers II, pp. 20–23. See also Mascarenhas 1986, p. 20.

146 Lewis 1992, p. 37 note 5.

147 Karim 2011, pp. 58, 78.

148 Montgomery et al. 2017, p. 158; see also Rahman 2007, p. 196.

149 Bhattacharya 1995, p. 136; for the adoption, see White 1992, p. 70.

150 Lewis 1997, pp. 36–37; see also Smillie 2009, p. 76; Lovell 1992, p. 109.

151 See Riddell and Robinson 1995, pp. 106–137; Nebelung 1988.

152 Wood 1997, p. 293. For the emphasis on credit, see also Mannan 2015, p. 87.

153 Hossain 2017, pp. 182–183.

Wignaraja described a core aim of the NGOs.¹⁵⁴ “I have seen bowed and subdued people transformed into proud and creative entrepreneurs when credit has come to change their lives”, in Muhammad Yunus’s words.¹⁵⁵ Critics called the outcome of NGO microcredits “brutalization” and competition undermining solidarity.¹⁵⁶ One of BRAC’s aims was “to create a large middle class that is a prerequisite for social stability”.¹⁵⁷ But members’ average total savings of US\$17 in late 1998 did not indicate that it reached this goal.¹⁵⁸ Nonetheless, Manzurul Mannan describes the ideology that BRAC successfully spread, in tune with its foreign ‘donors’, as embracing development and economic growth, secularism, anti-communism, equality, an anti-government attitude and individualism.¹⁵⁹

Grameen Bank (*grameen* means village) emerged in 1983 out of a development project that was started in 1974 by Muhammad Yunus, a U.S.-trained professor of economics. A local economics professor turned organizer-activist was an ideal figure for the development ‘community’ to identify with. He argued that the poor just needed credit to develop their capabilities and rise. The bank grew vigorously in the 1990s and 2000s and had 2.27 million borrowers, 12,628 employees and 1,105 branches by the end of 1997.¹⁶⁰ It offered small loans at factually relatively high interest rates of 20 percent (a fact that prevented many well-off from joining) to poor borrowers that it organized in collectively liable groups, which it taught about doing business in weekly meetings. Repayment rates were consistently at or above 95 percent. Forty percent of customers were women in 1982, 65.5 percent in 1985, and over 90 percent beginning in the 1990s.¹⁶¹ These loans primarily financed (except consumption) livestock rearing, food processing, handicrafts, trade (largely of crops), secondarily means of transportation (used by men), handlooms and vegetable seeds, but rarely rice cultivation.¹⁶² In 2004, most loans were used for trade and just one-seventh for agriculture and forestry.¹⁶³ Customers’ rates of return were highest for animal raising and trade.¹⁶⁴ In 1985, the largest group of borrowers were peasants, next was agricultural workers, then people involved in trade and cottage industries.¹⁶⁵

Bank officers taught members virtues like discipline, solidarity and thrift, to aim at living in prosperity, they emphasized the importance of exercising birth control

154 Wignaraja 1990, p. 52; see similarly on BRAC: Lovell 1992, p. 26.

155 Yunus 1997, p. 12; see also Yunus with Jolis 1998, pp. 262–264.

156 Bateman and Chang 2012, p. 27.

157 Smillie 2009, p. 203. See also Mannan 2015, p. 231.

158 Zaman 1999, p. 37.

159 Mannan 2015, esp. pp. 287–288. For Muslim clergy’s opposition to BRAC, see *ibid.*, pp. 58–60, 90, 94–95, 245–275; Karim 2011, pp. 25–30.

160 Yunus with Jolis 1998, esp. p. 333; Khandker et al. 1995, p. 60.

161 See Khandker et al. 1995, p. 25; Bornstein 2005, p. 140; Yunus with Jolis 1998. For factual interest rates, see Hossain 1988b, p. 46.

162 Hossain 1988b, pp. 34–39, 49–50; Yunus 1997, pp. 13, 21. More generally, see also Wood 1997, p. 294.

163 Harper 2007a, p. 84.

164 Hossain 1988b, p. 46.

165 Hye 1989, annex xii.

(the practice of which was slightly higher than for the rest of the population), improving their housing, of striving for cleanliness and the use of clean water, of good education, of growing and eating vegetables and told them to reject child marriages and not to pay or receive dowry.¹⁶⁶ Some practices raised observers' eyebrows, like an "emphasis on physical exercises at Center meetings, the Grameen [quasi-military] salute, and shouted slogans".¹⁶⁷ Among Grameen Bank's successes that many analysts mentioned were that its borrowers had higher rates of employment, higher wages, and more savings than comparable parts of the population and that they were less dependent on elites.¹⁶⁸ The bank's loans enabled members to go from unemployment or agricultural labor to trading, raising livestock and small-scale manufacturing.¹⁶⁹ Compared to others in the same village, borrowers in the 1980s spent much more on housing but almost the same on food, clothing and education.¹⁷⁰

In the 1970s, Grameen Bank, like other NGOs, involved women economically while Bangladesh's Planning Commission, the national press, the FAO and the 'World Bank' neglected them because of their outdated ideas of home economics and focus on population planning.¹⁷¹ NGOs targeted women because they believed that women would invest the money they borrowed to improve the well-being of their family, worked better in groups and repaid loans more reliably.¹⁷² In reality, men controlled the money from many of these loans taken out by women (e.g., from BRAC and Proshika, another big NGO), though less often if the borrowers were widows or divorcees.¹⁷³

Grameen Bank never worked profitably and always relied on donations and subsidies. It had high operation costs although its staff had to work long hours under unfavorable conditions, always being reminded that they were working for the poor.¹⁷⁴ Yunus was proud of having prevented his workers' attempt of unionizing.¹⁷⁵

BRAC is sometimes called the world's biggest NGO, and its history has also often been written as a "success story". It was founded in 1972 by Fazle Hassan Abed, a young former financial director for Shell in East Pakistan, to help returned Hindu refugees in Sulla, Sylhet district, and then also villagers in Rowmari, a hotspot during the 1974–1975 famine. In Sulla, Oxfam initially helped with

166 Sarkar 2001, p. 17; Bornstein 2005, pp. 97, 106, 154; Hossain 1988b, p. 28. In the 2000s, these values were rarely taught: Karim 2011, p. 75.

167 Holcombe 1995, p. 48 (quote), 124.

168 Sarkar 2001, pp. 5–6; Hossain 1988b, p. 65.

169 Hossain 1988b, pp. 62, 66.

170 Hossain 1988b, p. 69.

171 See McCarthy 1984, p. 56; Martius-von Harder 1978, pp. 184–185; Hamid 1995, p. 151. Things had changed in Bangladesh's Five-Year Development Plan 1990–1995, which called for employment and credit for women: Agarwal 1994, pp. 7–8; for the 1980–1985 plan, see *The Impact* 1988, pp. 5, 70. For the Comilla cooperatives, see Stevens 1976b, pp. 116–117.

172 See Todd 1996b; Yunus 1997, p. 16; Harper 1998, pp. 33, 40–41.

173 Hulme and Mosley 1997, pp. 120–121; Hossain 1988b, p. 61; more generally, Fernando 1997, pp. 170–171; Mannan 2015, pp. 227, 230; Karim 2011, p. 55.

174 Hossain 1988b, p. 75; MacIsaac and Wahid 1996, pp. 605, 607; Khandker et al. 1995, pp. xiii, 6, 66, 115; Holcombe 1995, pp. 88, 114–117.

175 Bornstein 2005, pp. 268, 274; see also Holcombe 1995, p. 88. 114–117.

seeds, fertilizers, pumps and power tillers.¹⁷⁶ Influenced by Paolo Freire's ideas about conscientization, BRAC, from the beginning depending on funding from abroad, moved immediately from relief to development, educational and health work and turned in 1979 to loan provision and organize groups of borrowers.¹⁷⁷ The most important income-generating activities which BRAC promoted were rural trading, poultry raising, sericulture, transportation businesses, food stalls, textile manufacturing, mat weaving, dairy production, fishing, rice processing and irrigation projects.¹⁷⁸ Few of these activities pertained to the growing of staples, and decreasingly so.¹⁷⁹ Similar to Grameen Bank, BRAC required members to make 17 "promises" about discipline, thrift, family planning, hygiene and the use of safe water, growing vegetables, striving for education and the rejection of polygamy.¹⁸⁰

By the mid-1990s, BRAC had about 50,000 full-time and part-time employees, 1.5 million participants in credit programs (mostly women), and it ran schools for 1.1 million students (70 percent girls) in 35,000 villages. In the 1980s, it was successful with its primary health care programs and its easily accessible and affordable oral-rehydration therapy (developed in an international cooperation involving researchers in East Pakistan/Bangladesh from the 1960s to the 1980s) that millions of families used and saved many lives of children with diarrhea. In 2008, there were 68,000 schools, one in virtually every village, and US\$1 billion in microloans with a 95 percent repayment rate.¹⁸¹ Today it has about seven million members. Like at Grameen Bank, staff had to work long hours and were under considerable pressure to perform; they were often transferred or dismissed.¹⁸²

Even sympathetic studies of BRAC's activities have noted failures. Among them was a program in 1990–1993 to use fertilizers and pesticides to grow high-yielding varieties of rice irrigated from deep tubewells owned by groups of poor villagers, which was primarily financed by Dutch and British 'donors'. But rice yields, peasants' income and loan repayments were so low that this program was given up; that participants earned little was not a surprise, given how much BRAC charged them for water. A project to introduce power tillers was no success

176 "Bangladesh and India – 29 February/16 March 1972", 16 March 1972, Oxfam, Ken Bennett's reports. See also Ahmed 1980, pp. 365, 406–410, 447–448; Smillie 2009, pp. 18–26; Lovell 1992, p. 1 (quote).

177 Oxfam, "A Visit to Bangladesh in December, 1974", January 1975, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976; David Campbell, "Bangladesh and the Landless", n.d. (ca. 1981), Oxfam, Various countries – Discussion papers; Chen 1986, pp. 6, 8; Smillie 2009, p. 85; Lovell 1992, p. 78; Montgomery et al. 2017, p. 114.

178 Abed with Chowdhury 1997, p. 49; Smillie 2009, pp. 2, 117–118, 206; Lovell 1992, pp. 34–73, 92, 97–108, 140; Montgomery et al. 2017, p. 132.

179 Lovell 1992, p. 92.

180 Lovell 1992, p. 84.

181 Abed with Chowdhury 1997, esp. pp. 45–46; Smillie 2009, pp. 2, 106; Lovell 1992, pp. 62–63; Montgomery et al. 2017, p. 101; Jessen 1990, p. 71 also for other NGOs. For cooperation with international researchers in developing the therapy, see Prinz 2021, pp. 283, 289; Wignaraja 1990, p. 186.

182 Mannan 2015, pp. 132–133, 142, 146–148, 152–153. Mannan even speaks of 21 million members (p. 193).

either.¹⁸³ At the end of the 1990s, BRAC concluded in general that they did not “reach” the poorest villagers, who did not join or were ineligible for credit – the destitute, sick, homeless and single mothers with small children (many Grameen Bank branches also rejected such applicants).¹⁸⁴ The large number of desperately poor people who did not join their programs or dropped out of them was a general problem of microcredit providers in Bangladesh and abroad.¹⁸⁵ Already in BRAC’s original project in Sulla, smallholders who owned no more than 0.4 hectares and to a degree the landless did not receive an appropriate share of the benefits although they constituted 80 percent of participants.¹⁸⁶ BRAC tried to address this problem in a 2001 program for the ultra-poor that it found largely successful, although it was perhaps more in terms of raising education and skills than economically.¹⁸⁷ For the borrowers that BRAC did have, one analysis found “marginal income and [. . .] asset increases” through the program and a “very gradual” and “marginal” impact of poverty alleviation.¹⁸⁸

For a long time, only a small portion of Bangladesh’s poor, especially among the landless, received microloans. In the mid-1990s, Grameen Bank provided 0.1 percent of all of the credit in the country, and all NGOs combined provided 0.6 percent.¹⁸⁹ But this changed gradually. In the early 2000s, 13 million Bangladeshis received microcredit, in 2005 the number was 16.2 million, and in 2009, after aggressive growth, the sector reached its peak with a reported 36 million customers. Then came the meltdown. In November 2011, Yunus was sacked as Grameen Bank’s director.¹⁹⁰

Among the foreign organizations involved in the founding or early funding of important Bangladeshi NGOs were the Canadian University Service Overseas and Oxfam.¹⁹¹ The ‘World Bank’ became a large creditor.¹⁹² Loans to Grameen Bank, which together with grants accounted for from half to nine-tenth of its funds, came primarily from the IFAD, grants largely from Norwegian, Swedish, German and Dutch government ‘aid’ institutions and the Ford Foundation, loans repeatedly also from state-owned Bangladeshi banks, and later from the ‘World Bank’.¹⁹³ BRAC received financial support from official institutions from the Netherlands, Britain,

183 Smillie 2009, pp. 137–139, 246; Wignaraja 1990, p. 54; for water charges, see Lovell 1992, p. 110 and indirectly also Ahmed 1980a, p. 409; for donors, see Montgomery et al. 2017, p. 102.

184 Smillie 2009, pp. 175, 177; Mushtaque et al. 1997, p. 182; for Grameen Bank, see Bornstein 2005, pp. 190–191.

185 Greeley 1997, pp. 90–93; Zaman 1999, pp. 2–4, 14, 18, esp. p. 4; Streeten 1997, pp. 196–197; Fernando 1997, p. 175.

186 See Ahmed 1980a, pp. 406, 440, 442.

187 Smillie 2009, pp. 177–185.

188 See Montgomery et al. 2017, pp. 136–139, 148 (quotes pp. 138, 139).

189 Streeten 1997, p. 197; Fernando 1997, p. 160

190 Serajul Hoque, “Does Micro-credit Really Help the Poor? Evidence from Rural Bangladesh”, presentation at the ICAS conference “Rural Development in Bangladesh”, Singapore, 22 February 2003; Hossain 2017, pp. 187, 191; Landingin and Lapper 2007; Jacquemart 2011; Eisenring 2013.

191 Nebelung 1988, pp. 115, 119; Ahmed 1980a, p. 455.

192 Lewis 1997, p. 36.

193 Yunus with Jolis 1998, pp. 332, 334–337; Hossain 1988b, p. 71; Khandker et al. 1995, pp. 21–22, 61, 89, 115; Karim 2011, p. 169. For the relationship to IFAD, see also Bornstein 2005, pp. 120–124.

Sweden, Canada, West Germany, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, from UNICEF, the Ford, Aga Khan, Rockefeller, Gates, Nike and Mastercard Foundations, Oxfam, Brot für die Welt and others. At first all of BRAC's funding came from abroad, in 2006 it was 80 percent.¹⁹⁴ Both Grameen Bank and BRAC accepted own 'donor' consortia in the late 1980s.¹⁹⁵ Most of Bangladesh's development NGOs enjoyed foreign funding in the early 1990s, which covered 95 percent of their budget.¹⁹⁶ Nonetheless, their ideas were not imposed on them from abroad, but a fusion of their own and international concepts.

Only a small part of foreign development funding that flowed into Bangladesh went to its NGOs (1 percent in 1972–1973, 6 percent in the early 1990s, 14 percent in the 2010s),¹⁹⁷ but they worked more efficiently and less wastefully (and paid lower salaries) than the government's or foreign agencies and became relatively influential promoters of rural change. In 1990–1991, they claimed that their anti-poverty programs reached 3.1 million people, as compared to 5.5 million in state programs.¹⁹⁸ As their importance rose in the late 1980s and there were suspicions that their activities were subversive, the government – as happened in other non-industrialized countries – tried to restrict their operations and sought to get control over them.¹⁹⁹ Given its statute after 1983, which placed it under government control and co-ownership, Grameen Bank has been criticized as a “quasi-governmental organization”.²⁰⁰

The international influence of Bangladesh's NGOs is apparent in the fact that the Grameen Bank's founder Muhammad Yunus was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2006. By that time, the bank's model had been replicated in about 40 countries.²⁰¹ BRAC, too, was imitated in a number of Asian and African countries and presented as a road to success.²⁰² The United Nations declared 2005 the year of microcredit.²⁰³ Yunus wanted more – around 1990, he lobbied, in vain, that a right to receive “credit for self-employment” be included in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and some disciples counted a “human right to entrepreneurship” among what they called “Yunusonomics”.²⁰⁴

194 Abed with Chowdhury 1997, p. 55; Smillie 2009, p. 2, cf. 252–253; Lovell 1992, pp. 196–199.

195 See Lovell 1992, pp. 87–88; Bornstein 2005, p. 188.

196 Bhattacharya 1995, p. 139.

197 Riddell and Robinson 1995, pp. 61, 101; Mannan 2015, pp. 16, 86; Nebelung 1988, p. 107, who puts the proportion at 10 percent of all foreign 'aid'. Bhattacharya 1995, p. 139 mentions a figure of 12–15 percent but includes the budgets of foreign NGOs. Islam 2005, p. 399, speaks of 25 percent.

198 Bhattacharya 1995, p. 139.

199 Riddell and Robinson 1995, pp. 104–105. See also “Tour Report (Charles Skinner), Visit to West Africa”, February 1977, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, January 1977–January 1979; “Conclusions” 1993, esp. p. 298. For similar moves in 1978 and 1992, see Mannan 2015, pp. 76, 86; Karim 2011, p. 23.

200 Lovell 1992, p. 75; see also Lewis 1992, pp. 17, 37 note 4; Harper 1998, pp. 42–43; Yunus with Jolis 1998, pp. 211–212, 215, 219.

201 See Todd 1996a; Khandker et al. 1995, p. vi; Yunus with Jolis 1998, p. 223.

202 Smillie 2009, p. 237; Hossain 2017, pp. 181–182.

203 Gundelfinger 2010, p. 1.

204 Bornstein 2005, p. 231. For Yunusonomics, see Karim 2011, p. 185.

The big NGOs postulated that only poor people could join their programs, but the underlying criteria were often vaguely defined, and there were better-off members in significant numbers.²⁰⁵ Some BRAC village group leaders embezzled loan funds.²⁰⁶ By contrast, people who belonged to the poorest were often thrown out because of loan default and arguments over land ownership.²⁰⁷ Some have also argued that many NGOs dropped their focus on working with the poor in the late 1990s.²⁰⁸

Grameen Bank, BRAC and the like did manage to channel capital to poor villagers, a result that many other agencies failed to achieve. Also, they involved women, stimulated rural trade, the raising of chicken and cows and vegetable cultivation, which improved diets. However, the national and international enthusiasm wore off in the late 2000s amidst stories of high interest rates, financial irregularities, credit dependency induced also for consumption, too hard pressure for repayment and many suicides among borrowers.²⁰⁹ NGOs often reported them for arrest, detained them illegally, stripped them of household possessions by force, and evicted them from their homes, with their houses at times pulled down by other microcredit customers, or threats with this.²¹⁰ Now scholars talked of women's higher "vulnerability" to credit than men's and of "distressed borrowers" of NGOs.²¹¹ Problems were inbuilt into program mechanisms. Because Grameen Bank required customers to start pay back their loan in installments one week after receiving it, when it could not be expected that the loan had generated additional income, they usually needed to turn to other microcredit operators – or private moneylenders.²¹² In addition, there was lending among the customers of microcredit NGOs to avoid overdues, and some women became moneylenders on a larger scale themselves.²¹³

Some scholars also objected that microloans (which were often for consumption) achieved little in raising incomes.²¹⁴ Particularly revealing was Grameen Bank's mid-1990s assessment that their borrowers needed 10–15 years "to cross over the poverty line" – meaning that most had not made it until then.²¹⁵ Apparently the nutrition of the children of Grameen Bank customers did not improve

205 Nebelung 1988, pp. 143, 158–159, 162, 199; Chen 1986, pp. 14–15; Lovell 1992, pp. 32–33; Zaman 1999, p. 2; Bornstein 2005, p. 170; Rahman 2007, p. 199; Montgomery et al. 2017, p. 129 (for BRAC); cf. Hossain 1988b, pp. 44–45.

206 Abed with Chowdhury 1997, p. 48; Lovell 1992, p. 82.

207 Nebelung 1988, pp. 214, 255.

208 Karim 2011, pp. 65–74.

209 See Hossain 2017, pp. 182–190; Bateman and Chang 2012, pp. 14–16, 21.

210 Karim 2011, pp. xvi, 40–41, 77, 110, 116–119, 195; Hulme 2007, p. 20; Montgomery et al. 2017, p. 154; Mannan 2015, pp. 57, 235. For evictions in general, see Zillur Rahman 1995, p. 124.

211 Karim 2011, p. xxix (first quote); Mannan 2015, p. 218 (second quote).

212 Karim 2011, pp. 38, 43, 45, 55, 66, is fundamental; see also Montgomery et al. 2017, p. 104; Rahman 2007, p. 200.

213 Karim 2011, pp. 56, 82, 105; Montgomery et al. 2017, pp. 153–154.

214 Sanyal 1997, p. 29.

215 Bornstein 2005, p. 291. In 2007, Yunus claimed that half of Grameen Bank's borrowers had graduated from poverty: Karim 2011, p. 174.

significantly.²¹⁶ Poverty did not even disappear from Jobra, the village where Yunus' credit experiments had once started, and in 2009, the daughter of Yunus' very first loan recipient was utterly poor.²¹⁷ There were also doubts about whether BRAC's work reduced poverty because many used its loans to pay for housing and food purchases.²¹⁸ A study of two of Bangladesh's other NGOs, Proshika and Nijera Kori (unusually, the latter did not offer credit) concluded that their activities did not lead to higher wages, better conditions for tenant farmers and even did little to raise consciousness about social problems.²¹⁹ Essentially, poor people found (self)employment through NGO microloans,²²⁰ often outside agriculture, and performed more than one job or activity, but most did not escape poverty and hunger.

Foreign impact

Some argue that development policies in Bangladesh were for a long time entirely determined by foreigners because they financed the government's development budgets almost completely.²²¹ However, several underlying assumptions do not hold, for example, that foreign agencies controlled Bangladesh's ministries and agencies and that these in turn controlled development practice. What then was the impact of foreign agencies and policies, especially in the fight against hunger?

Ostensibly, international 'aid' to Bangladesh was for the alleviation of poverty and prevention of deaths through hunger and diseases. It was also supposed to stabilize the new state and keep it in the capitalist camp. Acknowledging the social tensions arising from "economic contradictions", a UNDP paper called for preventing a "revolution" and overcoming "class hatred".²²² In 1981, Andrew Jenkins warned that "experts may not have the answers and that solutions may come from the landless peasants, in forms not too attractive to the World Bank".²²³

When the deadly cyclone struck East Pakistan in November 1970, very few foreign agencies operated there.²²⁴ But then and with independence, they flooded the country. So much money poured in that officials and rich farmers pocketed much

216 Pitt and Khandker 1996, p. 92.

217 "Bangalen" 2007; Karim 2011, p. 192.

218 Serajul Hoque, "Does Micro-credit Really Help the Poor? Evidence from Rural Bangladesh", presentation at the ICAS conference "Rural Development in Bangladesh", Singapore, 22 February 2003; Meyer 2007, p. 235 on BRAC and Grameen Bank; but see Lovell 1992, p. 167. More generally, see Bateman and Chang 2012, p. 16.

219 Nebelung 1988, p. 233. For Nijera Kori, see Nebelung's study and Kabeer n.d. (2002).

220 Indirectly, this is also recognized by the criticism in Bateman and Chang 2012 of "survivalist" micro-firms (p. 18) and inefficient over-employment (pp. 20–21).

221 Jessen 1990, for example p. 181. Riaz 1993, p. 210 and Hossain 1995, p. 263 come close to such an argument.

222 "Some notes on agriculture in Bangladesh" with cover letter by Kutena (UNDP) to Umali and Boerma, 18 November 1974, FAO, RG 15, RAFF, Bangladesh 1972–76.

223 Andrew Jenkins, "Bangladesh: Problems and possibilities", n.d. (1981), p. 18 of the document, Oxfam, Country reviews.

224 Richard Taylor report, November 1970, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976.

of it almost by necessity.²²⁵ A decade after independence, there were more than 10,000 foreign ‘aid’ workers in Dacca, according to one estimate,²²⁶ contrary to early ideas voiced within Bangladesh’s emerging government to put severe restrictions on ‘aid’.²²⁷

Foreign ODA was indispensable given Bangladesh’s very negative balance of payments.²²⁸ The flow of foreign ‘aid’ was in the order of US\$600 million in 1972–1977, around \$9 per capita; close to \$1.5 billion in the late 1980s, or \$13 per capita; and a bit higher in the early 1990s.²²⁹ But adjusted for inflation, it decreased.²³⁰ ‘Aid’ from abroad was nominally as much as 5 percent of Bangladesh’s national income in the early years, rose to from 5 to over 10 percent under the military juntas and dropped after 1990, falling to below 2 percent after 1997.²³¹ In the late 1970s, foreign resources financed about half of the government budget and 80 percent of its development budget (the latter was more than half of its total expenditures after 1976). By the mid-1980s, the proportion was perhaps slightly higher, after having been considerably lower 1972–1975. ‘Aid’ sometimes exceeded domestic revenue and far surpassed export earnings.²³² In some years in the 1970s and 1980s, Bangladesh nominally received more in ‘aid’ than its development budget, which means that the state covered part of recurrent expenses with foreign ODA.²³³

Despite other rhetoric, foreign ‘donors’ – especially bilateral ones – were not very keen on channeling resources to agriculture (or public health). Their focus continued to be infrastructure and industry – and thus urban. Only 17 percent of ‘aid’ in 1972–1982 was for agriculture, rural development, water and flood control (but the percentage was higher for ‘aid’ from the IDA and especially ADB,

225 Reports by Llewellyn (November 1973) and Acworth (11 March 1974), Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976.

226 Franda 1982, p. 245.

227 John Stonehouse, “Visit to Calcutta and Dacca on 17th/22nd December 1971”, Oxfam, Bangladesh Consortium of British Charities, file IBRD-FAO-ODM; Lifschultz 1979, pp. 39–40.

228 UNCTAD, “External Sector of Bangladesh: Strategy, policies, problems and recommendations”, draft mission report, January 1977, p. 78 of the document, FAO, RG 12, DP 9/1 INT/73/013, vol. 3; Étienne 1979, p. 135.

229 Ministry of Finance, Economic Advisers Wing, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, “Bangladesh Economic Survey 1976–77”, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 64, BD Bangladesh 1977 DR (showing low disbursement rates); Étienne 1979, p. 135; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 16; Shaw and Clay 1993, p. 43; Hartmann and Boyce 1989, p. 51; Hossain 1987, p. 24; Kabeer 2003, p. 71; Chowdhury 1998, p. 168; see also Hagen 1988, p. 117.

230 See Sobhan 1982, pp. 46, 194; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 215.

231 Hossain 2017, p. 68; Sadeque 1986, p. 155; Riaz 1993, p. 319; Easterly 2001, p. 108; Sobhan 1982, p. 9 and Islam 2005, p. 409 with higher figures for the 1970s.

232 Sheena Grosset, “Tour Report – Bangladesh 15–29 November 1978”, Oxfam, Bangladesh Tour Reports 1972–1987; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 213; “Bangladesh and Burma – Annual Report – 1985/86”, August 1986, Oxfam, Box India Annual Reports, Bangladesh and Burma Annual; Riaz 1993, pp. 209, 319; Hartmann and Boyce 1989, p. 51; Lawo 1984, pp. 98, 102; Franda 1982a, pp. 58, 152. See also International Monetary Fund, “People’s Republic of Bangladesh: Staff Report and Proposed Decision for the 1974 Article XIV Consultation”, 29 May 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974. Sadeque 1986, p. 156 cites higher percentages for the first half of the 1970s.

233 Riaz 1993, pp. 209, 319; Hossain 1995, pp. 262–263; Sobhan 1991a, p. 2.

which mainly financed irrigation/flood control and fertilizer, including fertilizer factories). To some degree, it was left to Bangladesh's government to invest in agriculture and rural development (as well as health and education), which devoted 32 percent of its budget to the former two sectors.²³⁴ At the time of Bangladesh's independence, foreign plans for its agriculture focused on HYV seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, machinery and agricultural education.²³⁵ In 1980, half of the USAID's budget for Bangladesh was for fertilizer deliveries.²³⁶

With some variations, about half of the 'aid' up to the mid-1990s was in the form of loans. Grants came primarily from bilateral agencies, loans from multilateral institutions. Loans led to a high public debt ratio by 1991. In 1994, Bangladesh's foreign debt per capita was US\$133.²³⁷ The most important 'aid' providers were USAID, the 'World Bank', Japan and the ADB (most debt was to IDA and Japan). Initially, India was also engaged.²³⁸ But overall, the large number of foreign players and international organizations involved was remarkable.

In many respects, international and national development strategies for Bangladesh coincided,²³⁹ but not in all. Foreign agencies urged Bangladesh's government on various occasions, particularly in the aid consortium, to reduce subsidies, devalue the Taka, liberalize imports, promote family planning, reorganize industries, reduce/reform food rationing, increase rice procurement, increase tax collection, improve administration, increase investment, continue long-term development planning and, in 1980, to fight inequality, make better efforts to "reach" the rural poor and even review conditions of land tenure.²⁴⁰ Except for the currency devaluation of May 1975, most of these issues were at best partially taken up by Bangladesh's government and with long delays. The 'World Bank' was largely excluded from the preparation of the country's first Five-Year Development Plan for 1973–1978.²⁴¹ "At present, there is little formal donor coordination of [. . .] recommendations

234 Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 230, 234–237; Ayres 1983, appendix C; Jessen 1990, pp. 4, 17; de Vylder 1982, p. 50; for IBRD, see Franda 1982b, p. 11.

235 FAO, "Background Paper for the agricultural rehabilitation and development programme for Bangladesh" (1972), FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Bangladesh 1972–76, is representative for others, including NGO projects.

236 Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 272.

237 Hossain 1995, p. 250; for 1972–1982, Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 230–231; Siddiqui 1980, pp. 455–456; Sobhan 1982, p. 27; for debts, see Thomas et al. 1994, p. 76; Chowdhury 1998, p. 168.

238 Sheena Grosset, "Tour Report – Bangladesh 15–29 November 1978", Oxfam, Bangladesh Tour Reports 1972–1987; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 231; for debts, see World Bank 1987, p. 227.

239 For example, see Faaland 1981a, p. 121.

240 See IBRD memo from Diamond to Knapp, "Bangladesh – Meeting of Bangladesh Aid Group", 1 November 1974, and V. Umbricht, "Bangladesh: Meeting of Bangladesh Aid Group, Paris, 3 to 6 June 1978", both in AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh, General VII, Gen. Miscellaneous 1972–1976; Bangladesh Aid Group, "Chairman's Report of Proceedings", 24–25 October 1974 and 4–5 June 1975, respectively, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh Aid Group, Meetings; ditto for 25–26 May 1976 and 12–13 May 1980, *ibid.*, Bangladesh Aid Group Further Meetings, 1974–1980; Kasturi Rangan, "Dacca: The Future Seems Hopeless", in: "Give Us" 1975, p. 34; Lifschultz 1979, p. 140; World Bank 1979, pp. x, 18; Sobhan 1982, p. 146. India, OPEC and socialist countries did not try to make policy impositions with their 'aid': *ibid.*, p. 149, 153.

241 Sobhan 1982, p. 189.

to the BDG [government of Bangladesh] on food policy measures”, wrote the U.S. embassy in Dacca in 1976.²⁴² In 1993, Bangladesh’s ‘aid’ group bemoaned the lack of a coherent development policy of the country’s government; the consortium had not managed to influence it decisively.²⁴³ In 1977, the U.S. State Department already called the “shortage of skilled manpower and weakness in planning mechanisms [...] major bottlenecks”.²⁴⁴ But in 1987, a ‘World Bank’ study actually advocated to curb the competences of the National Planning Commission.²⁴⁵ A program to foster private initiative that foreign agencies imposed on Bangladesh in 2005, purportedly for poverty reduction, was abandoned by the government in 2010.²⁴⁶

Foreign development policies had little success. “Bangladesh without doubt is one of the most frustrating places anyone can ever work in”, was the judgment in a report for Oxfam, representative of many others, which went on to complain that corruption paralyzed ‘development’.²⁴⁷ According to Brigitte Jessen, all of the foreign ‘aid’ workers she talked to called the cooperation with Bangladeshi authorities “difficult to impossible”, and projects for rural poverty alleviation usually failed.²⁴⁸ Asked in 1979 what would happen if all ‘aid’ were withdrawn from Bangladesh, David Campbell, Oxfam’s field representative, stated that the “country’s superstructure and urban elite would probably collapse” but the rural poor might hardly be affected.²⁴⁹

Foreign agencies tried to shift from commodity aid to project aid in the late 1970s – particularly on the agricultural sector – in order to control ‘development’ more closely, but this failed because of low disbursement rates in project aid due to implementation problems on both sides, among other reasons because Bangladesh’s government lacked counterfund money and did not deploy enough administrative personnel for approval processes. Many agricultural projects suffered from long delays. All of this has been interpreted as planning failure on the side of the Bangladeshi state,²⁵⁰ though it perhaps included an element of resistance against foreign impositions, too. For example, the ADB’s low disbursement rate was due to long waiting times for government approval (17 months), slow hiring of consultants (six months) and slow procurement of material (two years).²⁵¹ Absurdly

242 U.S. Embassy “Dhaka” to State Department, 3 December 1976, https://wikileaks/plusd/cables/1976DACCA06132_b.html (accessed 30 January 2019).

243 See Hossain 1995, p. 263, whose interpretation is different.

244 State Department to U.S. Embassy in Dacca, “Statement for the Paris Consortium”, 30 June 1977, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1977STATE152902_c.html (accessed 30 January 2019).

245 World Bank 1987, pp. 87–90, 99.

246 Raihan 2015, p. 231.

247 “ICA/Oxfam Project to assist co-operatives in Bangladesh, Final Report”, May 1975, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 1006, BD24.

248 Jessen 1990, quote on p. 6; see also Franda 1982a, p. viii.

249 Oxfam, Minutes of the Field Committee for Asia, 8 August 1979, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, November 1976–January 1980.

250 Wennergren et al 1984, pp. 215–219; Sobhan 1982, pp. 58–97; World Bank 1987, pp. xxiii, 49; Parkinson 1981a, p. 32; Stepanek 1978, p. 14; for the planning failure, see Clay 1984, pp. 34–41; for agriculture, see Sobhan 1982, p. 162.

251 Sobhan 1982, pp. 95–96.

far-reaching political conditions that ‘donors’ wrote into ‘aid’ agreements may also have blocked many projects.²⁵² By the early 1990s, project aid gained more real weight.²⁵³

Many foreign projects that did materialize, often designed without involvement of locals,²⁵⁴ were also not considered successful even by their organizers. Foreign agencies’ priorities in agriculture led to oversized projects, an emphasis on expensive technology, and deep tubewells in particular.²⁵⁵ Many projects increased production (though others failed to do even that), but they invariably benefitted wealthy and middle farmers at the expense of the poor.²⁵⁶ Among the foreign IRD projects, the Noakhali Integrated Rural Development Project (1978–1990) was internationally praised as the best and declared a “test case” by its Danish organizers – and yet it accomplished little to nothing toward its declared aim of poverty alleviation, given shrinking farm sizes, rising numbers of sharecroppers and a rise in labor emigration.²⁵⁷ And Companiganj, where there was a feeding program for small children, had an especially high death rate for children under five years in 1975.²⁵⁸

Foreign development policies were also scarcely coordinated. It is true that an aid consortium was imposed on Bangladesh when it was in a weak position in the emergency during the floods and oil and grain price hikes in the summer of 1974, it started operating in October 1974 and was chaired by the ‘World Bank’.²⁵⁹ Before that, UNROD/UNROB had tried to coordinate the work of foreign agencies in 1972, and in March 1973, Bangladesh’s government organized a ‘donors’ meeting, but it preferred to negotiate with foreign agencies individually.²⁶⁰ The ‘World Bank’ convened a meeting on Bangladesh with representatives of eight countries in August 1974.²⁶¹ “[O]ur present strategy is to encourage, through an IBRD-led consortium, [in] Bangladesh internal reforms”, wrote Henry Kissinger.²⁶² The ‘World Bank’ had considerable epistemic power. In preparation for meetings, it put together preliminary “green folder” reports with radical demands that influenced ‘donors’ perhaps more than the final, more moderate “grey folder” reports.²⁶³ Each

252 Islam 1981b, pp. 66–71.

253 Chowdhury 1998, p. 166.

254 Jessen 1990, p. 198.

255 De Vylder 1982, p. 51.

256 Hye 1989, p. 148; for West German projects, see Erler 1985, pp. 78–79.

257 See Hashemi et al. 1994, esp. pp. 5–10, 22–31; see also Hye 1989, pp. 1141, 121, 138–139; for the praise, see Jessen and Nebelung 1987, pp. 85–86, quote p. 86.

258 McCord 1977, pp. 97, 100.

259 Maniruzzaman 1975, p. 120; Lifschultz 1979, p. 140; Riaz 1993, pp. 213–216. For earlier attempts at this imposition, see Riaz 1993, pp. 213–214; Krueger et al. 1989, p. 107.

260 See Riaz 1993, pp. 212–216; Islam 2005, pp. 252–256; Faaland 1981a, pp. 107–108, U.S. State Department to U.S. Embassy New Delhi, 10 April 1973, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1973STATE066148.b_html (accessed 30 January 2019). For UNROD, see Oliver 1978.

261 Draft cable of Umbricht, 12 August 1974, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh, General VI; Faaland 1981a, pp. 114, 119.

262 Kissinger to Ford, 1 October 1974, Ford Library, NSA, Presidential Country Files for the Middle East and South Asia, Box 2 Bangladesh.

263 Sobhan 1982, pp. 167, 187–188. One final report is World Bank 1979.

year, the consortium collected ‘donors’ commitments for grants and loans, and the chairman and individual members made policy recommendations to Bangladesh’s government. However, the consortium’s record of coordination was mixed at best. Countries designed policies according to their different national interests, there was no common concept, and some authors have called their coordination non-existent.²⁶⁴ Foreign and Bangladeshi NGOs also held regular coordinatory meetings in the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB, first AVAB, founded in 1973).²⁶⁵ Little is known about their impact. According to Nebelung, discussion meetings with NGO functionaries, domestic and international academics, development practitioners and representatives of Bangladesh’s ministries were not only popular, but influential.²⁶⁶

A wide gulf separated foreign ‘aid’ people from rural Bangladeshis. Residing in villas or upscale hotels, using lavish offices, partying and enjoying a quasi-colonial lifestyle,²⁶⁷ the former were said to “behave like an occupation army”.²⁶⁸ The same was true of some foreign NGO activists. Vehicles were among their status symbols. In 1974, CARE, the Christian NGO from the USA, had 75 cars, trucks and motorcycles in Bangladesh.²⁶⁹ The workforce was impressive, too. For example, in the late 1980s UNDP had 229 staff members in Bangladesh, USAID had 35, and the ‘World Bank’ ran their largest office in a non-industrialized country in Dhaka.²⁷⁰ One Danish IRD project employed 20 expatriates in the field.²⁷¹ Hossain Khasru estimated in 1979 that 12 percent of foreign ‘aid’ to Bangladesh (or US\$44 million) was just for “foreign expertise/services”.²⁷²

This was long after Toni Hagen, the head of the UNROD in 1973, had tried to “protect the country from the many foreign “top notch” experts and advisers which UN headquarters tried to impose on Bangladesh”. In a forthcoming book, he would, as he announced, call this “‘Disaster Phase Two’ because they frequently are a real disaster for the poor stricken country”.²⁷³ Bangladesh, wrote Andrew Jenkins in 1976, “is occupied by a small but highly mechanized army of foreign experts committed to solving social problems without socio-political change, whose ‘solutions’

264 Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 252–253 is contradictory; Jessen 1990, pp. 6, 195–196, 200–202; Sobhan 1982, pp. 177–178.

265 ADAB News, vol. 8, September 1978, pp. 5–6 of the document, FAO, RG 12, Box 24, RU 7/46.27 BGD. First, foreign NGOs had a strong position in AVAB/ADAB: Karim 2011, pp. 13–14. Hashemi and Hassan 1995, p. 129, describe ADAP as a circle of Bangladeshi organizations. It split in 2003: Mannan 2015, pp. 94, pp. 263–275, 310 note 21.

266 Nebelung 1988, p. 108.

267 Franda 1982a, pp. viii, 29–30; Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 269.

268 Bornstein 2005, p. 235.

269 Smillie 2009, p. 113.

270 Jessen 1990, p. 199.

271 Hye 1989, p. 80.

272 Siddiqui 1980, p. 461.

273 Tony Hagen, Letter to the Editor, *The Economist*, 19 January 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974.

in some cases make problems worse [. . .]”²⁷⁴ As Thomas Hüsken says about the “tribe of the experts” in general, foreign specialists in Bangladesh, too, ascribed the frequent failures of their projects essentialistically to cultural difference and the deficiencies of their local counterparts.²⁷⁵ “What Bengalis are not very fond of is hard work”, wrote Victor Umbricht, Swiss industrialist and another former head of UNROD who was an UN emissary during the 1974 famine.²⁷⁶ Frustrated by the failures of a misconceived tractor project in Sudharam *thana*, Noakhali district, a British functionary from the Consortium of British Charities, known for abusively talking to local workers because he thought they were working too slowly, struck some of them and said insulting things about the country’s founder Mujibur Rahman, on 11 November 1974. As ten Bangladeshi workers wrote in their complaint, only their good manners and their appreciation of the project’s aim kept them from teaching him a physical lesson.²⁷⁷

The socioeconomic influence of foreign ‘aid’ on Bangladesh is a matter of disagreement. The currently prevailing narrative in the Bangladeshi bourgeoisie and intelligentsia is that it did not have much of an impact and was overall a failure.²⁷⁸ According to foreign analysts of the 1970s and 1980s, foreign ‘aid’ inflows fueled a “primitive accumulation” through corruption by local landlords, traders, moneylenders and officials, who appropriated public funds, relief goods and the results of technical works and enriched themselves through controlling licenses.²⁷⁹ In 1981, President Ziaur Rahman argued similarly, admitting that corruption, “which resulted from the large-scale influx of foreign aid and money”, had increased under his rule from 1975 but had to be accepted.²⁸⁰ The aid regime benefitted influential groups “in business, the state sector, the professions and among the rural elites” and “spawned a class of parasites”, including professionals hired for consultancy.²⁸¹ Unlike British colonialism and the Pakistani state, Betsy Hartmann and James Boyce argued, “foreign aid accomplished [. . .] the birth of a Bangladeshi bourgeoisie”.²⁸² On the one hand, this was exaggerated and not systematically backed up with data. On the other hand, there were plenty of stories about collusion between ‘aid’ functionaries and Bangladesh’s upper class. Corruption, in this sense, was a matter not only of local elites but also of foreign

274 Quoted in Andrew Jenkins, “Bangladesh: Problems and possibilities”, n.d. (1981), Oxfam, Country reviews.

275 Hüsken 2006; see also remarks by Muhammad Yunus quoted in Hodson 1997, p. 168.

276 “Was den Bengalen nicht sehr liegt, ist die harte Arbeit.” “Brief aus Bangladesh”, *Ciba-Geigy Zeitung* no. 2, 1973, 22 January 1973.

277 Letter by ten workers, 15 November 1974, Oxfam, Box Bangladesh Consortium of British Charities, file IBRD-FAO ODM. For the context, see this file.

278 See Hossain 2017.

279 Lifschultz 1979, pp. 40–41, quote p. 41. See also Huq et al. 1976, pp. 146–147, 150; Hartmann and Boyce 1983, pp. 147–148; Mascarenhas 1986, p. 26.

280 Quoted in Franda 1982b, p. 11.

281 Sobhan 1982, pp. 202 (first quote), 30 (second quote), 51.

282 Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 270.

‘aid’ officials.²⁸³ At some point, UNROD estimated that only one-tenth of relief goods reached the poor.²⁸⁴ In 1972, locals started “killing and terrorizing CORR [Christian Organisation for Relief and Rehabilitation] workers. This is the result of having so much money around, and [due] to jealousy over not getting jobs and/or relief [. . .]”.²⁸⁵ The sudden infusion of money on the order of US\$1 billion annually also had strongly inflationary effects,²⁸⁶ which contributed indirectly to the misery and mass death of the poor, as did the enrichment of local elites. Capital accumulation did take place, but through an anarchic struggle, not in the way that foreign strategists had declared and intended.

Finally, big business had little interest in Bangladesh’s agricultural sector for a long time. After the government raised the permitted investment level in 1974, it signed agreements for investment procedures with the USA and other countries.²⁸⁷ But investment sums increased only slightly, and the role of multinationals remained “very limited”. Most of the small amounts corporate capital was from the USA and Britain.²⁸⁸ Big business did use Bangladesh as a market, and their goods were often financed by official development ‘aid’. Unfulfilled contract commitments during the world food crisis demonstrate that the country was sometimes at the mercy of international grain traders. But the history of its medical sector shows that the government was able to resist the influence of foreign big business and regulate their activities – even though they teamed up to pressure for price increases – and the country developed locally produced, affordable generics in the 1980s.²⁸⁹ Though the Swiss company Ciba-Geigy, which had dominated the pesticide market in East Pakistan, reinforced its dominance after 1971 under the guise of ‘aid’, Bangladesh’s government began to restrict their activities in 1975 in order to save hard currency, and the firm lost its leading market position.²⁹⁰

283 Franda 1982a, p. 32; Jessen and Nebelung 1987, pp. 14–35. For the ‘World Bank’ paying US\$4 million in bribes for an irrigation project, see Lifschultz 1979, p. 41.

284 Lifschultz 1979, p. 41; see also “U.N. Aide Hits Bangladesh Relief Programs”, *Washington Post*, 30 September 1974; Franda 1982a, p. 177; Dupuis 1984, p. 124.

285 UNROD, Information Paper No. 26, 1972, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh, UNROD/UNROB Information Papers II.

286 Lifschultz 1979, pp. 44–46. For the increase of money supply 1971–1975, see World Bank, “Bangladesh: The Current Economic Situation and Short Term Outlook”, 2 May 1975, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, p. 24 of the document.

287 “Mechanisms to deal with oil price hike: Bangladesh, 34 others will get IMF loan”, *Bangladesh Observer*, 18 January 1975, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh, General Newspaper Clippings 1975–1978.

288 UNCTNC 1983b, pp. 307, 330; Islam 1985, pp. 191, 196 (quote); de Vylder 1982, p. 54; van Schendel 2009, p. 223.

289 Windelen 1986, pp. 116–123; Rubner 1990, p. 93; see Melrose 1982, pp. 37–44, 187–190, 212.

290 See Schobinger 2012, pp. 101, 104, 108–110. For Ciba-Geigy in the country, see also J. V. A. Nehemiah, “Policy Level Meeting on Bangladesh”, 27 April 1972, FAO 15, RAFE, Bangladesh 1972–76; UNROD Information Paper No. 15: UNROD – The First Six Months January–June 1972, AfZ, NL Umbricht, Bangladesh, UNROD/UNROB, Information Papers I, Information Paper No. 3, No. 11; photos from Umbricht’s office showing plans and achievements for incoming relief goods as of 15 June 1972, *ibid.*, UNROD/UNROB, Information Papers II, UNROD I; note Umbricht “v. Suppen-U.”, 22 October 1974, *ibid.*, Bangladesh, General VI.

Economic developments

Rice production, the core of Bangladesh's agriculture, was growing because of rising productivity and cropping intensity in the absence of land reserves. From 1969–1970 to 1982–1983, three quarters of Bangladesh's 20 percent increase of cereal production was due to increases in the production of *boro* rice, less because of yield increases than the expansion of hectareage, in part at the expense of the *aman* crop, which it overtook as the most important in the 2000s. Though it was less important, more wheat was grown than before and yields grew.²⁹¹ It seems that productivity in rice farming did grow especially in the 1980s and 1990s, not only for *boro* but also for *aman* and *aus* rice, and not only for HYVs but also traditional varieties.²⁹² Rice production rose faster in 1973–1982 than it had in the 1960s, but only at the rate of population growth.²⁹³ In the 1980s, net per capita rice output rose by about 4 percent, but from 1980 to 1997, the per capita availability of foodgrains was stagnant, after which there was a nominal production increase of 40 percent in just three years, 1997–1998 to 2000–2001.²⁹⁴ Further improvements in yields generated another steep rise in rice production in 2004–2008. From 1972 to 2013 – when the population slightly more than doubled – milled rice production increased by about 240 percent from 10.1 million tons to 34.4 million tons, yields by 175 percent, the area under rice cultivation by 23 percent (through multicropping), but the amount of arable land decreased by 17 percent after a peak in 1989.²⁹⁵

The use of high-yielding varieties (HYVs) was one reason for production increases, though such use may occasionally have been over-reported.²⁹⁶ According to official data, 4.6 percent of the area of foodgrain cultivation was planted with HYV crops in 1970–1971, which rose to 15.8 percent in 1973–1974, then stagnated for five years (together with HYV yields), reached 31.5 percent in 1984–1985 and 36 percent in 1990.²⁹⁷ Afterwards, HYV use expanded greatly to 67 percent of the acreage at around the turn of the century and 90 percent in 2008–2009. The introduction of new rice varieties better suited for conditions in Bangladesh, that is, flooding, seems to have been crucial for this expansion in later years.²⁹⁸ But compared to other countries in South and Southeast Asia, expenses for agricultural research were low.²⁹⁹ Peasants continued to grow traditional rice varieties, too – at

291 Étienne 1985, p. 187; Herbon 1992, p. 173; Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 78, 82, 87; Hossain et al. 1994, p. 258; Dalrymple 1986b, p. 40; Ahmed 2004, pp. 4043–4044.

292 Dorosh 2000, p. 28 with slightly contradictory data.

293 Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 78.

294 Ahmed 2004, pp. 4045, 4048, 4050.

295 See ricepedia.org/bangladesh (accessed 11 June 2020); Siddiqui et al. 2015, p. 106; also Ahmed 2004, p. 4044.

296 Chambers 1989, p. 34.

297 See Hossain 1988a, p. 25; Hashemi 1991, p. 61; for yields, see de Vylder 1982, p. 95 and Hossain et al. 1994, p. 258.

298 Ahmed 2004, pp. 4044, 4046, 4048; Siddiqui et al. 2015, p. 118. For varieties introduced in the 1970s and 1980s, see Dalrymple 1986, pp. 26–29, 39; Stepanek 1978, pp. 48–49.

299 Haggblade and Ahmed 2000, p. 290.

least 4,500 of them in 1980.³⁰⁰ At least in the 1960s and 1970s, HYVs tended to be sold and traditional sorts consumed on the farm and used for rituals.³⁰¹

For decades, the use of HYVs was concentrated in the dry season's *boro* crop, which was irrigated. In 1974–1975, HYVs were planted on 57 percent of the *boro* rice area, 34 percent of the *aus* area and only 9 percent of the *aman* area. In 1982, the figures were 68 percent, 14 percent and 15 percent (as well as most of the area under wheat), but because *aman* rice was still sown on a larger acreage, its HYV output came close to that of *boro*.³⁰² *Boro* yields had increased especially in the 1960s but did less so in the 1970s, when the rise of production was rather the result of the crop's expanding acreage. Apparently, it was similar for *aman* and *aus*, although these expanded less.³⁰³ Yields increased for all three rice crops, but for *aman* (deep water) rice gains were relatively low and the risks considerable.³⁰⁴ Thus, until the 1980s, most farms used HYVs for some crop, but on only a small part of their cropping area.³⁰⁵

Natural conditions limited the use of HYVs in Bangladesh for a long time. Most sorts were short-stemmed and therefore susceptible to flooding.³⁰⁶ In the large areas prone to flooding in the country, agriculturalists thus avoided growing them after 1972–1974, when floods resulted in great crop losses.³⁰⁷ Short-stemmed HYV rice was another case of unadapted technology.

HYVs lowered costs per output unit. It was primarily minifundists with less than half a hectare of land – and not large owners – who tended to grow HYV rice on much of their land in the mid-1970s. Later this changed, perhaps because their profits were lower than for larger farmers due to higher water charges for the former and, for sharecroppers, their rent, which was why the income of poor household hardly increased.³⁰⁸ More workers were hired, but HYVs seem to have created more employment per area though not per output unit.³⁰⁹

For two decades, the “critical missing input” for HYV use and, thus, for expanding food production in Bangladesh was irrigation.³¹⁰ In the 1970s, two-thirds of

300 Harwood 2015, p. 46.

301 Bhattacharya 1976, p. 209.

302 Government of Bangladesh, Dept. of Agriculture, “Agricultural Statistics”, n.d., NARA, RG 166, Ag Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 56, BD Bangladesh 1976; Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 111, 113. See Lawo 1984, p. 148, and Dalrymple 1986, p. 39.

303 Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 78, 82; Alauddin and Tisdell 1991, pp. 36, 270.

304 See Hossain 1988, p. 42; Hossain 1987, p. 20; cf. Étienne 1985, p. 180; Bose 1974, pp. 23–24.

305 Hossain 1988, p. 74; Rahman and Islam 1987, p. 131.

306 De Vylder 1982, p. 88.

307 Hone 1973, p. 310; Perelman 1977, p. 156. In 1974–1975, *aman* HYVs were primarily grown in the districts of Faridpur, Comilla, Sylhet, Dacca and Jessore, but hardly in Dinjapur and Rangpur: “Aman programme 1974–75”, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975 DR.

308 Agricultural Census Wing, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, “Report on Pilot Agricultural Census”, 1976, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD-Bangladesh 1978; for a later period, see Hoque 1987, pp. 255–256; see Hossain 1988, p. 74 and for profits p. 11; Hossain and Sen 1995, pp. 260, 262.

309 Hossain 1988, pp. 44–45; Hye 1993, pp. 300–308.

310 Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 318; for Boyce 1987, p. 162, it was the “leading input”.

all irrigation was for *boro* rice, later even more.³¹¹ Irrigation was expanded in the late 1960s, grew only slightly during the 1970s and was at 2.8 million hectares in 1985–1986, or one quarter of the total cultivated area; a decade later, it was not much more.³¹² In 1974, the FAO, stressing irrigation, as usual, had recommended to enlarge the irrigated area much faster, to 7.2 million hectares by 1990.³¹³ Expansion was slow due to funding, implementation and licensing problems, in addition to the inner social contradictions that I explain later.³¹⁴ Irrigation projects received substantial foreign funding, but only about 20 percent of what Indonesia got in the late 1970s, or 3 percent of all foreign loans and grants to Bangladesh.³¹⁵ By contrast, over half of Bangladesh's government development outlays 1981–1988 were for water control.³¹⁶ The irrigated area was especially small in the coastal districts of Khulna, Noakhali, Patuakhali and Barisal, each of which cultivated little HYV rice,³¹⁷ and in some flood-prone areas of the north. This “progress” thus led to regional inequality.³¹⁸

Traditional gravity schemes initially covered a major, later decreasing part of irrigated land. Among the modern methods, low-lift pumps irrigated a far larger area than deep and shallow tubewells.³¹⁹ Pumps were usually imported, and the great variety of types from many countries made maintenance difficult.³²⁰

Local and international observers agreed that large farmers came to control almost all of the wells and many of the pumps and used them for their own gain, benefitting from subsidies of 60–100 percent of irrigation costs.³²¹ Wells were usually placed on their land, and pump attendants were from the landlord's family.³²² These wealthy landowners irrigated their own land, that of relatives and their direct clientele first.³²³ The problem was especially but not only with deep tubewells,

311 Lawo 1984, p. 165; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 109; Manwar 1994, p. 178; Ahmed and Haggblade 2000, p. 23.

312 Stephen Briggs et al., “Irrigation in Bangladesh”, May 1977, Oxfam, Bangladesh general IV/1977; Huda 1989, pp. 45–48; Hossain 1988, p. 27; Ahmed and Haggblade 2000, p. 23.

313 FAO Programme Submission, Project proposal for technical assistance in the food and agriculture sector for Bangladesh, November 1974, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Bangladesh 1972–76.

314 Hossain 1988, p. 29; Jessen 1990, p. 64.

315 Carruthers 1983, p. 33. For bureaucratic constraints at IDA, see Islam 1981c, pp. 78–79.

316 World Bank 1990, p. 97.

317 Hossain 1988, p. 32; World Bank 1987, p. 252.

318 Hossain et al. 1994, p. 222.

319 Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 107; Sadeque 1986, p. 124; Étienne 1979, p. 135; Tolley et al. 1982, p. 50; Lawo 1984, p. 165; Feldman and McCarthy 1984, p. 12; World Bank 1987, p. 244; Morton 1989, p. 5; Stepanek 1978, pp. 118–137; cf. Hossain 1988, pp. 27–28. For regional distribution of irrigation methods, see Boyce 1987, p. 174.

320 Elkington 1976, p. 79; Jessen 1990, p. 63.

321 See Hartmann and Boyce 1983, pp. 256 ff.; Carruthers and Clark 1981, p. 109; Martius 1977, p. 60; van Schendel 1982, p. 96; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 110; for subsidies also Rahman Khan 1979a, pp. 124, 145.

322 Martius 1977, p. 66; Hartmann and Boyce 1981, pp. 194, 200–201; Hartmann and Boyce 1983, pp. 257–258; Boyce 1987, p. 240; Harrison 1980, p. 90. Many who had been running pumps for longer turned to serving primarily wealthy landowners after the 1971 conflict: Donald 1976, p. 205.

323 F. Kutena, “Some Notes on Agriculture and Related Factors in Bangladesh”, 15 November 1974, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Bangladesh 1972–76; Steve Jones, “A critical evaluation of rural development programmes”, n.d., p. 15 of the document, Oxfam, Bangladesh General 1978.

which were concentrated in Comilla and some other well accessible districts where the IBRD and other foreign agencies operated.³²⁴ To be eligible for a tubewell, many landlords set up fake cooperatives or pump groups.³²⁵ They then treated it as their property and charged neighboring peasants exorbitant prices for water.³²⁶ Some authors argue that they also employed a variety of tricks to discourage other peasants from using irrigation, thus creating water insecurity.³²⁷ Through irregular water supply, some other waterlords drove peasants intentionally into ruin and bought their land.³²⁸ Massive corruption (among bank officials and others) also occurred when the Grameen Bank took over inactive deep tubewells with help of UNDP in the 1990s.³²⁹ Massive foreign ‘help’ for irrigation – often advertised as helping the poor – thus contributed to small farmers losing their land and livelihoods, which is why the West German development functionary Brigitte Erler quit her job, calling this “deadly aid”.³³⁰

These practices resulted in an average irrigated area size per pump far below potential.³³¹ A contributing reason was peasants’ resistance who sabotaged tubewells and low-lift pumps with bamboo sticks and bricks. This was a mass phenomenon.³³² In the 1980s, 25 percent of Bangladesh’s area under cultivation was irrigated, but only 9 percent of poor farmers’ land was. In 1983–1984, 57.9 percent of large farms had access to irrigation, 53.4 percent of medium and 38.7 percent of small farms (but most farmers used it only on some of their land). Seven years earlier the differences had been smaller.³³³ The privatization of many pumps and tubewells in the early 1980s legalized this state of affairs, which meant that the

324 “Agricultural Situation in Bangladesh”, 26 April 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974 DR; Thomas 1975, p. 37. Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 262 saw such problems with any irrigation technology in Bangladesh. For shallow tubewells, see White 1992, p. 52; for low-lift pumps, see Wood 1994, p. 142.

325 Bose 1974, p. 24; Bennett 1987, p. 96; Hartmann and Boyce 1983, pp. 132, 145, 204, 256–257; Hartmann and Boyce 1989, p. 39.

326 “NGO Country Paper for WCARRD”, draft, 22 November 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 28, RU 7/46.30, vol. 3; Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 257; Bennett 1987, p. 96; Jessen 1986, p. 292; Jessen 1990, p. 53; Jazairy et al. 1992, p. 136.

327 Müller 1988a, p. 52.

328 Jessen 1990, pp. 9, 54. Jansen 1983a, pp. pp. 259–260, describes the complex consequences of the introduction of deep tubewells like this: land disputes, sharecropping re-negotiated, more jobs but not higher wages.

329 Holcombe 1995, pp. 43, 87.

330 See Erler 1985, esp. pp. 10–14; almost fully confirmed by Jessen 1990, pp. 9, 45–59, once a critic of Erler’s.

331 F. Kutena, “Some Notes on Agriculture and Related Factors in Bangladesh”, 15 November 1974, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Bangladesh 1972–76; World Bank, Bangladesh: Current Economic Performance and Short-Term Prospects, 22 March 1976, pp. 7–8; Étienne 1979, pp. 75–78, Étienne 87, 1985, p. 184; Hartmann and Boyce 1981, p. 200; Hartmann and Boyce 1983, pp. 204, 257; see Boyce 1987, p. 241, also for low-lift pumps and shallow tubewells. Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 108, show a large increase in the command size of deep and shallow tubewells 1972–1982, but Hye 1989, p. 159, offers data showing a much smaller increase and World Bank 1987, p. 245, none at all; in between is Sadeque 1986, p. 127.

332 Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 259; Jessen 1990, p. 67.

333 Jazairy et al. 1992, p. 57; Alauddin and Tisdell 1991, p. 165.

state gave up claims of pursuing equality.³³⁴ One pump could provide water for an area far larger than the typical farm – in a wider sense, their under-use symbolized local divisions and conflicts.³³⁵

In addition to these problems, *thana* agricultural officers often kept no records about the use of the pumps and sold some of their scarce fuel for their own gain.³³⁶ And some pumps never arrived because they were disassembled and the parts smuggled to India.³³⁷ Local administrators and landowners also paid little attention to maintenance so that pumps often broke down and irrigated agriculture assumed the image of a risky business. For example, in 1976–1977 less than half of all deep tubewells were operating.³³⁸

The argument of a landlord-friendly dissenter that tubewells served such a small area because of a competitive water market, and not because of waterlords holding others down, had one weak point: if made in kind, water payments amounted usually to one quarter of a peasant's crop.³³⁹ This high rate did not indicate a buyers' market. Water was a farmer's largest cost, followed by fertilizer (but hired labor and draught animals also required a large part of the costs, especially for growing traditional varieties).³⁴⁰ However, tubewells did create many jobs in the sale, installation and repair of pumps, for sellers of diesel, operators and night guards.³⁴¹

Instead of the high-tech, expensive deep tubewells preferred by foreign agencies, many experts recommended cheaper (shallow) tubewells and labor-intensive hand pumps as a way to lower costs and avoid landlords' control.³⁴² Bangladesh's authorities followed this advice in a project, co-sponsored by UNICEF and the 'World Bank' (with help of the FAO and UNDP), that added many shallow tubewells with fewer subsidies in 1976–1984.³⁴³ Because the organizers failed to consider environmental risks and the groundwater had high levels of naturally occurring arsenic, this project caused what the WHO called the "largest mass poisoning of a population in history", as turned out in the 1990s, leaving up to 77 million people with an elevated cancer risk.³⁴⁴ It also failed to make access to water

334 Riaz 1993, p. 314; Sadeque 1986, p. 126; Wood 1994, p. 246; Ahmed 2000b, p. 53; Andrew Jenkins, "Bangladesh: Problems and possibilities", n.d. (1981), Oxfam, file Country reviews.

335 Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 203.

336 F. Kutena, "Some Notes on Agriculture and Related Factors in Bangladesh", 15 November 1974, FAO, RG 15, RAFA, Bangladesh 1972–76.

337 Franda 1982a, pp. 177–179.

338 Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, "The Two-Year Plan, 1978–80", March 1978, p. 117 of the document, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD-Bangladesh 1978. See also Étienne 1979, p. 72, 1985, p. 185; de Vylder 1982, p. 53; and Bhattacharya 1976, pp. 67–74 for West Bengal.

339 Morton 1989, pp. 4, 6, 11, 15, 22, 27. See also Jessen and Nebelung 1987, pp. 51–52.

340 Rashid 1986, p. 140; but see Hossain 1987, p. 131, and Hossain et al. 1994, pp. 245, 272 for labor and animals. Cf. Manwar 1994, p. 187.

341 Piesch 1988, p. 130.

342 Carruthers and Clark 1981, pp. 113–114, 124; Thomas 1975, p. 45; Manwar 1994, p. 177; see Étienne 1985, pp. 182, 188; Hartmann and Boyce 1983, pp. 256, 259.

343 Morton 1989, p. 5; Hye 1989, p. 77; Hossain 1988, pp. 26–27; Wood 1994, 191, 246; for subsidies, see Hossain 1988, p. 133; de Vylder 1982, p. 93.

344 Hossain 2017, p. 15; see also van Schendel 2009, p. 241.

more equal. Already in 1975 USAID had refused to fund a shallow tubewell project in Bangladesh with the terse rationale “benefit larger farmers”,³⁴⁵

From the mid-1980s to the turn of the century, the irrigated area doubled to 51 percent of the land under cultivation.³⁴⁶ One factor in this may have been that NGOs developed simple types of hand or treadle pumps, which were then widely distributed.³⁴⁷ The National Water Plan of the early 1990s anticipated raising foodgrain production to 30.7 million tons by 2005 (a level reached in the late 2000s) with help of large-scale flood control and drainage works, together with increasing minor irrigation.³⁴⁸ This would have been a risky mega-project to change the basis of Bangladesh’s agriculture from flood-based to irrigation-dependent; it was prevented by a national movement citing environmental concerns.³⁴⁹

Fertilizer was regarded as a strategic input, most of which was used on rice, but its application did not increase as planned for a number of reasons, including the 1971 war, budget limits when facing high world market prices in 1973–1975 and shortfalls in domestic production.³⁵⁰ In 1972 and 1976, fertilizer use per hectare was nonetheless nearly the same as in Indonesia and Pakistan and higher than in India.³⁵¹ It picked especially up in the late 1960s, 1975–1979 and 1983–1985.³⁵² The state subsidized fertilizer prices substantially, both directly and through support of transportation and credit.³⁵³ In the 1970s, subsidies formed a large part of official development expenditure.³⁵⁴ Plans to abolish subsidies in 1973 failed, reportedly due to the opposition of (large) farmers, but price hikes did occur and curtailed demand in undesirable ways. The government reduced these subsidies since 1978, and fertilizer prices approached world market levels in 1985, but low subsidies

345 Ninety-Fourth Congress, First Session, Agency of International Development, “Implementation of ‘New Directions’ in Development Assistance: Report to the Committee on International Relations [. . .]”, 22 July 1975. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1975, p. 41.

346 Ahmed 2004, p. 4044.

347 Hagen 1988, p. 82; Lewis 1992, p. 23; Erler 1985, p. 14; Jansen 1983a, p. 264; Jessen 1990, p. 234; Wood 1994, p. 372.

348 Hashemi 1991, p. 61.

349 Van Schendel 2009, p. 223.

350 M. Yamashita, “Report on Trip to East Pakistan”, October 1967, FAO, RG 12, ES, FA 8/3, vol. I; “Ambassador Erna Sailer’s Report”, March–April 1972, table 4, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh, UNROD/UNROB Reports; Cheong-Yeong Lee (FAO/RAFE), “Fertilizer Marketing for Small Farmers – Institutional Aspects”, June 1975, FAO, RG 15, RAFE World Fertilizer Sit./Fertilizer; World Bank, Bangladesh: Current Economic Performance and Short-Term Prospects, 22 March 1976, p. 6, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht; Yao et al. 1978, p. 2; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 102.

351 Steve Jones, “Bangladesh: A critical evaluation of rural development programmes”, p. 27 note 8 of the document, no date, Oxfam, file Bangladesh General 1978; Hayami and Kikuchi 1981, p. 46; Grigg 1986, p. 209.

352 Hossain 1988, pp. 29–30; Rahman 1986, p. 204; Sadeque 1986, p. 120.

353 World Bank, Bangladesh: The Current Economic Situation and Short Term Outlook, 2 May 1975, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht; Winberg to USDA, 27 January 1976, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. And Coun. Reports, Box 56, BD Bangladesh 76; U.S. Agricultural Attache Dacca to USDA, 29 December 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD Bangladesh 1978. For indirect subsidies, see Yao et al. 1978, pp. 32–33. See also Mai 1977, p. 137.

354 Tolley et al. 1982, p. 64.

continued, despite the ‘World Bank’s’ opposition.³⁵⁵ Only for a short period in the early 1990s, the fertilizer subsidy was virtually abolished.³⁵⁶ Subsidies for fertilizer as well as irrigation were still being paid recently. In 2011–2012, price supports for fertilizer were 4.3 percent of Bangladesh’s total government spending.³⁵⁷ In addition to irrigation, government subsidies concentrated on fertilizers rather than on high-yielding seeds and pesticides. In fiscal year 1978, input subsidies constituted 25–30 percent of government development expenditure for agriculture.³⁵⁸

In the 1970s, many agriculturalists wanted fertilizer, but far from all obtained it (over 60 percent did so in 1978, but most used it only on part of their cropped area).³⁵⁹ As long as it remained scarce, large farmers secured their access, especially to subsidized products, through various forms of local corruption that included a priority list system at the Union agricultural administrations and manipulation in the Thana Central Cooperative Associations.³⁶⁰ There were four distribution channels for fertilizer, also including *thana* stores and the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation.³⁶¹ The close to 20,000 licensed private retailers in Bangladesh were fairly specialized and over half of their business was fertilizer, but their knowledge about this merchandise seems to have been limited. Each retailer served about four villages on average. Granted low commission and reportedly very low retail margins, they actually charged 50–100 percent over the official prices, and a large black market existed as well, to which especially the poor turned.³⁶² In its “Fertilizer Distribution Improvement Project” in 1978, the USAID pressed for a partial privatization and liberalization of trade.³⁶³ This took 14 years and there were some modifications: private trade was introduced in 1978–1983,

355 Eger 1982, p. 60; Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 151–152; Hossain 1988, pp. 29, 55; “Bangladesh Tour Report November 1987 – John Clark”, Oxfam, Bangladesh Tour Reports, 1972–1987; Hashemi 1991, p. 63; contrary to Manwar 1994, p. 197. For opposition by producers, importers, traders and landowners, see Mai 1977, p. 127.

356 Ahmed 2000b, p. 55.

357 Siddiqui et al. 2015, p. 114; see also Ahmed 2004, p. 4045.

358 Planning Commission, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, “The Two-Year Plan, 1978–80”, March 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD Bangladesh 1978; Streeten 1987, p. 87; Rahman Khan 1979b, p. 415; Riaz 1993, p. 189.

359 Huq 1976, pp. 107–108; Tolley et al. 1982, p. 49; Boyce 1987, p. 179 (with data for 1977).

360 Cheong-Yeong Lee (FAO/RAFE), “Fertilizer Marketing for Small Farmers – Institutional Aspects”, June 1975, FAO, RG 15, RAFE World Fertilizer Sit./Fertilizer. See also “Trip Report of [TVA] Advance Team to Bangladesh”, 22 January 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974; Hartmann and Boyce 1989, p. 58.

361 Ashraf-uz-Zaman, Joint Secretary, Planning Commission of Bangladesh, to Schwarzwaldler (USAID Coordinator Bangladesh), 10 June 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974.

362 See Cheong-Yeong Lee (FAO/RAFE), “Fertilizer Marketing for Small Farmers – Institutional Aspects”, June 1975, FAO, RG 15, RAFE World Fertilizer Sit./Fertilizer. See also “Trip Report of [TVA] Advance Team to Bangladesh”, 22 January 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974; Yao et al. 1978, pp. 10, 23, 29–31; Elkington 1976, p. 74; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 149. For the poor, see Mai 1977, p. 162.

363 BADC Monthly Fertilizer Newsletter, 15 December 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD Bangladesh 1978; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 150.

public distribution (temporarily) outphased until 1992, prices were deregulated in 1982–1984 and imports in 1992.³⁶⁴

According to experts, fertilized rice had to be irrigated. So, fertilizer use focused on the *boro* crop and irrigated *aman* patches planted with high-yielding varieties, but little was used on rainfed crops and in saline areas.³⁶⁵ Many – small peasants more than minifundists and large farmers – fertilized only part of their crop. In 1976, 51 percent of farms used fertilizer but on just 19.1 percent of their cropland. By 1987, the figures had risen to 87 percent of farms and 55 percent of the area.³⁶⁶ Observers also noted that farmers applied fertilizers only in small quantities.³⁶⁷ What limited fertilizer application were irregular supplies, lack of credit, and many peasants were skeptical, some because they found fertilizer not useful in flood-prone areas.³⁶⁸ Some peasants said that fertilizer hardened the soil, so that one could not stop using it once one had started. And whoever used fertilizer needed more labor input.³⁶⁹

Bangladesh's fertilizer industry was state owned, and production employed domestic sources of natural gas. Pakistan's government planned to increase production from 80,000 tons in 1967 to 340,000 tons in 1971.³⁷⁰ But this level was not reached before 1975–1976, when Bangladesh produced most of the fertilizer it consumed in urea plants in Ghorasal (damaged by an explosion in late 1974) and Fenchuganj and a triple-superphosphate plant in Chittagong, all of which operated well below capacity but were scheduled for expansion. Officials already expected fertilizer exports by the end of the decade.³⁷¹ But construction – in a new factory at Ashuganj financed by a 'World Bank'-led consortium, in Ghorasal with Chinese help, in Chittagong with ADB loans – was delayed for some years, during which consumption was over 800,000 tons and imports rose to over half a million tons and amounted to 16 percent of the country's export revenue. Upon pressure by 'donors', the government gave up plans for a petrochemical complex involving

364 Ahmed 2004, p. 4045; World Bank 1981, p. 67. Pump import restrictions were removed in 1988, power tiller and pesticide imports liberalized in 1989 and rice seed imports in 1997 (*ibid.*). See also Ahmed 2000b, pp. 52–53.

365 Refugio Rochin, "Farmer's Experiences with IR-20 Rice Variety and Complementary Production Inputs, East Pakistan, Aman-1970", 30 January 1971, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 25, PK Pakistan 1971; World Bank, Bangladesh: The Current Economic Situation and Short Term Outlook, 2 May 1975, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht; Winberg to USDA, 9 December 1976, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 56, BD Bangladesh 76; see Hossain et al. 1994, p. 264.

366 Agricultural Census Wing, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, "Report on Pilot Agricultural Census", 1976, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD Bangladesh 1978; Hossain 1988, p. 47.

367 Parikh 1990a, p. 12; Étienne 1979, p. 77.

368 Parikh 1990a, p. 4; Winberg to USDA, 14 May 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974 DR.

369 Hostenstein 1980, pp. 8–9; Parikh 1990a, p. 11; Bhattacharya 1976 p. 34 (for West Bengal).

370 M. Yamashita, "Report on Trip to East Pakistan", October 1967, FAO, RG 12, ES, FA 8/3, vol. I; see Riaz 1993, p. 177 note 22.

371 Winberg to USDA, 19 May and 9 December 1976, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 56, BD Bangladesh 76.

plastics production.³⁷² Another plan for a joint fertilizer plant with India, to generate exports to the big neighbor, was pursued in 1973–1975 but abandoned when bilateral relations soured.³⁷³ Total investments in the industry may have been over US\$1 billion in the 1970s.³⁷⁴ Among the reasons for the factories' low output were issues that we will meet again in this volume: war damage, mechanical problems (e.g., at the Japanese-built factory in Ghorasal), a lack of qualified personnel, poor maintenance, an insufficient supply of raw materials, power outages and a lack of spare parts.³⁷⁵ And yet, fertilizer production in Bangladesh increased substantially in the long run, as it did in other non-industrialized countries (see Chapter 6). The consumption of mineral fertilizers almost quadrupled from 1980–1981 to 2001–2002 to about 1.5 million tons.³⁷⁶

However, this compares to the use of about 10 million tons of manure in the early 1980s, which was primarily used on *aus* and *aman* rice, wheat and vegetables. Another 7 million tons were used for cooking and heating, mostly by poor people.³⁷⁷ The use of manure on crops had also increased through the Comilla approach.³⁷⁸ But the 'development' literature has ignored the use and impact of these nutrients.

Pesticides constituted a much smaller market than fertilizers. In 1970/1971, Bangladesh's farmers used about 4,000 tons, mainly on rice fields. (Figures for the area covered differ widely.)³⁷⁹ The UN Relief Operation in Dacca (UNROD) provided pesticides in 1972.³⁸⁰ UNROD was headed by Victor Umbricht, a leading manager of Ciba-Geigy, a chemical multinational from Switzerland. The

372 U.S. Agricultural Attache Dacca to USDA, 29 December 1978 and BADC Monthly Fertilizer Newsletter, 15 December 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD Bangladesh 1978; see also Sobhan 1982, p. 85; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 149; FAO 1985, p. 52; Lawo 1984, p. 179; Feldman and McCarthy 1984, p. 12; Sadeque 1986, p. 87. For low official sales of 710,000 tons in 1987–1988, see Hossain et al. 1994, p. 235. For the petrochemical complex, see Parkinson 1981c, pp. 153–155.

373 Islam 2005, pp. 321–326.

374 U.S. Agricultural Attache Dacca to USDA, 29 December 1978 and BADC Monthly Fertilizer Newsletter, 15 December 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD Bangladesh 1978; Shihata et al. 2011, pp. 213–216.

375 See Winberg to USDA, 8 May 1975, and Ahmed Hosain, "Use of Fertilizers", *Morning News*, 14 May 1974, both in NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975; Jessen 1990, pp. 203–204.

376 Bangladesh government homepage, Market Monitoring and Information System, Ministry of Agriculture, Statistics, "Nutrient-wise fertiliser consumption from 1980 to 2002", www.fadinap.org/Bangladesh/documents/Statistics/table-2.htm (accessed 31 August 2005).

377 Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 95–96, 104; BRAC 1986, pp. 53–54. Cf. Hoque 1987, p. 241; Jansen 1983a, p. 43.

378 Malek 1976, p. 361. In 1959–1960, manure was applied to 23 percent of the sown area: Boyce 1987, p. 179.

379 "Agricultural Situation in Bangladesh", 26 April 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh DR 1974; "Ambassador Sailer's Report", March–April 1972, table 5, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh, UNROD/UNROB Reports; cf. Elkington 1976, p. 65.

380 J. Nehemiah, "Policy Level Meeting on Bangladesh [. . .]", 27 April 1972, FAO, RG15, RAFE, Bangladesh 1972–76.

company supplied the agent malathion for the country's malaria eradication program.³⁸¹ Inspired by Umbricht, UNROD tried to flood the country with pesticides. It planned to raise consumption in the newly independent country to almost 25,000 tons (at least 4,000 tons of which supplied by Ciba-Geigy) at a cost of US\$19.1 million, nearly half of all expenses for agricultural inputs planned for 1972–1973.³⁸² By comparison, 7,000 tons of pesticides were actually used that year (when they were free for farmers), and 5,000 tons in the following, after the subsidy had been reduced – but despite the reduction there were fewer pests.³⁸³ The government's program called for the use of 12,200 tons in 1974–1975, but actual distribution was just 2,500 tons, one-tenth of what UNROD had envisioned for two years before.³⁸⁴ Meanwhile, a USAID study considered whether pesticides really led to high returns for farmers in the country or whether one could not make more effective investments, the IDA objected to a free delivery of sprayers to peasants, and annual application vacillated between 1,500 and 3,000 tons.³⁸⁵ In international fora, the country pressed for more transparency about risks in the industry.³⁸⁶

Aerial spraying of pesticides was done in Bangladesh, although it covered only an one-tenth of the area of ground operations.³⁸⁷ Aerial spraying was a Dutch 'aid' specialty.³⁸⁸ In the early 1970s, malaria was largely eradicated from "most of Bangladesh" this way.³⁸⁹ Ciba-Geigy operated five small crop dusters in the country (which were later used in a food airlift).³⁹⁰ When insecticides to eradicate mosquitos were sprayed from planes, they covered towns, fields and people.³⁹¹ In ground operations in 1979 in rice fields, for the most part to kill stem borers, 93 percent of *boro* growers and 47 percent of *aman* growers sprayed pesticides.³⁹² But figures from 1980 to 1982 suggest that their use was restricted to 20 percent of a family's plots or less, mostly *boro* high-yielding variety fields.³⁹³ Because pests

381 Weir and Schapiro 1981, p. 53.

382 "Ambassador Sailer's Report", March-April 1972, tables 16 and 17, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh, UNROD/UNROB Reports.

383 "Agricultural Situation in Bangladesh", 26 April 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh DR 1974; Winberg to USDA, 20 January 1975, *ibid.*, Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975. For the 100 percent, see RAFE, "Summary Record of Staff Meeting", 17 January 1973, FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Div., PR 12/50, II.

384 Government of Bangladesh, Planning Commission, Annual Plan 1975–76, no date (excerpt), p. 22 of the document, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 56, BD Bangladesh 76.

385 Bull 1982, pp. 76–77; Lawo 1984, p. 173; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 115; de Vylder 1982, p. 98; for sprayers, see Islam 1981c, p. 79.

386 Solomon 1977, pp. 77–78.

387 "Agricultural Situation in Bangladesh", 26 April 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh DR 1974.

388 Islam 1981, p. 48.

389 Dyson 1991, p. 288.

390 Pauline Ansman, "Ciba-Geigy Ltd Executive Returns from UN Mission" (n.d., 1974), AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh, General VI.

391 See photograph in *Bangladesh Observer*, 27 February 1976, AfZ, Nachlass Umbricht, Bangladesh, General Newspaper Clippings 1975–1978.

392 Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 114.

393 Hossain 1988, p. 49.

could spread to neighboring fields, social pressure to utilize pesticides was great,³⁹⁴ though high prices restricted their use.³⁹⁵ The pesticide trade was privatized in the 1980s, but a decade later, an advocate of this step noted that “the liberalization of markets for seeds and pesticides has had only a modest impact”.³⁹⁶ So-called integrated pest management in the 1980s hardly changed practices.³⁹⁷ But in later decades, pesticide use in Bangladesh strongly intensified, peaking at around 48,000 tons in 2008 and soon dropping by a quarter, but always exceeding 35,000 tons.³⁹⁸

The use of poison was a violent practice that greatly affected humans and animals. Among the latter were cows who ate contaminated fodder. To drink pesticides also became a means for many villagers, often indebted peasants or landless people, to commit suicide, and some men used pesticides in attacks on women who refused their advances to disfigure their faces, as in the later notorious acid attacks that became so common that the government introduced the death penalty for them.³⁹⁹

The use of tractors made little sense on the small, intensively cultivated plots in Bangladesh and remained limited. There were just a few thousands, mostly imported under Pakistani rule, and several thousand power tillers, and even less per unit of cultivated area than in neighboring India, let alone other countries. In 1977, tractors and power tillers plowed only 0.38 percent of the country’s agricultural land.⁴⁰⁰ Though they did not affect yields much, they enabled farmers to operate larger areas.⁴⁰¹ However, those who wanted them suffered from long waiting times for, and insecure availability of, tractors, which were often in need of repair with few spare parts in store. Among the reasons for their breakdowns was unadapted technology, they were “not tropicalised”, as Oxfam observers put it. Massey Ferguson, Ford or Belarus brands were not made for rice paddies where wheels and axles were submerged under water.⁴⁰² The tractor rental stations that were part of the Comilla experiment closed down in 1978 because so many vehicles were inoperable and influential persons profited disproportionately from them; individuals took the tractors over and rented them out. Such bad experiences did not prevent a British ‘aid’ project that started in 1987 to bring in another 2,000 British tractors.⁴⁰³ Unlike tractors, the use of power tillers picked up in the 1990s and 2000s.⁴⁰⁴

394 Manwar 1994, p. 182.

395 Siddiqui 1980, p. 129.

396 Hye 1989, p. 97; quote in Ahmed 2000b, p. 54.

397 Erler 1985, p. 54.

398 See Faruq 2018.

399 See Nazneen 1998; for the suicides, see Kabeer 2003, pp. 149–150, 235 and chapter 5.

400 Rahman 1986, p. 202; Lawo 1984, p. 185; Hossain 1988, p. 47; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 116;

Sadeque 1986, p. 128; de Vylder 1982, p. 81. Low figures for 1985 in Asaduzzaman 1993, p. 108.

401 Gill 1981, p. 5.

402 Martius 1977, p. 71; Rahman Khan 1979a, p. 126. Quote: “Visit of Messrs Littlewood and Bennett to East Pakistan, 23rd August/1st September [1971]”, Oxfam, Ken Bennett reports (lose file); see also I. Macdonald, Temporary Consultant to War on Want, “East Pakistan Cyclone, November, 1970 – Report No. 6 – Final Report and Recommendations”, Oxfam, Oxfam – East Pakistan Rehabilitation (PE7), and Oxfam, Bangladesh Consortium of British Charities, file IBRD-FAO-ODM; Gerlach 2002a, pp. 81–82.

403 Lewis 1996, pp. 26, 28; Stevens 1976b, p. 102.

404 Ahmed 2004, p. 45.

Draught animals were more important. Tilling and leveling were often done with animal-drawn plows.⁴⁰⁵ The number of draught animals was fairly constant at about 20 million head of cattle and half a million buffalos, and not only oxen, but also many cows were used for work.⁴⁰⁶ But ownership was as unequal as with land. According to one study, almost all farms over 1.4 hectares had bovines in the 1970s, more than 70 percent of those larger than 0.6 hectares and 50 percent of those larger than 0.2 hectares. Ownership declined during the decade and in the 1980s.⁴⁰⁷ Yet 37 percent of farmers owned no draught animal and another 10 percent only one – the minifundists.⁴⁰⁸ They borrowed animals from less poor neighbors and became dependent on them. One million out of over eight million farm families also owned no plow in 1977.⁴⁰⁹ Bovines cost only a fraction of a tractor or power tiller, but could normally work the size of most Bangladeshi farms.⁴¹⁰ Experts considered their average number per acreage sufficient, with the notable exception of coastal areas, but the poorest villagers had none, and since the animals that existed were often underfed, too small, light and weak, their work ability was reduced.⁴¹¹ Given the lack of pasturage, their number could not easily be increased.

The slow spread of HYV rice in the 1970s and 1980s was attributed to the unequal access – including access on unequal conditions – to inputs for larger and small farmers. Even government officially acknowledged in 1976 that the former monopolized subsidized inputs for themselves.⁴¹² Small peasants and sharecroppers often had to pay more for water, loans, labor and other inputs, one reason why their risks were greater and their profits smaller, even though they planted HYV seeds on slightly more of their land than did big farmers.⁴¹³ And while the latter could productively invest their higher income from HYVs, the former tended to use theirs to pay debts or increase their consumption.⁴¹⁴ Other scholars have argued that large farmers were the first to adopt the new rice technology but the others

405 Sadeque 1986, pp. 114–115.

406 Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 94–95 with data for 1960 and 1977. Cattle numbers decreased later: Siddiqui et al. 2015, p. 109.

407 Rahman 1986, pp. 123–124. See Alauddin and Tisdell 1991, p. 166; Datta 1998, p. 54; Sen 1995b, p. 196.

408 Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 115.

409 Hossain 1988, p. 47; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 99. Dependency is described by van Schendel 1982, pp. 166–167, 235. According to a 1977 survey, there were 8.2 million farming families and 11.8 million rural families: “Summary Report of the 1977 Land Occupancy Survey of Rural Bangladesh, compiled under the direction of A. K. M. Ghulam Rabbani, James T. Peach, F. Tomason Januzzi”, July 1977, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 64, BD Bangladesh 1977 DR; Herbon 1992, p. 194.

410 Gill 1981, esp. pp. 5, 11–14; but see Arens and van Beurden 1977, p. 109.

411 Gill 1981, p. 14; Jansen 1983a, pp. 45–46. Cf. Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 115.

412 Sadeque 1986, p. 197 note 3.

413 “ADAB Forum, August 25, 1978”, ADAB News 8, September 1978, pp. 5–6, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 24, RU 7/46.27 BGD (remarks by Mahabub Hossain); Hossain 1988, pp. 11, 74, 76, 88; Rahman 1986, pp. 102, 135, 138–139; Hossain et al. 1994, pp. 229–230.

414 Islam 1978, p. 29.

caught up quickly.⁴¹⁵ But this is questionable. In 1976–1977, HYV seeds, irrigation and fertilizer were already most intensely used by the smallest holdings for the *aman* and *aus* crops.⁴¹⁶ Whether fertilizer use per hectare was higher on medium and large or on smaller holdings was a matter of debate.⁴¹⁷ Already during the Comilla experiment in the 1960s, small peasants had a higher productivity per area unit than larger farmers though the latter were catching up.⁴¹⁸ In particular, small farmers did much more multi-cropping than others in order to get the most out of their bit of land.⁴¹⁹ As for sharecroppers, it was under debate whether their productivity was significantly lower than owner-cultivators', that is, whether tenancy was an impediment to 'development'.⁴²⁰

This information suggests that many small peasants, contrary to the conservatism sometimes ascribed to them, did take the risk to intensify their agricultural production. Sometimes they lost this gamble. The better and cheaper access to inputs, and, consequentially, higher profits, enabled larger farmers to buy land from poor peasants.⁴²¹ One factor that limited this predation was the existence of more profitable investment opportunities.⁴²²

Credit was crucial to agricultural investments. The private savings rate in East Pakistan in the 1960s was a relatively low 10–12 percent (and considerably lower in the countryside), but in the 1970s, it dropped to between 0 and 5 percent.⁴²³ Then most people lived hand-to-mouth. Private investment rates were low in the early decades of Bangladesh – little above 5 percent in 1975 and a little over 9 percent around 1980; then they fell again to below 6 percent, despite – or, rather, because – of structural adjustment policies.⁴²⁴ One study found that investment rates in 1979–1982, especially for increasing output, were markedly higher in 'underdeveloped' villages than in those raising mostly HYVs. With some exceptions, the investment rate grew with the farm size (another study found the contrary), but large farmers in 'underdeveloped' villages in particular invested much money outside agriculture, even if one disregards non-productive spending such as housing construction.⁴²⁵

415 Singh 1990, pp. 160, 163–164 extends the argument to India but shows major differences between Indian states. Lipton and Longhurst 1989, p. 117 argue that smallholders did not catch up.

416 Boyce 1987, p. 207.

417 For the first view, see Islam 1978, p. 27–28; for the second view, see Hossain 1988, p. 79; Singh 1990, pp. 171–173, 364 for India.

418 Eger 1982, p. 30; Hartmann and Boyce 1981, p. 191; Islam 1978, pp. 27–28; Hossain 1988, p. 87.

419 Singh 1979, p. iv.

420 See de Vylder 1982, pp. 119–120.

421 "NGO Country Paper for WCARRD", draft, 22 November 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 28, RU 7/46.30, vol. 3.

422 Hossain 1988, p. 54.

423 Elkington 1976, p. 89; Sadeque 1986, pp. 149–150, 155; Sobhan 1982, pp. 2, 9; Chowdhury 1988, p. 108; Alamgir 1974, p. 788.

424 Hossain 1995, p. 260; Sobhan 1991a, p. 2; de Vylder 1982, p. 29. According to Sadeque 1986, the investment rate was between 10.9 and 14.5 percent in 1979–1982, and it was 12 percent around 2000 (Haggblade and Ahmed 2000, p. 284).

425 Hossain 1988, pp. 12, 113–115; the other study was Hoque 1987, pp. 178–179.

However, credit, necessary as it was for intensified farming, was also a major factor in the dispossession of small landowners. For a long time, official agricultural credit was given at relatively low interest rates, but in insufficient amounts and through institutions which lacked rural branches and were out of reach for small peasants, especially illiterate ones.⁴²⁶ The IDA, IFAD and the Danish International Development Agency financed some of these credit programs.⁴²⁷ As in many non-industrialized countries, institutional credit was mostly for larger farmers. Repayment rates for these loans in Bangladesh were low (35–75 percent in the 1970s), and wealthy borrowers – as in other countries – the worst offenders; low repayment rates implied an indirect subsidy.⁴²⁸ Corrupt bank officials facilitated wealthy borrowers' default, but took big bribes in exchange.⁴²⁹ As a result of these practices, most of the money that small peasants and sharecroppers borrowed came from relatives, friends and moneylenders/merchants.⁴³⁰ The latter usually charged extortionate interest rates, which could easily lead to the borrowers' loss of land and solidified power hierarchies.⁴³¹ Lenders sometimes demanded, instead of interest, the mortgaging of land, labor services, the sale of crops when they were cheap, or political support.⁴³² Faced with such risks, many peasants avoided borrowing. Their loan sums were very low in comparison to the value of their agricultural production. Their investments were primarily from own (meagre) savings.⁴³³ Local elites sometimes lent money to the poor at low interest because they were kin or to maintain social cohesion.⁴³⁴ Those who owned less than 0.4 hectares received especially little credit per unit area, while the loan sums of those with between 0.4 and 1 hectare came close to that of larger farmers.⁴³⁵ Even large landowners depended primarily on informal credit.⁴³⁶ This could lead to intra-elite conflicts.

426 Winberg to USDA, 10 April 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975; Hossain 1988b, pp. 21–22.

427 Jessen 1990, p. 71.

428 Bennett 1987, p. 97; Khandker et al. 1995, p. 16; for the 1970s, see Adams and Nelson 1981, p. 37; for other countries, see U.S. General Accounting Office 1975, pp. 17–18. Small peasants were also more conscientious about repayments in countries like Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka; see Donald 1976, pp. 137, 140; Collins and Moore Lappé 1980, p. 194. For the indirect subsidy, see Holcombe 1995, p. 53.

429 Hoque 1987, pp. 265–269.

430 Winberg to USDA, 10 April 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975; Hossain 1987, p. 127; Rahman Khan 1979a, p. 140; Fernando 1997, p. 170; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 156; Muqtada 1981, p. 20; Singh 1990, p. 138; Herbon 1992, p. 261; Khandker et al. 1995, p. 15 (with data for 1989); Sen 1995b, p. 206.

431 Other collaterals than land included jewelry, utensils, bullocks, plows, boats, trees and standing crops. See Siddiqui 1980, p. 211.

432 Montgomery et al. 2017, p. 98.

433 Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 156; Winberg to USDA, 10 April 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 47, BD Bangladesh 1975; Crow and Murshid 1992, p. 36; for savings as primary source, see Jazairy et al. 1992, p. 177. Cf. Herbon 1984, pp. 173, 378; also Hossain 1987, p. 117 for a high rate of net borrowing.

434 De Vylder 1982, p. 114.

435 Rahman 1986, p. 136 (data for 1981–1982).

436 Hossain 1988b, p. 22.

In the countryside, cartels of larger merchants kept transportation and credit under their control, sometimes with violent means. This way, they also kept small traders in poverty, from which local officials demanded additionally illegal fees.⁴³⁷

There was also altruism and mutual help. Anywhere between 14 percent and 60 percent of loans from relatives and friends bore no interest. These can be regarded as a social safety net.⁴³⁸ Daily local barter transactions belonged in the same context.⁴³⁹ That said, some relatives also charged high rates,⁴⁴⁰ and even from brothers or fathers, “interest-free loans” increasingly “had to be begged for”.⁴⁴¹

In early 1977, the government announced, with “much fanfare”, a Tk1 billion (US\$65 million) agricultural credit program.⁴⁴² It ran until 1984, did increase credit for farmers and led to over 2,000 new bank branches opening in rural areas. But it excluded peasants with less than 0.8 hectares; resentful of peasants, bank officials left many decisions to local elected officials; most of the loans went to wealthy landowners; repayment rates were below 50 percent; and most of the money was not spent for technical inputs but for hiring workers. Thus, social power structures were reinforced and productivity gains modest.⁴⁴³ Other loan programs in the 1970s and 1980s with over two million borrowers, strictly supervised through primarily female borrower groups who met regularly (similar to Grameen Bank and BRAC), did have many poor participants.⁴⁴⁴ But only 4.6 percent of farmers received institutional credit in 1982.⁴⁴⁵ Things changed slowly. An increasing part of borrowing worked through the NGO microcredit schemes described earlier. In the 2000s, banking in Bangladesh was still very bureaucratic, but there was a comparatively high rate of 373 bank accounts per 1,000 adults.⁴⁴⁶

Landlessness was growing because of unpayable debts “often incurred [. . .] in order to finance the introduction of new high-yield high-cost inputs such as fertilisers, improved seeds, etc.” that international actors advocated so much.⁴⁴⁷

437 Crow and Murshid 1993, pp. 39–53; Siddiqui 1980, pp. 136–142, 170–173, 193–210.

438 Abbott 1976, p. 342; Herbon 1984, p. 173; Hossain 1988, p. 84; Jansen 1983a, pp. 103–104; Hoque 1987, pp. 269, 274; Michael Lipton’s comments in Robinson and Griffin 1974, p. 157.

439 BRAC 1986, p. 100.

440 See Räder 1988a, p. 95; Hoque 1987, p. 274.

441 Hoque 1987, p. 126.

442 Winberg to USDA, 15 February 1977, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 64, BD Bangladesh 1977 DR.

443 McGregor 1994, pp. 104–108, 115–116; Bangladesh Planning Commission, “The Two-Year Plan, 1978–1980”, March 1978, pp. 141–142 of the document, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD-Bangladesh 1978; de Vylder 1982, pp. 112–113; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 156; Hashemi 1991, p. 62.

444 Hossain Khan 1997, pp. 205–210; see also Hulme and Mosley 1997, pp. 97, 104.

445 Hashemi 1991, p. 62.

446 Banking 2009, pp. 24, 80.

447 UNDP Resident Representative Bernard Zagarin quoted in report by Eugene Stockwell, 9 April 1979, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 2, Bangladesh. See also Abercrombie paper, first draft, 3 April 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 8, Abercrombie 11(a)i, p. 10.

Large landowners (as well as traders) reinvested only some their profits productively into intensifying farming, while also buying land and investing into more profitable or promising sectors like trade, money lending, mortgaging, rice milling (in combination this could amount to controlling the whole local economy), the education of their sons, construction and urban assets and increasing consumption, namely housing.⁴⁴⁸ Some poor people with any surplus had similar tendencies.⁴⁴⁹ In general, rural credit was more for ventures in trade, services and transportation than agriculture.⁴⁵⁰ These conditions have led some analysts to call markets of land, labor, money and commodities interlocked.⁴⁵¹

Social change

At the core of rural poverty and impoverishment in East Pakistan and Bangladesh was the high and increasing rate of landlessness in combination with too few other jobs and low wages. There were “no two opinions about the fact” that poverty in Bangladesh was on the increase, the FAO stated in 1984.⁴⁵² Census data showed that 14 percent of rural families were completely landless in 1951, 17 percent in 1960 and 28.8 percent in 1978.⁴⁵³ It was customary to make distinctions between different degrees of landlessness. A 1977 survey found that 11.1 percent of rural households owned no land at all, another 21.7 percent only their homestead land, and another 15.3 percent owned less than 0.2 hectares of agricultural land. This is to say that 48.1 percent were considered functionally landless, and 50.0 percent a year later.⁴⁵⁴ 1.5 million households were functionally landless in 1960, but 7.75 million were in 1985.⁴⁵⁵

Many other farm families struggled constantly. 26.8 percent of families owned between 0.2 and 0.8 hectares in 1977. In 1938, 74.6 percent of all farms were smaller than 2 hectares; in 1944–1945, 84.7 percent; in 1960, 77 percent; and in 1983–1984, 88 percent.⁴⁵⁶ Such data mean that at many places, over half of the rural families did not grow enough food for themselves and needed income from

448 Steve Jones, “Bangladesh: a critical evaluation of rural development programmes”, draft, n.d., pp. 16–18 of the document, Oxfam, Bangladesh General 1978; see also Hossain 1988, pp. 12, 113–115; Sadeque 1986, pp. 199–201; Nebelung 1988, p. 89; Westergaard 1985, pp. 123, 138, 158; Hoque 1987, pp. 144, 178–179. For traders, see Siddiqui 1980, p. 222.

449 BRAC 1986, pp. 148, 195.

450 Herbon 1992, p. 262; Siddiqui 1980, p. 337.

451 Crow and Murshid 1992, p. 37.

452 Quoted in Jessen 1990, p. 1.

453 Akanda 1985, p. 42; Rahman Khan 1979a, p. 149.

454 “Summary Report of the 1977 Land Occupancy Survey”, as note 409 in this chapter; Januzzi and Peach 1980, p. 21 (pp. 101, 110 have some even higher data). In the 1980s, the level was similar: Zillur Rahman and Hossain 1995b, p. 34; Manwar 1994, pp. 172–173.

455 Hossain 1987, p. 25.

456 Januzzi and Peach 1980, pp. 19, 21; Bertocci 1976, p. 175; Hossain 1988, p. 23; for the late colonial period, Rahman 1986, p. 24.

other sources.⁴⁵⁷ In the longer run, the number of agricultural laborers as a proportion of the rural population increased, that of sharecroppers and tenants fell in better times and rose in crises, at the expense of those who were exclusively owner-cultivators. Most sharecroppers were owners of a little land who worked some other land in addition.⁴⁵⁸

One aspect of the rise of functional landlessness was a decline of the average farm size, especially because the population grew and farmland was divided through inheritance. From 1960 to around 1990, it shrank from 1.4 hectares to 1.1 hectares and a decade later to 0.8 hectares.⁴⁵⁹ Land ownership became more and more concentrated, and the proportion of mini-farms under 0.4 hectares rose steeply.⁴⁶⁰ In 1983–1984, 11.8 percent of farms operated 43.5 percent of the land. 10 percent of rural families owned at least 50 percent of the land.⁴⁶¹

By the 1970s, a complex web of ownership relations existed in which there were more owner-cum-sharecroppers than pure owner-cultivators. This could mean anything from large landowners leasing extra land to expand their operations to poor families sharecropping additional plots to get by. Relatively few were just sharecroppers or tenants with no own land because these often owned no plow and draught animals.⁴⁶² Those who sharecropped somebody else's lands were often also taking loans and renting cattle from him, were employed by him (or had to do unpaid labor), or were in kinship and/or political patronage relationships that were highly exploitative.⁴⁶³ Sharecropping covered over 20 percent of the area under cultivation (until 1986 at least) and was especially common in the country's northwest and southwest and the district of Chittagong, where the landowners involved in some places were descendants of the former *zamindari*. On average, sharecroppers took in half a hectare, but in most cases it was less.⁴⁶⁴ The land reform of 1951 had granted them almost no rights. Landowner usually claimed half of their crops. One problem was that many agreements, usually oral, were for just one or two years so that sharecroppers had little interest to improve the land.⁴⁶⁵

457 Van Schendel 1982, pp. 162, 165, 231. Stepanek 1978, p. 63 about a study where it was 90 percent.

458 Januzzi and Peach 1980, p. 22; see Chandra 1972/2002, p. 71 for 1951–1961; Bose 1974, p. 22 for 1960–1968; Andrew Jenkins, "Country-review paper: Bangladesh", n.d., Oxfam, file Country reviews.

459 Hashemi 1991, p. 61; Ahmed 2004, p. 4043; Hossain 1987, p. 21 points to a steeper drop in 1960–1977.

460 See Bose 1974, p. 22; Hayami and Kikuchi 1981, p. 61; Rahman Khan 1979a, p. 150; Hossain 1988, p. 23. A contrary trend for 1960–1976 was suggested in Agricultural Census Wing, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, "Report on Pilot Agricultural Census", 1976, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD-Bangladesh 1978.

461 Hossain 1988, p. 23; Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 194; Huda 1989, p. 15; World Bank 1979, Preface; Stepanek 1978, p. 98.

462 Januzzi and Peach 1980, p. 22; Arens and van Beurden 1977, p. 106.

463 Jansen 1983a, pp. 166–174; Datta 1998, pp. 89–101.

464 Januzzi and Peach 1980, pp. 21–24; Bertocci 1976, pp. 159, 175–177; Boyce 1987, pp. 213, 221; Hoque 1987, pp. 173–177 (for the *zamindari*); Hossain et al. 1994, p. 227.

465 Januzzi and Peach 1980, pp. 11–12, 105, 113; Hoque 1987, pp. 223–224.

Despite these conditions, and in most cases being forced to pay for all inputs alone, sharecroppers made surprisingly large investments.⁴⁶⁶ When leftist experts and also the USAID called for tenancy reform, the Ziaur Rahman regime announced that tenancy relationships should have a minimum term of three years but observers reported that the rule was not enforced.⁴⁶⁷ But this regulation may have strengthened the trend among landowners of replacing sharecroppers with wage workers. Landlords were also hesitant to enter into sharecropping agreements with relatives for fear that these would lay claim to their land.⁴⁶⁸ In the late 1970s, less than half of the cultivated land – perhaps as little as 10 percent – was farmed by its owners; the rest was tilled either by sharecroppers or hired laborers.⁴⁶⁹ In 1984, the Ershad regime made another effort for tenancy reform.⁴⁷⁰

Wage labor was on the increase. Laborers were primarily male members of landless and marginal farming households; Singh estimated in 1983 that there were 13 million people living in the former and 23 million in the latter.⁴⁷¹ In most cases, wages generated income in addition to the own farmland or self-employment. But about half of the rural laborers were employed for less than 100 days annually.⁴⁷² As the number of landless and near landless people in need of wage labor rose, work was difficult to find and real wages in agriculture fell by more than half from 1949 to 1983, despite temporary increases in growth times like 1960–1964, 1967–1970, and some years after 1975. The early 1970s witnessed the steepest drop, and the 1970 level was again reached no earlier than in 1986.⁴⁷³ The employment was highly exploitative.⁴⁷⁴ At the root of this, Anjan Kumar Datta argues, was the fact that this was no ‘free’ wage labor, but workers were in multiple ways

466 See Hossain 1988, p. 64 and Januzzi and Peach 1980, pp. 106, 114–115.

467 “NGO Country Paper for WCARRD”, 22 November 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 28, RU 7/46.30, vol. 3; Sheena Grosset, “Tour Report – Bangladesh, 15–29 November 1978”, Oxfam, Bangladesh Tour Reports, 1972–1987. The call for reform is in Januzzi and Peach 1980, pp. 50–51.

468 Wahidul Haque et al. (UN Asian Development Institute), “Toward a Theory of Rural Development”, December 1975, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Rural Development 1972–76; Arens and van Beurden 1977, pp. 92–93.

469 Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 195 say it was less than half; Stepanek 1978, p. 101 says it was ten percent (Stepanek worked for USAID).

470 Datta 1998, pp. 209–210.

471 Singh 1983, p. 390; see also Sen 1995b, p. 197; BRAC 1986, pp. 157, 178.

472 Rahman and Islam 1987, pp. 131–137; Clay 1976, pp. 424, 434; van Schendel 1982, p. 79. For the number of days that men and women were employed, see Chen 1986, p. 71. But Sen 1995b, p. 212 found about 300 days of wage labor per worker.

473 Rahman Khan 1977, pp. 151–152; Zaman 1984, p. 267; Chandra 1972/2002, p. 67; Clay 1976, p. 424; Noman 1988, p. 19; Alamgir 1980, p. 107; for 1969–1982, see Osmani 1991, p. 324; Hye 1993, pp. 382–391; for 1974 to the early 1980s, see Hossain 1987, p. 27; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 29; for the late 1970s, see Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Monthly Economic Situation of Bangladesh, February 1978, p. 27 of the document, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD-Bangladesh 1978, and Ahmed 1986, p. 125. Singh 1990, p. 33 sees a strong increase in 1980–1985; Hossain 1988b, p. 16 an increase 1982–1986; World Bank 1987, pp. 132, 277 a strong increase 1984–1986. See also World Bank 1990, p. 5; White 1992, p. 62.

474 For example, see Datta 1998, p. 41, 159–165; Jansen 1983a, pp. 195–204.

(credit, political power, additional tenancy) dependent on their employers and, for example, denied any payment for past work if they stopped working.⁴⁷⁵

Official poverty rates were at shocking levels in the early 1970s (78.5 percent of the population were living in “absolute” and 42 percent in “extreme” poverty in 1973–1974), then decreased some, but rose again in the late 1980s and remained high during the 1990s, despite a substantial rise in GDP per capita.⁴⁷⁶ By official standards, there were 42.6 million rural poor in 1973–1974 and 59.5 million in 1978–1979.⁴⁷⁷ One study from the 1980s found that poverty rates were about average in villages with irrigated fields, higher in drought-prone villages (e.g., in the north), but lower than average in saline (coastal) villages – despite low incomes and low use of ‘modern’ inputs.⁴⁷⁸ A USAID expert who did advocate the new rice-growing technologies concluded in 1978 that these had hardly improved the lot of the poor and had no “significant impact upon the lives of the landless cultivators”.⁴⁷⁹

Around 1990, the authorities expected that agricultural employment would create jobs for no more than 40 percent of the increase in the working-age population.⁴⁸⁰ In fact, the number of people employed in agriculture had decreased slightly (from its high level) from 1974 to 1983–1984 – but the population grew.⁴⁸¹ Under such conditions, wages could hardly rise; only in the years to follow, labor demand increased.⁴⁸² Rural workers could do little more than trying to influence employers and job-seekers alike not to offer or accept wages below a certain level.⁴⁸³

If there was an increase in income,⁴⁸⁴ it was primarily because people worked more jobs, engaged more in self-employment (especially women), and men went on labor emigration.⁴⁸⁵ In one village in Bogra district, 275 households ran 375 businesses in the mid-1980s: 159 in trade (often petty trade requiring little capital, for example paddy/rice, groceries and animals), 106 in food preparation, mostly rice processing, 46 in crafts (masonry, carpentry, etc.), 19 in transportation, 16 in small industries (rice milling, tubewell setting and repair) and others.⁴⁸⁶ Revealing the authors’ ignorance, a ‘World Bank’ study stated in 1979 that “little is known about the sources of income of the landless”.⁴⁸⁷ Many landless and marginal owners had more than two sources of income, and the most important sources other

475 See Datta 1998, p. 6, 119, 138–139, 159–165.

476 Rahman Khan 1977, p. 147; Zaman 1984, pp. 269–270; Singh 1990, p. 10; Ahmed 2000, pp. 102, 112; Narayan and Petesch 2000, p. 114.

477 Hossain 1987, p. 32.

478 Hossain et al. 1994, pp. 252, 264.

479 Stepanek 1978, pp. 33, 35, 81, 87 (quote).

480 Barraclough 1991, p. 76.

481 Hossain 1987, p. 26. For many new agricultural workers in the mid-1970s, see Rahman 1986, p. 175.

482 Datta 1998, pp. 154–157.

483 As described by Jansen 1983a, pp. 194–195.

484 Herbon 1992, p. 177; Hossain 1988, p. 12. Rural income declined 1974–1980, compared to urban income: Hye 1989, annex xi.

485 Westergaard 1983, p. 14.

486 Kahrs 1988, pp. 66, 78.

487 World Bank 1979, p. 19.

than own farming were trade and wages, while less worked in (public) services and crafts.⁴⁸⁸ Wealthier farmers also diversified their income, mostly through trade, moneylending and remittances by family members sent abroad.⁴⁸⁹ In areas where many farmers used technical inputs, there was somewhat more income than elsewhere in the form of agricultural wages, possibly through rising wage levels, and in trade and services, but there was also more inequality, and medium landholders were under much pressure.⁴⁹⁰ According to Geoffrey Wood, people found as much additional employment in trade as in transportation, services and manufacturing combined.⁴⁹¹ In other words, what increased was primarily non-agricultural employment.⁴⁹² And yet, agriculture was so dominant that during the lean season in the fall petty trading activities also diminished.⁴⁹³

Minifundists and the landless were the biggest groups of employees, received the lowest wages and were often literally starving. Wages increased with the size of workers' own farm, but only those with more than 0.5 hectares of cropland had disposable income.⁴⁹⁴ Wage labor was largely done by the poor, but not only the rich were employers. According to one study, more rural households hired labor than sold it – poor families also hired workers.⁴⁹⁵ Most rural jobs were in agriculture (usually as day labor), otherwise in domestic service (for females), commerce, and a variety of other fields.⁴⁹⁶

Wages tended to be a bit higher in commerce, fishery and transportation, whereas especially families of agricultural wage workers often went bitterly hungry.⁴⁹⁷ Women were paid much less than men.⁴⁹⁸ Seasonally, the highest real wages were in many regions paid from August to mid-December, especially in the last quarter of the year, which was when loans were repaid – *if they were*.⁴⁹⁹ Repayment was also difficult because of the conditions of employment. Permanent jobs were scarce and getting scarcer (as were semi-bonded labor and neighborly help), but casual 'free' labor, often day labor, seasonal or migrant labor, were on the rise.⁵⁰⁰

488 Sen 1995b, p. 210; Hossain 1995, p. 59; BRAC 1986, pp. 70, 75–81, 157, 178.

489 Hoque 1987, p. 179.

490 Hossain 1988, pp. 120, 126, 129. For wages dropping in HYV agriculture, see Clay 1976, pp. 425 and 428; Rahman Khan 1979b, p. 408; Hashemi et al. 1994, p. 50 came to the opposite conclusion.

491 Wood 1994, p. 237.

492 Bakht 1993, pp. 140, 152 (data about 1961–1984).

493 Zillur Rahman 1995b, p. 236 (figures from 1991).

494 Hossain 1987, pp. 53, 56; Rahman 1986, p. 182.

495 Arens and van Beurden 1977, pp. 43, 95; Datta 1998, pp. 108–114, 126; Osmani 1991, p. 325; Jansen 1983a, pp. 196, 198.

496 Hossain 1987, pp. 104, 107.

497 Hossain 1987, pp. 110, 120, 132–133.

498 Kabeer 2003, pp. 151–152.

499 Chaudhury 1981, p. 90, Hossain 1987, pp. 85, 89 and Chowdhury et al. 1981, p. 55 offer some conflicting data; Clay 1981, p. 99 shows that part of the explanation is regional differences. See also Barkat-e-Khuda 1985.

500 Hossain et al. 1994, p. 269; see also Rahman 1986, p. 189; Piesch 1988, p. 111; Herbon 1984, p. 172. Rahman and Islam 1987, pp. 140–141 (unlike Hossain et al. 1994), saw a tendency toward more stable employment from HYV agriculture. Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 206 witnessed much neighborly aid.

Therefore, peasants increasingly sought non-agricultural side jobs.⁵⁰¹ And they were looking for income in self-employment, for example, raising small livestock and cattle and dairy production.⁵⁰² Self-employment was already common by the 1970s, especially in trade and services, including domestic service, but less in food processing, handicrafts and transportation.⁵⁰³ Counting all work, not only remunerative labor, men worked 10–11 hours and women 14 hours per day. These facts point less to overall underemployment, as ‘experts’ often claimed, than to seasonal underemployment, especially for men younger than 25 and over 35.⁵⁰⁴

Women started to earn money when they were forced by their husband’s too low income, his death or sickness, divorce or separation, and the sale of land.⁵⁰⁵ Around 1980, in addition to cooking, cleaning and taking care of children, rural women’s work included collecting firewood, knitting fishing nets, sewing, husking rice, mat weaving, tending for other people’s children and, rather among better-off women, raising poultry and selling products. Women from land-poor households had very little opportunity for activities at home and sought work more often outside their own neighborhood in the village (*bari*).⁵⁰⁶ The better-off tended to observe *pardah*, female seclusion (to the extent of not going shopping), also as a mark of status.⁵⁰⁷ Rural women faced a special problem with earning money because modern rice mills – financed and/or promoted by Japanese and West German ‘aid’ – replaced hand husking and, thus, eliminated an important traditional source of their income (though it was hard work); only the lack of rural electricity limited these mills’ expansion before the 1990s.⁵⁰⁸ Women became more visible after the 1970s, and among the reasons were the need for poor women to contribute to the family income, the growing number of female-headed households, the absence of men who went on labor migration and NGOs’ policies to activate women.⁵⁰⁹ But given Bangladesh’s abundance of workers, employers’ hiring of women could also be seen as a way to drive down wages.⁵¹⁰ The widow Pushpo, whose life Michael

501 Piesch 1988, p. 135.

502 Singh 1990, pp. 204–232.

503 Hossain et al. 1994, p. 273; see already van Schendel 1982, pp. 80, 87–88, 236–237; Arens and van Beurden 1977, p. 24; see Huq et al. 1976, p. 101, although they saw agricultural employment prevailing.

504 Westergaard 1983, p. 2; see Barkat-e-Khuda 1985, pp. 159–161; Westergaard 1993, pp. 438–444; Halim and McCarthy 1985, p. 243. But Hossain 1987, p. 47, speaks of just 65 hours of work per family and week in 1984. Small peasant women worked more than landless women, according to Westergaard 1993, p. 502.

505 Halim and McCarthy 1985, p. 247.

506 Westergaard 1983, pp. 39–40, 53, 113; Begum 1985, p. 235.

507 Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982, pp. 55–64; Agarwal 1994, pp. 304–306; Begum 1985, p. 226; see also Martius-von Harder 1978. According to Siddiqui 1980, p. 281, women judged *pardah* more often positively than men and judged female wage labor less often favorable than men did.

508 For Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 38, de Vylder 1982, p. 82, Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 273 and Bennett 1987, p. 79 this was still a future threat; for Westergaard 1983, pp. 45, 48, an ongoing process; for Crow and Murshid 1992, p. 55, Westergaard 1993, p. 431, Piesch 1988, p. 118, Jessen 1990, p. 230 and Jessen and Nebelung 1987, p. 57, it was largely completed. See Ahmed 2004, pp. 4047–4048 for the rising number of mills.

509 Hashemi et al. 1994, pp. 20–22.

510 McCarthy 1984, p. 52.

Nebelung described, appears symptomatic for income diversification: in the course of the year, she had five different sources of income and received gifts and grants from two other sources.⁵¹¹

Facing such a lack of jobs that provided a livelihood, losing one's land was a great threat. Some had their land taken by the rich and powerful through coercion and illegal schemes.⁵¹² It was probably not unusual for households to complain to have become landless "due to forcible occupation, false documentation, and intimidation".⁵¹³ Most frequently, however, the loss of land was because poor people were forced by circumstances to sell.⁵¹⁴ A study of the village of Char Gopalpur in 1976 found that of 101 land sales, 58 were to buy food, 12 to invest in cattle and plows and 7 because of sickness.⁵¹⁵ Peasants sold land only after they had exhausted all other options, by which time they often had to accept a low price. Often it was mortgaged first; many informal loans were accompanied by mortgaging land. After some time, the moneylender demanded repayment, which often – but not always – resulted in land loss for the poor; in fact, many private lenders made loans in order to seize defaulters' land.⁵¹⁶ The number of transactions peaked in 1973–1976, a time of famine and distress, surpassing the disastrous level of sales of 1940–1944, and in these transactions the richest usually acquired land from the poorest.⁵¹⁷

But the picture was more muddled. People clung to their land and sold it in tiny parcels, for example, 0.16 hectares on average in 1971–1976.⁵¹⁸ Thus, despite the high number of sales in and after 1974, poor owners lost only 3 percent of their farmland. According to one study, sales were 0.7–2.2 percent of all farmland annually in the early 1980s, and up to 5 percent for certain groups of small farmers. This meant that land accumulation took a long time; large landowners in one area under study needed 13 years to increase their holdings by a quarter.⁵¹⁹ Viewed from another angle, Rowmari – already a famine hotspot in 1974 – witnessed exceptionally high levels of transactions in the 1979 crisis when 10 percent of the households sold land, but only 2 percent lost all of their holdings as a result.⁵²⁰ There were also

511 Nebelung 1988, p. 194.

512 *The Net* 1986, esp. pp. 34–43.

513 Hoque 1987, pp. 184–188, quote p. 184; see Arens and van Beurden 1977, p. 142.

514 Rahman Khan 1977, p. 159; Rahman 1986, p. 169.

515 Chambers 1983, pp. 122–123; a similar picture of reasons for taking out loans is in Herbon 1984, p. 377.

516 Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee 1984, pp. 5–6; Arens and van Beurden 1977, pp. 113, 117, 121; Bertocci 1976, p. 173; Huq et al. 1976, pp. 139–143; de Vylder 1982, p. 114; Jansen 1983a, p. 132; Hoque 1987, p. 210. Rahman 1986, p. 168 saw land prices rising in 1973–1974.

517 "Summary Report of the 1977 Land Occupancy Survey", 1977, as note 409 in this chapter; Cain 1981, p. 454; Rahman Khan 1979a, pp. 130, 132; Zaman 1984, p. 274. Locally, Siddiqui 1980, pp. 158–160 and Westergaard 1985, pp. 115, 127 observed fewer land sales.

518 Januzzi and Peach 1980, p. 106; Hoque 1987, p. 189.

519 See Torry 1984, p. 228 and Muqtada 1981, pp. 16, 27, as opposed to the exaggeration in Collins and Moore Lappé 1980, p. 154, for 1974; Hossain 1988a, p. 117, for the 1980s; Hossain et al. 1994, p. 268, for 1987.

520 Cutler 1985, p. 214.

sometimes poor people buying and wealthy selling land, or land was changing hands among the better-off.⁵²¹ Many who bought land in the 1960s were forced to sell it in the early 1970s.⁵²² Land transactions became more frequent in villages with 'modern' agricultural production.⁵²³ The struggle over land was complex and dogged. For many families, it ended in impoverishment and slow death from sickness and hunger for small children, but also adults.⁵²⁴ Per capita spending declined in 1963–1976 for 95 percent of the population, and Muhammad Yunus found in a village study in 1976 that 80 percent of men thought that they were worse off than their parents had been.⁵²⁵ Another village study found that families in 1984 had movable assets worth less than US\$50 on average.⁵²⁶

There was striking social mobility in Bangladesh's countryside. It was strongly on the increase in the 1970s – fueled in part by the independence conflict in 1971 and the famine in 1974–1975 – and possibly already in the 1960s.⁵²⁷ In a period of 24 years in one village in Rangpur district, half of all households experienced upward mobility and two-thirds downward mobility, there was much in- and outmigration, and many families split and merged.⁵²⁸ Even more dramatically, a study of two villages showed that only 22.6 percent of rich households in 1951 were still rich in 1981, and more than one-third of 1981s' rich had risen to that status.⁵²⁹ Amidst a general trend of descent in the lower and middle strata and consolidation in the upper strata, the reverse was also observed.⁵³⁰ The proportion of larger farms declined.⁵³¹ Social mobility was strong, multidirectional and complex.⁵³²

Monetization permeated all rural social relations.⁵³³ According to a survey in 1984–1985, the landless and minifundists derived only about 10 percent of their income from gifts and relief, coming in approximately equal parts from government relief, private relief organizations, relatives, and neighbors.⁵³⁴ Very few, if any, villagers lived only on the crops that they grew. A rising proportion of the rice was marketed – an estimated 10 percent in 1964–1965, 19–23 percent in 1973–1978, 40 percent in 1980–1985 and 60 percent around 2000, though the early figures may be underestimates. Seventy-seven percent of the surplus was from just 15 percent of farms in 1973–1974, but even small farms sold more than half of their

521 Hossain 1988a, p. 117; Westergaard 1983, pp. 35, 37; Herbon 1984, p. 200.

522 Westergaard 1983, p. 36.

523 Hossain 1988a, pp. 116–117.

524 For example, see Hartmann and Boyce 1989, pp. 31–33, 42–44.

525 Akanda 1985, p. 38. For similar statements, see Jansen 1983a, p. 15; Osmani 1991, p. 322.

526 Hossain 1987, p. 41.

527 Van Schendel 1982, pp. 186, 254, cf. pp. 97–99.

528 Van Schendel 1982, pp. 99–109, 186. Similar findings of social mobility in Westergaard 1985, p. 126; Datta 1998, pp. 46–48.

529 Rahman 1986, pp. 87–89; for elite circulation, see also Bertocci 1976, p. 173.

530 Herbon 1992, pp. 314–315.

531 See Bose 1974, p. 22 for 1960–1968.

532 Van Schendel 1982, pp. x, 4, 183–190, 291–298. See also Franda 1982a, p. 196.

533 This becomes abundantly clear in Hartmann and Boyce 1983.

534 Hossain 1987, pp. 117, 127.

production in the 1990s.⁵³⁵ In 1974, at least half of Bangladesh's overwhelmingly rural population bought rice because they either had no land or did not produce enough. Village studies confirm this picture. Many who were forced to sell rice in need of cash later had to buy some.⁵³⁶ Most farmers did not sell rice on the farm but at 6,000–6,500 technically badly equipped rural markets.⁵³⁷

The social changes and social mobility led to tension and open conflict. Violence pervaded the country after the war of independence anyway, with an average 15–20 officially recorded riots per day, gheraos (in which crowds besieged officials and entrepreneurs), thousands of kidnappings, robberies and political murders.⁵³⁸ Robbery, theft, physical harassment and false police cases remained a mass phenomenon for a long time. Violent acts could be organized by large landowners sending gangs of thugs, or groups of poor confronting the wealthy,⁵³⁹ or directed against another ethnoreligious group, like in seizing Hindus' land, on top of pogrom-like scenes.⁵⁴⁰ In a long process, Hindus lost much of their land in the 30 years after 1947, especially when they had to flee from persecution. Many disputes revolved around who was able to register on his own name land formerly owned by Hindus.⁵⁴¹ Factionalism between local elites added to the conflicts.⁵⁴²

Conflicts over land often lasted for years.⁵⁴³ If they involved small owners and went to court, they could ruin both sides, which was in the interest of rich neighbors.⁵⁴⁴ In their conflicts with the poor, wealthy men could count on the help of local police and civil servants.⁵⁴⁵ Rich farmers dominated the local administrations and also the *shalish* (village arbitration courts), which had “become a rich peasants' instrument”.⁵⁴⁶

But there was also infighting between the poor. Arens and van Beurden found in 1974–1975 that in the village in Kushtia district where they lived about 12 percent of the families were directly involved in land quarrels and as many indirectly.

535 Mosharraf Hossain, “Our Food Problem”, *Holiday*, 19 May 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974; Streeten 1987, p. 115; Ahmed 1979, p. 21; Hossain 1988, p. 52; Ahmed 2004, p. 4047. See also Chowdhury and Haggblade 2000a, p. 74.

536 Mosharraf Hossain, “Our Food Problem”, *Holiday*, 19 May 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974. See also Januzzi and Peach 1980, p. 117, and the village studies van Schendel 1982, p. 85; Martius-von Harder 1978, p. 100; Herbon 1992, pp. 267–268.

537 FAO, “Rural Marketing: A Critical Link for Small Farmer Development [. . .]”, December 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 32, RU 7/46.33 Annex; Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 131; Ahmed 1979, p. 21; BRAC 1986, pp. 14, 63, 84–88, 100.

538 See Gerlach 2010, pp. 131–132, 169–171.

539 Arens and van Beurden 1977, p. 163; Mascarenhas 1986, p. 37; *The Net* 1986, pp. 7–32; Jansen 1983a, p. 190; Zillur Rahman 1995, p. 124.

540 Datta 1998, pp. 46–48.

541 BRAC 1986, pp. 22–24; Datta 1998, pp. 46–48; Jansen 1983a, pp. 223–229.

542 See BRAC 1986, pp. 122–129.

543 Hoque 1987, pp. 135–142.

544 Rahman 1986, p. 238.

545 Rahman 1986, pp. 237–240.

546 See Siddiqui 1980, pp. 306–312, 315–323; Hoque 1987, pp. 142–143 (quote p. 143).

The number had increased since 1960. “These villages should therefore not be called ‘communities’”, they added.⁵⁴⁷ “[P]eople are not neighbors but rivals”, concluded the FAO’s country representative Hugh Brammer in 1978, and Betsy Hartmann and James Boyce stated: “Bangladesh is the scene of relentless struggles, pitting villager against villager”.⁵⁴⁸ BRAC too pointed out: “Tensions and conflicts over agriculture-related activities are unlimited” and related to labor, land boundaries and land transactions. Within families, many conflicts were about the distribution of the household income.⁵⁴⁹ Villagers stated in interviews: “Poverty forces us to be ruthless” and “I cannot afford to practice and live accord to high moral standards”.⁵⁵⁰

A Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies’ survey of four villages in 1974 noted that “conflict over land and scarce resources is endemic and, often, explicitly or implicitly violent” and “the poor are confronted with the bleakness of a world without law for the powerless”.⁵⁵¹ That land disputes led to killings was “common”, according to a 1979 report.⁵⁵² “A large number of criminal cases, including assault and murder in the rural areas, arise out of either disrupted ownership of land or rival claims over its ownership”, read another.⁵⁵³ Already before 1971, a police officer from Patuakhali district said that it was “as the harvest is reaped, when most crimes take place. Murders are mostly committed over crops or land”.⁵⁵⁴ Frequent theft was another issue. In the early 1980s, a scholar recorded 197 cases of theft in a village of 376 households in Bogra district within one year; in about 50 percent food was stolen, in 20 percent household utensils, in 10 percent animals.⁵⁵⁵

Multiple conflicts also occurred within the family, especially in times of famine,⁵⁵⁶ but also more generally. Muslim women claiming their right to inherit land were challenged by male relatives, sometimes in court; husbands and sons threatened to divorce or abandon them and sometimes did so; kin stole women’s land with forged documents; women were beaten and tortured by relatives; and brothers coerced sisters to lease them their land but did not pay the rent and eventually wrestled the land away from

547 Arens and van Beurden 1977, pp. 140–146, quote pp. 145–146. Similar findings are in Cain 1978, p. 427; see Noronha 1985, p. 211.

548 Brammer is quoted in Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 59; the other quote is in Hartmann and Boyce 1983, p. 205.

549 BRAC 1986, pp. 188, 189 (quote).

550 Jansen 1983a, p. 71.

551 Quoted in Étienne 1979, pp. 84, 85.

552 “Bangladesh Annual Report 1978–79”, 3 April 1979, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee Nov 1976–Jan 1980.

553 M. Zaman, “The Role of Land Administration in Agricultural Development”, n.d. (1977?), FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 27, RU 7/46.29(a), vol. I.

554 Quoted in Moraes 1971, p. 70.

555 Herbon 1984, p. 261; see Westergaard 1983, p. 74.

556 See Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee 1984, pp. 8–9; Currey 1979, p. 107.

them.⁵⁵⁷ Often women did not claim their inheritance rights under Muslim law because this entitled them to move in with their brothers in case of divorce or widowhood. It was often their husbands who made women claim their inheritance.⁵⁵⁸ This was part of a broader trend. Divorce and separation were on the rise, and there were more female-headed households because men, particularly poor men, could or would no longer “discharge their customary responsibilities” toward wives and daughters.⁵⁵⁹ In a special variety of this kind of behavior, known as “seasonal divorce”, poor men divorced or deserted their wives in the lean season. This was also when women were more frequently beaten, often because husbands and sons were angry if not given food.⁵⁶⁰ In the 2000s, women at a BRAC workshop said that poverty first eroded the ties within the extended family and then within the immediate family.⁵⁶¹ In general, poverty led to smaller household sizes through disputes and lack of financial means. Whereas many studies talk of a dominance of bourgeois family models that are copied by lower classes, in Bangladesh it was the very poor who pioneered nuclear families, female-headed and single households.⁵⁶²

Land was not only taken from female relatives. In a “bitter struggle for survival”, brothers forced brothers to mortgage their land under usurious conditions and then sell it to them cheaply.⁵⁶³ Brothers’ living standards often diverged widely.⁵⁶⁴ Tenancy and employment were often among brothers or wider kin, not always under favorable terms.⁵⁶⁵ More generally, “enmity, suspicion and hatred developed between brothers fighting over land property”. Many such conflicts were about inheritance through which “most property is transferred”.⁵⁶⁶ All of these social processes and conditions were also reflected in people’s nourishment.

557 Agarwal 1994, pp. 283–284, 293, 297; Kabeer 2003, p. 149. See also Arens and van Beurden 1977, pp. 45–46; Hartmann and Boyce 1983, pp. 92–93 saw women increasingly making claims. For a counterexample, see Westergaard 1983, p. 70. Siddiqui 1980, p. 161 with low figures on female landownership.

558 Jansen 1983a, pp. 66–67; Hoque 1987, pp. 158–159.

559 Kabeer 1990, p. 144; Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982, p. 75 note 9; Jansen 1983a, p. 85; Siddiqui 1980, p. 398.

560 Kabeer 2003, pp. 144, 156.

561 See Smillie 2009, p. 53. Siddiqui 1980, p. 398 offers some data for this.

562 Hoque 1987, pp. 151–154. In other countries, this also applies to co-habitation without marriage. For the argument on bourgeois family models, see Hoernle 1973 (1929) and the overview in Eibach 2022.

563 Huq 1976, p. 117, from a village study from Comilla district; see also Cain 1981. For frequent land sales of people to brothers and wider kin, see BRAC 1986, p. 47; Jansen 1983a, p. 125; Hoque 1987, p. 215. But see Siddiqui 1980, pp. 213, 312.

564 Jansen 1983a, p. 213.

565 For employment, see BRAC 1986, p. 197; for brothers or other relatives in a landlord-tenant relationship, see Jansen 1983a, pp. 166–174, 336; Sen 1995b, p. 202; see also Hoque 1987, pp. 212, 215.

566 Jansen 1983a, pp. 68–69, 71 (quotes), 217–222; Hoque 1987, p. 157.

Table 7.1 Data on nutrition in Bangladesh in 1961–2015⁵⁶⁷

	1961– 1963	1962– 1964	1965	1966– 1968	1969– 1971	1971	1974– 1976	1975– 1976	1977– 1979	1979– 1981	1981– 1982
Daily calorie consumption	1,939	2,301	1,964	1,939	2,002	1,840	1,816	2,029	1,787	1,837	1,943
					2,012			2,060		1,850	
						80		2,094		80	
Calories as percent of requirements											
Daily protein consumption in grams		57.9		38.1	40.2	40	37.2	56.8	36.3	39.7	48.4
								57.5			
								58.5			
	1983– 85	1984	1985	1990– 92	1995– 96	1995– 97	2000– 2002	2002– 2004	2003– 2005	2005– 2007	2015
Daily calorie consumption	1,854	[1,940]	1,899	1,960	1,960	1,930	2,170	2,325	2,230	2,250	ca. 2,300
				2,010		2,086					
Calories as percent of requirements		84									
Daily protein consumption in grams		42		43	42	45		50	48		

With few aberrations, these data are consistent; the methodology at their basis differed, though it is impossible here and for similar tables in the following case studies to discuss it in every case in detail; many are derived from calculations about the overall food supply. It is possible but uncertain that the situation was relatively comfortable in the early 1960s. Consumption was low in the mid- to late 1960s due to drought and a limited ‘modernization’ of agriculture, increased slightly at the end of the decade, dropped during the war of independence and the famines 1972–1975, and very low levels of nutrition continued into the 1980s.⁵⁶⁸ After overall intake levels were not much better in the 1990s, they improved in the early 2000s,

567 UN World Food Conference 1974a, p. 52; Almeida et al. 1975a, p. 103; Hassan and Ahmad 1984, p. 150; Lawo 1984, pp. 27, 263; von Blanckenburg 1986, pp. 136, 145; Hossain 1987, pp. 32, 59; Parikh and Tims 1989, pp. 12–13; Timmer 1991, p. 148; Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 166–171; Begum et al. 2013, p. 268; ChartsBin, <http://chartsbin.com/view/1150> (accessed 22 March 2018); Siddiqui et al. 2015, p. 107. The 1971 data are ascribed to 1969–71 in Biswas and Biswas 1975, p. 17 (also for Indonesia, Mali and Tanzania). See Chowdhury 1993, pp. 183–185 for a critique of the 1975–1976 and 1981–1982 surveys.

If the literature provides two different data for one year, they are listed below each other. Figures in square brackets were calculated from information about the percentage of minimum requirements met.

568 FAO 1985, pp. 179–180 offers slightly different data: a minimum requirement of 2,210 calories, 87 percent of which were met in 1970–1972, 83 percent in 1973–1975, 82 percent in 1977–1979 and 83 percent in 1980–1982. These figures imply 1,923, 1,834, 1,812 and 1,834 calories per day, respectively. According to Hartmann and Boyce 1989, p. 71 the intake of calories and protein actually decreased, and the number of malnourished families rose, from the 1975 famine level to 1984.

dropped slightly mid-decade, but rose again later.⁵⁶⁹ Calorie deficiency was reduced more for women than for children in the 1990s and 2000s.⁵⁷⁰ Bangladesh's governments adopted the UN Millenium Development Goals, but in 2015 the country "was behind on some nutrition, and on water and sanitation, targets".⁵⁷¹

Bangladesh remained a land of hunger. Except for one short period, calorie intake was *on average* below the daily requirement of 2,310 (as determined by FAO in the 1970s). In 1987, a UNICEF team found that only 5 percent of Bangladeshis consumed food in sufficient quantity and quality.⁵⁷² 37 percent of the population had an adequate food intake in 1995–1997, and the intake of fats was particularly low.⁵⁷³ Around 1995, about half of the people lived on less than 1,740 calories.⁵⁷⁴ The situation improved in the 2000s, but in 2013, 24 percent received still fewer than 1,805 calories, and 45 percent fewer than 2,122 calories, per day.⁵⁷⁵ More than half of the children were found stunted or wasted in 1998, more than in any other case study included in this book. By 2006, this had hardly changed.⁵⁷⁶

Such general average data mask great inequality, especially in Bangladesh. Of course, poor people often ate less than the well-off. Many poor Bangladeshis went hungry, especially in the 1970s. In 1963–1964, 40.2 percent of the population consumed fewer than 1,935 calories, and 5.2 percent fewer than 1,720 calories, per day. By 1973–1974, conditions had worsened drastically when 78.5 percent had fewer than 1,935 calories and a staggering 42.1 percent fewer than 1,720 calories.⁵⁷⁷ And the number of those who received under 1,805 calories increased substantially from 1974 to 1982 both in absolute and relative terms.⁵⁷⁸ Rural wage workers in particular suffered from inadequate food intake – almost all of them.⁵⁷⁹ Female-headed households, families of fishermen and boat pullers were also strongly affected.⁵⁸⁰ Even the comparatively optimistic 1975–1976 food survey concluded that "every member of every single family owning less than three acres [1.2 hectares] of land was deficient in its intake of calories, calcium, vitamin A,

See also Hossain 1987, p. 31; Jessen 1986, p. 272; Parikh and Tims 1989, p. 13; Ravallion 1995, p. 299.

569 See Begum et al. 2013, pp. 266–267; also Ahmed et al. 2012, p. 6; <http://chartsbin.com/view/1150> (accessed 31 January 2019) shows no drop in 2005–2007 and Ahmed 2004, p. 4051 says that there was a slight decrease in foodgrain consumption in the 1990s. Siddiqui et al. 2015, p. 107 shows a decrease in 2000–2005 and a marked increase in 2005–2010.

570 Ahmed et al. 2012, pp. 2, 6.

571 Hossain 2017, p. 47.

572 Kabeer 2003, p. 142.

573 Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 166–171; see also Ahmed 2000, p. 105.

574 Hashemi 1997, p. 253.

575 Siddiqui et al. 2015, pp. 110–113.

576 Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 178–183; see also Begum et al. 2013, p. 269; "Bangladesh in figures", <https://bangladesh.org/en/bangladesh/country-brief/bangladesh-in-figures.html> (accessed 13 December 2018). For earlier, similar data, see World Bank 1990, p. 41; Osmani 1991, p. 310; Chowdhury 1993, pp. 212–213. Chowdhury 1995a, p. 87 offers slightly more optimistic data for 1990–1991.

577 Lifschultz 1979, p. 109.

578 World Bank 1987, pp. 132, 137.

579 See Osmani 1991, pp. 308–309.

580 Ahmed 2000c, p. 213.

riboflavin, and vitamin C”.⁵⁸¹ Those who earned less than Tk100 per month consumed 885 daily calories on average.⁵⁸² One study of six villages in 1984–1985 concluded that 20 percent of the population had fewer than 887 calories per day, a starvation diet. The average intake was 1,526 calories.⁵⁸³ In 1982, the poorest third of Bangladeshis consumed fewer than 1,500 calories per day.⁵⁸⁴ Another sign of poverty was that over 60 percent of the landless and poor did not possess sufficient clothing. Many lacked warm winter cloths and many women any sari undamaged enough to leave the house.⁵⁸⁵

In 2000, the government set the minimum daily requirement of calories at 2,122, lower than the FAO had done before; still, the intake of about half of citizens was below that level, and one quarter consumed fewer than 1,800 calories. The data were only slightly better in 2006.⁵⁸⁶ One scholar concluded in 2012 that “around 40% of the population cannot afford to have the desired number of calories per day”, more than the 31.5 percent who did not reach the official calorie requirement.⁵⁸⁷

Rural dwellers ate considerably more than urbanites in the 1970s, as in other non-industrialized countries.⁵⁸⁸ Females had a worse nutritional standard than males in almost all age groups.⁵⁸⁹ According to one study, it was families of minifundists and domestic servants that ate the least; those of landless workers a bit more; families of people working in commerce, transportation and small landowners were at a medium level; and those of fishermen, larger landowners and female headed households (often counted among the poorest) were relatively well fed.⁵⁹⁰ There was little seasonal variation in per capita intake.⁵⁹¹

Rice was the main staple. Two scholars in the 1970s learned of many villagers having just one rice meal – in their view, a full meal – per day. Another researcher studied a village in 1980 where 63 percent of the landless, and 30 percent of those with over 0.2 hectares land, had just two meals daily. In another village, those having three meals per day counted as rich. Yet another study in the early 1980s came up with even worse rates.⁵⁹² In 1975–1976, people ate 440 or 520 grams of rice per day, according to varying data; according to a UN aid organizer, it was only 5–8 ounces per day for many in 1972.⁵⁹³ In six Bangladeshi villages in 1984–1985, the

581 Quoted in Franda 1982b, p. 8.

582 Ahmed 1979, p. 19.

583 Hossain 1987, pp. 48, 59, 96

584 World Bank 1987, p. 139.

585 Siddiqui 1980, p. 245. See also Sen 1995a, pp. 100–101; Hamid 1995, p. 136.

586 Begum et al. 2013, p. 264; see also Smillie 2009, p. 177; “Bangladesh in figures”, <https://bangladesh.org/en/bangladesh/country-brief/bangladesh-in-figures.html> (accessed 13 December 2018).

587 Ahmed 2012, p. 8.

588 FAO 1985, p. 103; UN World Food Conference 1974a, p. 61; Islam 1978, p. 5.

589 Kabeer 2003, p. 122; Kabeer 1990, p. 138.

590 Hossain 1987, pp. 110, 120, 132–133.

591 Hossain 1987, p. 91; see Longhurt and Payne 1981, p. 49.

592 Westergaard 1983, p. 60; Siddiqui 1980, pp. 241, 401; Kabeer 2003, p. 145; Arens and van Beurden 1977, p. 77; Rahman 1986, p. 147; Hossain 1987, pp. 62–63; see also Chen 1986, p. 179.

593 Van Schendel 1982, p. 76; text of an article by Tony Hagen in *The Economist*, 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 36, BD Bangladesh 1974. For 1981–1982, see Hassan and Ahmad 1984, p. 145.

relatively well-off consumed 530 grams of rice on average per day, while the poorest averaged just 224 grams.⁵⁹⁴ On the other hand, a countrywide dietary survey in 1981–1982 found that even in the highest income group, 56 percent received fewer than the official daily requirement of calories.⁵⁹⁵ This included children from wealthier families, whereas the nutritional status of relatively many poor children was sufficient – probably because they were working and buying their own food.⁵⁹⁶ Gastro-intestinal diseases showed little differentiation according to wealth.⁵⁹⁷ Fifty million or more Bangladeshis went hungry regularly.

Because more and more winter (*boro*) rice was grown, less pulses and vegetables were produced and eaten, for which winter was the normal season. A large part of these pulses were marketed. This reduced many people's intake of minerals and vitamins to low levels.⁵⁹⁸ That is, *boro* rice, which was supposed to solve Bangladesh's food problem, made the rural diet even poorer. The population's fruit consumption declined even more steeply.⁵⁹⁹ Vitamin A and iron deficiency were widespread, but according to the 1981–1982 food survey, people had enough iron, thiamine and niacine while most lacked calcium, riboflavin and vitamin C.⁶⁰⁰ Micronutrient intake also differed according to income.⁶⁰¹ In this situation, NGOs like BRAC and the Grameen Bank called on their members to grow and eat vegetables, which, like fruit, women could tend without violating *purdah*. Raising vegetables had higher rates of return than rice farming in the 1990s.⁶⁰² Over the period 1973–1998, vegetable production was on par with population growth, unlike pulses and oilseeds which needed to be imported.⁶⁰³ Vitamin A deficiency, which had caused blindness in about 30,000 children annually, was largely overcome between 1982 and 2004, though anemia was not.⁶⁰⁴ Today, Bangladesh boasts to be the world's third largest vegetable producer.⁶⁰⁵

Although much of the population is still chronically hungry, people in Bangladesh came to live much longer lives in the past half-century.

594 Hossain 1987, p. 61.

595 Hassan and Ahmad 1984, p. 154.

596 Herbon 1992, p. 199.

597 Sen 1995a, p. 105.

598 See Herbon 1992, pp. 174, 199, 229, 268 note 567 (who sees no lack of protein); Hassan and Ahmad 1984, pp. 146, 148, 152, 154; see also Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 21, 80, 82; Islam 1978, pp. 5, 13; Hossain 1988, p. 36. According to World Bank 1987, p. 138, vegetable intake increased 1974–1982, whereas people consumed less milk, pulses and fruit.

599 Alauddin and Tisdell 1991, pp. 91–99, esp. p. 92.

600 Franda 1982b, p. 8; Hassan and Ahmad 1984, pp. 155–157; Siddiqui 1980, p. 103. Chowdhury 1993, pp. 198–199, notes higher deficits also for Niacine.

601 See Ahmed 2000, p. 106.

602 For *purdah*, see Kabeer 1990, p. 140. For Grameen Bank's '16 decisions', see Yunus with Jolis 1998, p. 147, and for BRAC's '17 promises' Lovell 1992, p. 84. For rates of return, see Ahmed 2004, p. 4049. For foreign experts recommending fruit and vegetable cultivation, see comments by René Dumont in Robinson and Griffin 1974, pp. 162, 177; Étienne 1979, p. 76.

603 Mahmud et al. 2000, pp. 233, 240, 253.

604 Ahmed et al. 2012, pp. 3–4; Lovell 1992, p. 13; World Bank 1990, p. 41; Chowdhury 1993, p. 217.

605 See Faruq 2018.

Table 7.2 Data on life and death in Bangladesh in 1960–2013⁶⁰⁶

	1960	1961	1965	1970	1971	1972	1979	1981	1983	1984	1984/ 1985	1985/ 1986	1987
Life expectancy	43	48	44	45	48		49	50	49/50		47	48	
Infant mortality per 1,000	151		153			149		56	53.9				
Under five mortality per 1,000	262	258	177		223			194	152		121	148	131
											125		120
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1997	2001	2004	2011	2013			
Life expectancy	50		52	51	55.6	58	66		69	70.4			
Infant mortality per 1,000				115	91	108	109	56		37			
Under five mortality per 1,000		ca.		138		191	84		47				
		180											

Invariably, there are some contradictions and gaps in such compilations, and some question marks are at place. However, the data show improvements, first slow with some stagnation (or even declines) in the 1980s but then accelerating. Reportedly, the average child mortality between 1980 and 1985 was at up to 215 per 1,000.⁶⁰⁷ One author holds that infant mortality declined slowly from the 1950s to the early 1980s, though it stagnated in the early 1970s.⁶⁰⁸ However, from 1990 to the early 2000s, it was halved, and the death rate for children under five was down 45 percent. According to UNICEF data, the death rate for children under five was 32.4 per 1,000 in 2017, after a steady decline over more than 25 years (1990: 143.8 per 1,000).⁶⁰⁹ By the 1970s, adult mortality was relatively high, and markedly higher than average among

606 Philip Jackson, "Report of a Month in Bangladesh, 16th June–14th July 1972", 21 July 1972, Oxfam, Bangladesh Tour Reports 1972–1987; Lawo 1984, p. 9; Tricia Parker, "Bangladesh and Burma, Annual report – 1985/86", August 1986, Oxfam, Box India Annual Reports, file Bangladesh and Burma Annual; Nebelung 1986, annex 15a; Rahman 1986, p. xlv; Hossain 1987, p. 33; Jazairy et al. 1992, pp. 9, 392; Thomas 1994, pp. 58, 74; Ravallion 1995, pp. 299–300; Young 1997, p. 31; Chowdhury 1998, p. 166; Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 190–195; Olsen 2002, p. 83; Faaland and Parkinson 2013, p. 8; Hossain 2017, p. 43; "Bangladesh in figures", <https://bangladesh.org/en/bangladesh/country-brief/bangladesh-in-figures.html> (accessed 13 December 2018). Lawo 1984, pp. 51–52 gives an infant mortality rate of about 170 and an under 5 mortality rate of about 260 in 1962–1964.

607 Kakwani et al. 1993, p. 153. For the early 1980s in rural areas, see also Hossain 1987, p. 33. World Bank 1987, p. 206 saw life expectancy falling and infant mortality on the rise 1980–1984. Data in Chen et al. 1981, p. 57 seem to indicate that infant mortality dropped in the middle of the 1970s.

608 Prosterman 1984, p. 16. For five-year periods from 1950–1955 to 1980–1985, Prosterman lists 179.5, 161.9, 156.0, 150.3, 150.3, 139.6 and 132.6 as infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births.

609 Smillie 2009, p. 215; Ahmed et al. 2012, p. 7; UNICEF website, <https://data.unicef.org/country/bgd/> (accessed 28 August 2019). Begum et al. 2013 mention lower infant mortality rates for the

the poor, but normally there was not much of a social differentiation in deaths among children (except during the 1974–1975 famine).⁶¹⁰ And this appears to have remained so for a while. However, life expectancy increased from 55 years to 63 years from the early 1990s to the early 2000s⁶¹¹ and is today over 70 years. But for many people, these improvements were not the result of a much better diet than before.

The impact of migration

Phenomena of migration are important to understand social changes in the countryside and have strong implications for rural poverty. Labor emigration increased in the second half of the 1970s and rose to a significant level in the 1980s, when between 150,000 and 250,000, Bangladeshis were registered as working abroad. Annual departures first exceeded 50,000 in 1981; there were between 200,000 and 250,000 from the early 1990s to the mid-2000s and one million in 2007–2008.⁶¹² By tendency, the dominant sort of emigrant shifted from highly skilled to unskilled workers, the main destination changed from Britain (until the early 1970s) to the Persian Gulf region.⁶¹³ In the early 1990s, an increasing number of Bangladeshis also emigrated to Malaysia and North America.⁶¹⁴ Migrants to Britain came primarily from Sylhet district and those to West Asia from Chittagong, Noakhali, Sylhet, Dhaka and Comilla districts.⁶¹⁵ In 2015, between 8.6 and 10 million Bangladeshis worked abroad.⁶¹⁶

Labor emigration is said to have made a big impact on the national economy. In the 1980s, the value of remittances from workers abroad (which had been modest in 1976 at slightly above US\$50 million, or 10 percent of export earnings) were US\$700 million, which was 90 percent of export earnings (though not enough to make up for the country's trade deficit) or from 2 percent to 5 percent of GDP. This share rose to between 7 percent and 10 percent in 2005–2015.⁶¹⁷ Emigrants' money transfers home from abroad reached \$1 billion annually in the early 1990s, \$2 billion in 2001–2002, \$5 billion in 2006 and \$14 billion in 2013–2014.⁶¹⁸ The government's Workers Earnings' Scheme channeled some of this money into the ready-made garment export sector, the country's most important emerging industry.⁶¹⁹ Remittances constituted 3.7 percent of rural household incomes in 1987/1988 but 18.5 percent in 2000.⁶²⁰ Privately recipients used money from remittances for housing, savings, but also invested it in land, bullocks, water pumps, tubewells,

1990s and 2000s: 96 per 1,000 for 1990–1992, 75 for 1995–1997, 54 for 2000–2002 and 56 for 2004, and for under 5 mortality 144, 116, 82 and 77, respectively.

610 Cain 1978, pp. 434–435; Razzaque 1985, p. 86.

611 Begum et al. 2013, p. 269.

612 Azam and Shahabuddin 1999, p. 286; Wennergren et al. 1984, pp. 11, 70; Hossain 2017, p. 175.

613 Azam and Shahabuddin 1999, p. 289; Gardner 1995, p. 2, 50.

614 Gardner 1995, p. 52.

615 Gardner 1995, p. 2.

616 Hossain 2017, pp. 58–59, 175.

617 Azam and Shahabuddin 1999, p. 286., 288, 290; Hossain 2017, p. 58; see Gardner 1995, p. 23; for 1976, see de Vylder 1982, p. 57.

618 Van Schendel 2009, p. 225; Hossain 2017, pp. 58, 175.

619 Azam and Shahabuddin 1999, pp. 286–287, 305.

620 Mannan 2015, p. 24.

tractors and fertilizer. In some places, this drove up land prices. Labor emigrants tended to come from wealthier households, or their families acquired wealth (this was especially true for migration to Britain), although there was no guarantee.⁶²¹ This means that labor emigration may have spurred agricultural capital accumulation. It also boosted education for some relatives in Bangladesh as well as strict interpretations of Islam and practices of *purdah*, although it also provided economic opportunities for women at home.⁶²² But these effects became weaker. In 2013, about 80 percent of emigrants were from poor families, and the money they sent home was the primary income in 78 percent of their families.⁶²³

There were other population movements. One was urbanization: from 1960 to 1992, the urban population increased from 5 percent to 17 percent of the total (or about from three million to 17 million). In 2015, it was 24 percent.⁶²⁴ From 1974 to 1981 alone, four million people relocated to cities.⁶²⁵ Both men and women moved. In the 1970s, people also moved seasonally to the cities in the summer, when demand for labor in the countryside was low, to work in factories and as cooks, servants, drivers, bricklayers and dockworkers.⁶²⁶ The second movement to gain importance was seasonal rural-rural labor migration of work gangs of poor men for agricultural work for between one day and two months, either short-distance or outside the home district, which was in part organized by rich peasants.⁶²⁷ Third, in the 1980s about half a million people went to farm as semi-colonial settlers into the Chittagong Hill Tracts. And fourth, several million Bangladeshis trickled across the border into eastern India over decades. Many but not all of these emigrés probably just managed to make a living without sending remittances.⁶²⁸ In the state of Assam alone, the Indian authorities deny four million people citizenship for allegedly being Bangladeshi immigrants.⁶²⁹

Conclusion

Bangladesh greatly increased its staple food production per capita, especially in the 1990s and 2000s, but there is still mass hunger. National and international rural development policies were production-oriented and primarily based on irrigation, upon which the use of high-yielding varieties depended. Domestic and international strategists saw credit programs as the key to increasing the use of technical inputs in food production. But in none of these loan programs, the majority ever ‘graduated’ from credit, whether it was in the Comilla approach, the integrated rural development programs or among Grameen Bank customers. They all failed. In the former two, the resources were appropriated by large and medium landowners, and

621 Gardner 1995, pp. 1, 59, 61, 66, 69, 78, 81, 85–86, 88, 94–95, 97, 123, 279; Azam and Shahabuddin 1999, p. 291. Zaman 1997, p. 233, doubts that remittances had a big impact on family wealth.

622 Gardner 1995, pp. 97, 210, 226; Abdus Sabur and Mahmud 2008.

623 Hossain 2017, p. 176.

624 Young 1997, p. 71; Hossain 2017, p. 146.

625 Wennergren et al. 1984, p. 68.

626 Chaudhury 1981, p. 90.

627 Datta 1998, pp. 126, 181–203; Jansen 1983a, p. 105.

628 Van Schendel 2009, pp. 227, 229; Islam 2005, pp. 470–474 mentions remittances of an unknown size.

629 See Kauffmann Bossart 2019.

the latter program turned away from grain production and supported a secondary or alternative income through self-employment in various agricultural and non-agricultural activities, helping create “survivalist” micro-firms.⁶³⁰

Farming families financed any technical inputs for grain production instead primarily with own savings and secondarily through informal credit. For small peasants and minifundists, this meant to take on great sacrifices. For some, they bore fruit; others lost the little farmland they had; and many carried on, barely surviving. In this sense, what happened can be called “immiserizing growth” leading to dispossession and, for many, proletarianization.⁶³¹ Bangladesh is an example where small peasant ‘development’ and technical inputs resulted in more inequality and a lot of hunger.

It has to be kept in mind that much of the money designated as foreign ‘aid’ for Bangladesh paid the salaries of ‘experts’ and never reached the country. Most of the money and goods that did arrive ended up in the hands of civil servants, rural elites and military officers⁶³² and, so, stimulated other parts of the economy than programmed, namely, construction and services to supply these elites.⁶³³ It was also from their ranks that Bangladesh’s textile industrialists emerged. Among these elites were a “military-bureaucratic oligarchy” and merchants that one critic called “lumpen capitalists”, who appeared, at least early on, to amass “not capital, but wealth”.⁶³⁴ Also, national and international development projects inevitably created new divisions in society because they never had the capacity to ‘reach’ more than a fraction of the population. “We now have a new class of the aided and patronised poor who have been divided from the masses of the poor”, Rehman Sobhan stated.⁶³⁵ This reinforced the lack of class solidarity in rural Bangladesh.⁶³⁶ The fact that foreign agencies paid their Bangladeshi employees much higher salaries than the Bangladeshi government its officials, created additional envy and discord.⁶³⁷ In a way, then, ‘development’ did function as state surveillance and control of society, as Abdul Bhuiyan et al. argued, though it was not as tight and effective as they believed.⁶³⁸ Settlement programs, for example, failed. However, military and civilian regimes alike successfully aimed at the stabilization of capitalism in Bangladesh and the country’s integration into the world economy.⁶³⁹

People do live much longer in Bangladesh now than 50 years ago. But this is primarily the result of measures in basic health care that BRAC, other NGOs and the

630 The term is from Bateman and Chang 2012, p. 18.

631 De Vylder 1982, p. 2.

632 Riaz 1993, p. 335.

633 Private construction was a major part of this; for public construction, especially of office buildings, roads and other infrastructure, see Sadeque 1986, p. 148.

634 Riaz 1993, pp. 335 (first two quotes), 193 (third quote).

635 Sobhan 1991a, p. 5.

636 Huq et al. 1976, p. 154; van Schendel 1982.

637 Wood 1994, pp. 444–445.

638 Bhuiyan et al. 2005, esp. p. 364.

639 Riaz 1993, esp. p. 3, attributed this to military regimes.

state took with some support from abroad, not because of changes in food production and distribution and any capital accumulation that occurred there. There is still much hunger and misery in the country, and even the larger part of proletarianization – if this is progress – is happening by sending workers abroad.

8 Indonesia

Limits to farming intensification and poverty alleviation

Indonesia is important here as a nation of hunger and large farming intensification programs for small peasants, which many scholars have regarded as successful, but which at a closer look were unevenly adopted and had ambivalent social effects.

Indonesia is the largest and most populous of my cases. In the 1970s, it was fifth among the world's most populous nations, and the fourth after 1991. Its rapidly growing population reached 100 million around 1963 and 200 million in 1995.¹ In 2000, the country had about 69,000 villages.² Ethnically, linguistically, culturally and religiously diverse, it was and is dominated by Islam and the Javanese. About 60 percent of its people lived (and live) on the fertile and densely populated island of Java which is about the size of Greece. Consisting of several thousand islands in tropical Southeast Asia, Indonesia's geography, climate and biological conditions also vary greatly. The soils in many parts of the outer islands are poorer than on Java and Bali, and parts of the east are quite dry.

Only a small part of the country's 1.9 million square kilometers was under cultivation – 10 percent in 1980 (including annual and perennial cropland); according to other data, 14.4 percent in 1975 and between 12 and 17.1 percent in 1993. Close to two-thirds was forests and woodlands.³ Most people were farming in the countryside. Rice was the dominant crop, March to May being the most important harvest period.⁴ Estimates from the early 1970s are that rice was the main crop for 7.5 million peasant families, corn for 3.2 million and cassava for 1.5 million.⁵ Rice provided over half of the calories that Indonesians consumed, and corn and cassava each supplied 10 percent.⁶ Under Dutch colonialism, the archipelago was known for its plantation economy, but plantations were in decline after the 1930s. In the 1970s and 1980s, cash crops such as coconut, rubber and palm oil covered

1 The population was 97.1 million in 1961, 119.2 million in 1971, 147.5 million in 1980 and 206.3 million in 1998. Maurer 1986a, p. 61; Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 154–159.

2 Rice 2004a, p. 83.

3 Capistrano and Marten 1986, p. 8; Ahmed and Rustagi 1987, p. 106; Than 1998, p. 4; Chadha 1994, p. 64; Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 67.

4 Mears 1981, p. 35.

5 Confederation of British Industry 1975, p. 17.

6 Dixon 1984, p. 67.

a relatively small and (except for palm oil and sugar) shrinking area and were mostly grown by small peasants, with whom contract farming was on the rise.⁷

Many scholars see Indonesia as a country rising out of poverty through intelligent government policies. For whatever such data are worth, aggregate economic growth was very dynamic in the 1970s (7.6 percent) and lower, but notable, in the 1960s (3.5 percent), 1980s (4.9 percent) and 1990s, rising again in the 2000s.⁸ In 1965, Indonesia was nominally behind China, India and Bangladesh in per capita GDP; in 1990, it had surpassed them (but it has fallen behind the PRC again since).⁹ The following periodization is standard: crisis and hyperinflation in 1964–1966; stabilization and recovery in 1966–1973; strong growth through oil booms and state dirigism in 1974–1982; post-oil growth, liberalization and more of an export orientation in 1983–1996; and deep economic crisis in 1997–1999.¹⁰ Deregulation came on installments, with substantial steps in 1986 focusing more on trade and finance than industry and agriculture.¹¹ According to many analysts, a clever exchange rate policy with three major devaluations 1978–1986 eased the transition away from a merely oil-based economy.¹² As the mainstream narrative goes, the state invested the oil windfalls wisely to help intensify farming, in building domestic industries and expanding the educational sector. For in the mid-1970s, most industrial employment was still in cottage industries in the food and forest product processing sectors.¹³ Aside from mining (oil and mineral resources), the leading sector in terms of value, and the related large petrochemical factories, what emerged in the 1980s were labor-intensive consumer goods industries such as textiles and garment production, in part located in the countryside.¹⁴ In terms of employment, agricultural and wood processing remained the largest industries by far.¹⁵

Economic performance and development policies had substantial social effects. Officially, the number of poor people fell from 54 to 23 million between 1976 and 1996, or from 40 percent to 11 percent of the population. After the 1997–1998 crisis, it stood at 48 million in 1999 and remained above 30 million until 2010 (13.3 percent), indicating that the problems were structural.¹⁶ Only then, the poverty rate dropped steeply. At the onset of the crisis in 1997, many were just slightly

7 See Booth 1988, pp. 43–44; White 1999; Hill 2000, pp. 140–143. For palm oil, see *ibid.*; Stoler 1995, pp. 167–168; Anwar 1976, p. 112.

8 See Dixon 1995, p. 203; slightly different data in Bresnan 1993, p. 284; Lecrow 1992, p. 117.

9 Bresnan 1993, p. 284.

10 Thee 2002, p. 203.

11 Winters 1996, pp. 155–180; Bowie and Unger 1997, p. 58; Bresnan 1993, p. 263; Lecrow 1992, pp. 117–118.

12 Wing and Nasution 1989, pp. 108, 116; Bowie and Unger 1997, p. 56.

13 McCawley 1981a, pp. 68, 72–73; Hill 2000, p. 81.

14 Wolf 1992, pp. 37, 46.

15 Rice 2004a, p. 68 with data for 1987 and 1996.

16 Thee 2002, pp. 225, 239, 2012, pp. 70, 76; Hsu and Perry 2014, pp. 63–64; World Bank Office 2000, pp. 4–5.

above the official poverty line.¹⁷ This is a reminder of the limited value of these official data.

Indonesia is also a prime example of a developmental dictatorship.¹⁸ From 1965 to 1998, the country was governed by an authoritarian, hybrid military-civilian regime under General Suharto, which called its rule the ‘New Order’. It came to power during a time of economic and social crisis, political polarization and external confrontation with capitalist countries. The occasion for the takeover was a coup attempt of leftist-leaning officers, which propaganda blamed on the Communist Party of Indonesia, the largest communist party ever in a capitalist country with over 15 million members, if one includes affiliated organizations. From October 1965 to early 1966, an estimated half-million alleged communists were murdered in all parts of the country in a mixture of official and popular violence by military units, paramilitaries of other political parties, religious groups, mass organizations and angry crowds. At least another 1.8 million were arrested. Impoverishment, hunger, struggles for land, religious and ethnic conflict, including about transmigrants and ethnic Chinese, and disputes between neighbors were among the causes of the violence.¹⁹ Later, mass violence remained an important element of the New Order, including long-term counterinsurgency campaigns harming civilians in Aceh and Irian Jaya/West Papua, anti-Chinese pogroms, the occupation of East Timor starting in 1975 and a wave of killings and expulsions in 1996–1999.

The authoritarian system, in which elected village officials were replaced by government-appointed ones, also influenced agricultural production statistics; some U.S. observers found those too optimistic because they were based on estimates by village officials.²⁰ According to Richard Robison, the mass violence of 1965 was a “victory [. . .] for the propertied classes over the threat posed by the landless and the urban workers”.²¹ The New Order, others argued, favored comprador relationships “to serve the interest of the military elite and the civilian bureaucracy and business groups” – that is, existing elite groups.²²

The role of the military itself in the economy was ambiguous. Officially, its share of government expenditure dropped from 24.5 percent in 1970 to 15 percent in 1978 and 8.4 percent in 1988, but there are doubts about these figures, and the military also funded itself through its own unregistered economic activities, which included some big firms.²³ Many observers and contemporaries have just shouted ‘corruption!’ and assumed that it blocked productivity, though it appears more helpful to regard corruption as having facilitated or driven some of Indonesia’s growth because some capital derived from corruption was invested in productive

17 This follows from ‘World Bank’ data cited in Friend 2003, p. 152.

18 See Robison 1988.

19 See Gerlach 2010, pp. 17–91; Cribb 1990.

20 See Roche 1984a, p. 185; Mink and Dorosh 1987, pp. 46–47.

21 Robison 1988, p. 109.

22 Crouch 1978, pp. 302–303; Farid 2005 calls what transpired a “primitive accumulation” of capital (p. 10) and stresses foreign dependence, dispossession and “slave labor” (p. 12).

23 Bresnan 1993, pp. 106–107; Robison 1988, p. 239.

sectors of the economy and because the leadership supervised the situation, preventing anarchy through corruption.²⁴

The state in Indonesia grew during the post-1965 regime (as it did in all my other cases). Until 1985, the government's routine budget grew at the same pace as the development budget. The number of civil servants increased especially in 1969–1974 and in the early 1980s, reaching 608,000 in 1963, 1.6 million in 1974, 2.7 million in 1984, and four million in 1992; and 1.6 million civil servants worked for the Department of Education alone in 1986.²⁵ Building on earlier efforts, the regime pursued a policy of universal primary education, essentially eradicating rural illiteracy by the 1990s.²⁶ Yet government expenditure grew in line with the economy; it fell back to its 1970s level (18.5 percent of GDP) in the late 1980s after having been higher for some years.²⁷

A number of events influenced and interrupted what was perceived as Indonesia's success story. They point to the fact that, despite the authoritarian system, there was no uniform opinion about issues of development, but a lot of debate, even conflict.²⁸ One was the so-called Malari affair: anti-Japanese, anti-foreign and anti-Chinese riots in reaction to a visit of Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka in January 1974.²⁹ The background was widespread criticism among elites and students of undue foreign and Indonesian–Chinese economic influence, which was perceived to cause inequality (and block careers by non-Chinese Indonesian elites).³⁰ Although perceived as a student protest, most of those arrested after the mid-January 1974 riots were laborers.³¹ The Malari affair led the government to adopt more nationalistic, equality-driven development policies. Another event occurred soon afterwards. The public oil-based company Pertamina basically collapsed in 1975, after it had overextended itself – also producing fertilizer and pesticides on a massive scale – financed by unregulated foreign borrowing over some years. Its debt of US\$10.5 billion far surpassed Indonesia's entire other foreign debt.³² This marked limits to the country's industrialization and renewed Indonesian dependence on foreign credit, despite its frequent positive trade balance (the dominant trading partner in the 1970s was Japan).³³

The Asian economic crisis of 1997–1998 also affected Indonesia, with two million manufacturing jobs lost, agriculture stagnant for three years, a large part of

24 See Enweremadu 2013, pp. 202–219.

25 Erath and Kruijt 1988, p. 47; Bresnan 1993, p. 105; Hill 2000, pp. 44, 56, 122, 137.

26 Thee 2002, pp. 201–202; Saraswati 2002, p. 167.

27 Dixon 1995, p. 211. Cf. Sjahrir, "The Indonesian Deregulation Policy Process", 1990, in: Chalmers and Hadiz 1997, p. 154.

28 See Chalmers and Hadiz 1997, esp. p. xxiii.

29 Robison 1988, pp. 157–168. Tanaka was greeted with similar, politically less influential riots in other Asian countries 1972 and 1974, see Lerch 1984, p. 52 note 143.

30 Herkenrath 2003, pp. 199–200; Bresnan 1993, p. 139; Palmer 1978, pp. 157–158; Southwood and Flanagan 1983, pp. 182–183; "Mohammad Sadli" 2003, p. 130; Prawiro 1998, pp. 159–160.

31 Bresnan 1993, p. 137.

32 See Bresnan 1993, pp. 164–193; Wing et al. 1994, pp. 54–72; Robison 1988, pp. 233–242; Thee 2003, p. 32.

33 Confederation of British Industry 1975, p. 6.

foreign private investment withdrawn, private consumption dropping by 3 percent and state expenses by much more.³⁴ The impact was especially bad in Java, where many industrial workers returned to the countryside, depressing agricultural wages.³⁵ However, this was not only about an external shock, for signs of stagnation had begun earlier, and recovery afterwards was slow. The period 1996–1999 was also a period of great social tensions; political upheaval; anti-Chinese pogroms, violent conflict and mass expulsion in many areas of the archipelago, like Aceh, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku and Jakarta; the fall of the Suharto regime amidst corruption charges; and Indonesia’s withdrawal from East Timor.

Built on a bloodbath, the New Order’s *raison d’être* was preventing communism. Realizing – like the governor of Riau province, Colonel Arifui – that only a small minority “of the estimated 20 million PKI sympathizers and 3 million members” had been killed,³⁶ development policies were supposed to forestall leftist activities. Among Suharto’s political concerns, the “first is avoiding conditions favorable to the revival of the PKI”, which was why the regime wanted to improve social conditions in Java.³⁷ For example, the success of the first five-year development plan was called essential to fight communism.³⁸ The Sub-District Credit Agency (BKK) was founded in 1970 “with the explicitly political objective of defusing potential subversion by providing economic opportunities for low-income groups” through small loans.³⁹ Moderate leftist opponents also invoked the communist threat to justify their demands or accused Indonesian–Chinese capitalists of being part of a communist plot.⁴⁰ Business International, the U.S. consultancy group, turned the argument around: “New Order policies that consistently favor foreign investment have become possible only because of the post-1965 political restructuring that excludes important groups from power and applies a high degree of pressure and coercion against opponents of the regime”.⁴¹ In 1972, some projects supported by Oxfam “had to stop working [. . .] until they had been cleared by authorities” since the government was “concerned about the infiltration of communism into the villages”.⁴² Anti-communism triggered social reformism and efforts at poverty alleviation, but also set limits to social engagement.

Thus, the regime tried to prevent famines. The year 1972 saw the threat of nationwide shortages (see Chapter 3). The regime managed to contain it, but the crisis

34 Thee 2000, pp. 427–428, 436, 439.

35 Thee 2012, pp. 120–121.

36 [Australian] Department of External Affairs, Inward Savingram, n.d. (ca. March 1967), ANA 3034/2/2/2, part 16, p. 6.

37 Wing and Nasution 1989, p. 103.

38 Commentary “The Social Aspects of Resettlement of Gestapu-PKI Detainees of Category ‘B’ on Buru Island”, Antara news agency, 23 December 1969, ANA, 3034/3/6/2, part 5.

39 Mosley 2017, p. 34.

40 “Manifesto by the Students of Bandung Institute of Technology”, 11 January 1978, in: Chalmers and Hadiz 1997, p. 119; Robison 1988, p. 322.

41 Quoted in: Southwood and Flanagan 1983, p. 16.

42 “South-east Asia tour”, November–December 1972, Oxfam, Tour Reports Asia (not India), Tour Report – Multi-country tours.

re-ignited inflation that had just been brought under control.⁴³ Later on, shortages became regional affairs again.⁴⁴ From 1966 to 1968, famines had killed many people.⁴⁵ In 1976 and 1978–1979, more food shortages were reported, especially in Central and Eastern Java, in Nusa Tenggara and in East Timor – which was by far the worst due to military food denial and resettlement strategies (see later).⁴⁶ The year 1978 was a difficult time especially on the eastern islands. There were hunger deaths on Flores after three years of crop failures⁴⁷ and a famine in the area of Karawang, West Java, and the insufficient government response in the attempt to conceal it spurred protest.⁴⁸ Drought and a *wereng* (brown planthopper) infestation had led to crop failures and shortages in West Java in 1977, followed by people turning to substitute foods, rumors of hunger deaths and widespread outmigration. The head of the regency administration of Karawang also blamed the situation on unspecified socioeconomic factors.⁴⁹ In some places, starvation occurred also later, like in late 1981 in Gunung Kidul regency, Central Java, and in 1983 in Irian Jaya (West Papua). In that year, Indonesia's rice output fell by 5–10 percent after a drought.⁵⁰

Rural development policies

In assessing Indonesian rural development policies, it is fundamental to note the country's high levels of investment. Gross domestic investment increased from 7 or 8 percent of GDP in 1965 to 21.8 percent in the 1970s, 27.6 percent in the 1980s and 28.7 percent in 1991–1998 (about two-thirds of it was private investment), and gross domestic savings grew from 8 percent to 26 percent, 31 percent and 29.5 percent in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Though such upward trends were common in Asian low-income countries, Indonesia's was far steeper than average, and its investment rate was one of the highest in the world in the 1990s.⁵¹ The development budget in the country rose from about one-third to more than half of total government expenditure.⁵² This emphasis on investment involved great sacrifices for the population because only a smaller part of it was either foreign 'aid' or

43 See data in Fraser to USDA, 19 April 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 79, ID-Indonesia 1978.

44 For this pattern, see van der Eng 2012.

45 van der Eng 2012, pp. 24–25.

46 Oxfam, Minutes of Meeting of Food Committee for Asia, 26 November 1976 and "Indonesia – Annual Report" 1977/78, 8 April 1978, both in Box Asia Field Committee, November 1976–January 1980; Binder to Leeks, 9 February 1978, FAO, RG 12, Commodities and Trade Division, FA 4/21 – W. P. of OSRO, WFP, ESN & FIS, vol. II; "Relative self-sufficiency – and absolute hunger", Tapol 35, August 1979, p. 15; "Indonesia – Annual Report 1978/79", 10 December 1979, Oxfam, Box Annual Reports Asia (not India), Far East, A-K, file Indonesia-Annual.

47 See Lipski and Pura 1978.

48 Southwood and Flanagan 1983, p. 189; Bresnan 1993, pp. 198–199.

49 Sacerdoti 1977; Hugo 1984, p. 23; "Manifesto by the Students of Bandung Institute of Technology", 11 January 1978, in: Chalmers and Hadiz 1997, p. 119.

50 Sjahrir 1986, p. 50; Thee 2012, pp. 102–103.

51 Thee 2002, p. 200; Lewis 2007, pp. 189, 196; Wing et al. 1994, p. 2; Hill 2000, p. 18. Saraswati 2002, p. 158 presents lower data. See also Thee 2003, p. 26

52 Wing et al. 1994, pp. 174–175.

private investment from abroad. Private consumption as a share of GDP dropped from 88 percent in 1965 to 78 percent in 1970, 68 percent in 1975, 52 percent in 1980, 59 percent in 1985 and 53 percent in 1989.⁵³ In addition to the state, it was also citizens who made a lot of savings and then investments.⁵⁴ Richard Robison concludes that Indonesia underwent, instead of a mere dependency on foreign capital, a “process of domestic capital accumulation, both private and state”.⁵⁵

Five-year development plans (*repelita*) drawn up by the National Planning Board (BAPPENAS) described Indonesia’s policy goals after 1969, ostensibly trying to avoid unrealistic objectives of previous development plans and slogans.⁵⁶ There had been plans for 1956–1961 and 1961–1969, but this time, Suharto insisted on “non-inflationary sources” of funding, that is, to cover expenses in the budget or from foreign sources.⁵⁷ During the first four five-year development plans covering 1969–1989, reducing poverty received increasing attention. All four were oriented toward economic stability and growth, but only the first – to raise rice production by 50 percent and build industries supporting agriculture⁵⁸ – reached its growth targets. In agriculture, these were also missed in *Repelita* II but surpassed in *Repelita* III.⁵⁹ The first two five-year development plans explicitly aimed at food self-sufficiency.⁶⁰ Yet in the view of some analysts and also according to an official Indonesian statement, it was only *Repelita* II that marked a turn to social goals and became more equality oriented in response to the Malari riots.⁶¹ “*Repelita* II was the first program to include a chapter on alleviating poverty, on more equal distribution of the benefits of development” and on preventing inequality between regions, whereas its predecessor had opted for “uneven development”.⁶² However, when it appeared opportune, Suharto still described the country’s agricultural development goals as “first to increase food production and secondly to improve [the] lot [of the] farmer”.⁶³

Repelita III set the motto “equitable distribution” and mentioned “Eight Paths to Equity” (number 3 of which was “equal income distribution”) but it was

53 Wing et al. 1994, p. 2.

54 For the example of petty traders, see Alexander and Booth 1992a, p. 308.

55 Over 70 percent of private domestic capital remained in the hands of Indonesians of Chinese descent. Robison 1988, pp. 115, 192, 276. For the continuous strong position of state enterprises, see *ibid.*, pp. 99–112.

56 Booth 1998, p. 184.

57 Panglaykim and Thomas 1971, pp. 1, 7.

58 *Indonesia develops* (1969), pp. 5, 9; see also Lim 1976, pp. 224, 229.

59 Wing et al. 1994, p. 12. Palmer 1977c, p. 179 argues that targets for food supply in *Repelita* I were missed.

60 “ESCAP Inter-Agency Team on Integrated Rural Development Country Report: Indonesia”, n.d. (1975), FAO, RG 15, RAFA, Rural development 1972–1976; Sjahrir 1986, p. 15; Hansen 1971, p. 390.

61 Eldridge 1980, pp. 3, 11; for a statement of the Indonesian delegation to the IGGI, see fragment of telegram U.S. Embassy The Hague, 10 May 1974, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1974THEHA02354_b.html (accessed 23 January 2017).

62 Dirkse et al. 1993b, p. 7 (first quote); Panglaykim and Thomas 1971, p. 48 (second quote).

63 Newsom (Jakarta) to U.S. State Department, “President Suharto-Secretary Butz meeting”, 20 April 1976, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1976JAKART05104_b.html (accessed 23 January 2017).

“disappointingly vague” concerning “employment policies in relation to [. . .] landless laborers”.⁶⁴ Apparently, it also made “harmonization between the social groups” an aim.⁶⁵ Already with Repelita I, planners sought to raise food production enough to reach a daily per capita supply of 2,100 calories and 55 grams of proteins.⁶⁶ This goal was reached, but in this particular case, it appears equally important that it was even set. In Repelita IV, the emphasis shifted to mining and education, away from agriculture and also trade and tourism.⁶⁷

There were also regional (and regency) development plans – 11 of them by October 1976 comprising 11,000 pages of documents, and separate plans for each of over 900 development projects.⁶⁸ The regional plans seem to have come close to an integrated rural development approach, which the ‘World Bank’ also adopted in part in the late 1970s.⁶⁹ Provincial authorities were given wide authority to make and implement plans,⁷⁰ which made coordination between the provinces and the different national ministries involved in ‘development’ a problem, also because of a lack of data on the provincial level.⁷¹

Suharto was stylized in Indonesia as the ‘father of development’ but internationally he has often been regarded as a dull and corrupt power monger. However, that is too simplistic. On the one hand, he did have a lot of blood on his hands, and not only from 1965 to 1966 and East Timor. On the other hand, it seems that Suharto was “Minister-Coordinator for National Development and Planning” even before the 1965 coup, as few scholars have realized.⁷² Already as a military officer in the 1950s, he engaged in large-scale informal economic activities – in part to provide for military veterans – and development projects.⁷³ Suharto had political vision. He understood the 1969–1994 planning period as a 25-year plan and contributed to the “second twenty-five year plan” (1994–2018), through which the government wanted to make Indonesia a middle-income country despite the facts that it would soon exhaust its oil reserves, and rice production in Java was at its limits, that is, new success models were needed.⁷⁴ In November 1985, Suharto was invited

64 “Oxfam in Indonesia” (ca. fall of 1980; first quote) and “Indonesia – Annual report 1978/79”, 10 December 1979 (third and fourth quotes), both in Oxfam, Box Annual Reports Asia (not India), Far East, A-K, file Indonesia – Annual; Eldridge 1980, p. 12 (second quote).

65 Steigerwald 1987, p. 40.

66 Soesilo Prakoso, Deputy Regional Representative of FAO, Bangkok, “Report on a Visit to Indonesia 5–17 July 1968”, FAO, RG 12, ES, FA 8/3, vol. II.

67 “Indonesia – Annual report – 1983/84”, Oxfam, Box Annual Reports Asia (not India), Far East, A-K, file Indonesia – Annual.

68 See Dürr 1977, esp. p. 150; MacAndrews et al. 1982; Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 247.

69 See MacAndrews et al. 1982, p. 94; Masters to U.S. State Department, 8 February 1979, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979JAKARTA02094_e.html (accessed 23 January 2017).

70 Intergovernmental Group on Indonesia, “Meeting held in Amsterdam on December 21–22, 1972: Summary of Proceedings”, NARA, RG 59, SNF 1970–73, Economic, Box 480, AID 9 Indon 1–1–73.

71 “ESCAP Inter-Agency Team on Integrated Rural Development Country Report: Indonesia”, n.d. (1975), FAO, RG 15, RAFF, Rural Development 1972–1976; Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 247.

72 See telegram from Reischauer (U.S. Embassy Jakarta) to Secretary of State, 6 October 1965, NARA, RG 59, 250/7/2, Box 2310, POL 7 INDON 7/1/65.

73 McDonald 1980, pp. 29–32; Elson 2001, pp. 60–65, 71–72.

74 Fukuchi and Sato 2000, p. 409; Suharto’s state of the union address, 16 August 1990, in Chalmers and Hadiz 1997, p. 181.

to address the FAO Conference on the occasion of its 40th anniversary. He also received an FAO award.⁷⁵

In hindsight, Radius Prawiro, a key strategist, described the goal of the government's "Social Engineering through Economics" policy as limiting urbanization by keeping people in the countryside.⁷⁶ But agriculture received a minor share of public investment, as in the other countries studied in detail in this book, and it decreased in every five-year development plan. In Repelita I (1969–1974), it was still high at 30.1 percent of investment spending, when agriculture was regarded as the most important economic sector with high potential and rice supplies were of major concern to the government. But in Repelita II (1974–1979), agriculture and irrigation were to get 19.1 percent of expenditures (of which half was for irrigation; 7.6 percent of the total was for rice).⁷⁷ In the following five-year plan, agriculture and irrigation were supposed to absorb 14 percent, in Repelita IV (1984–1989) 12.7 percent.⁷⁸ These figures indicate a consistent, though secondary, interest in agriculture. But as other data suggest, in the 1980s, the emphasis on agriculture was greater in the Indonesian government than in foreign 'aid' agencies.⁷⁹

The allocation of subsidies is a good indicator for the points of emphasis of Indonesian rural development policies. From 1970 to 1984, the thrust shifted several times between irrigation, on the one hand, and fertilizer and pesticides, on the other hand; irrigation was the focus in 1969–1973 and 1977–1981. These three sectors combined accounted for two-thirds of all agricultural subsidies.⁸⁰ Public expenditure for irrigation peaked in 1977–1983, with over US\$1.2 billion of ODA support. It got 16 percent of the development budget in Repelita I (1969–1974), far higher than the 10 percent in Repelita II (1974–1979), though in absolute figures, investment rose from 114 billion to 546 billion Rupiah.⁸¹ Total agricultural subsidies were considerable – US\$700 million in 1986, according to a 'World Bank' estimate.⁸²

As Tumari Jatileksono argued, fertilizer subsidies had a greater influence on farmers' gains than those for irrigation.⁸³ The fertilizer subsidy was at 33 percent of real production and provision costs in 1971, but in 1974, 75 percent were reported.⁸⁴ Later, it was around 50 percent.⁸⁵ Public costs of this subsidy were not so high in the 1970s – except for 1974–1975 and 1975–1976 – but strongly on the rise in

75 Booth 1988, p. 1; see also note 131 in this chapter.

76 Prawiro 1998, p. 147.

77 *Indonesia develops*, vol. III, p. 185; Department of Information 1975, p. 20; Booth 1998, p. 193. For Repelita I, see Hayami and Kikuchi 1981, p. 188, and Lim 1976, p. 229.

78 Booth 1998, p. 193; Steigerwald 1987, p. 99; see also Pearson et al. 1991b, p. 19.

79 World Bank 1990b, p. 177.

80 Jatileksono 1987, pp. 60, 149. See also Timmer 1989, pp. 39–43.

81 Gonzales et al. 1993, p. 25; Maurer 1986a, p. 71; Panglaykim and Thomas 1971, p. 37; for ODA, see Carruthers 1983, p. 33; for this and absolute plan figures, see Ward 1985, p. 95.

82 Bresnan 1993, p. 121.

83 Jatileksono 1987, pp. 89, 93.

84 Palmer 1978, p. 84; U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta to USDA, 19 August 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 40, ID Indonesia 1974 DR; Mai 1977, p. 70.

85 Gonzales 1993, pp. 13–14 argued it was slightly declining in the mid-1980s.

the early 1980s.⁸⁶ In most years from 1973 to 1985, the fertilizer subsidy consumed between 1.5 and 7 percent of the government's development budget, sometimes almost half of agriculture's share including irrigation, and this share was on the rise again in the late 1980s.⁸⁷ As for pesticides, in the middle of that decade, farmers paid allegedly only 10–20 percent of the full economic costs.⁸⁸ For rice, there was a state-guaranteed floor price,⁸⁹ and cultivators received a relatively high proportion of the market price when selling to official agents. Such policies raised the incomes of farmers with rice surpluses, steadily reduced seasonal price fluctuations and limited marketing margins for private traders.⁹⁰ However, apparently this was not always and everywhere the case – unlike for many other crops, including food crops, rainfed rice producers' income terms of trade in Java developed negatively in 1971–1977.⁹¹ Sjahrir has argued that subsidies replaced older “village welfare institutions” and practices and functioned as flanking measures for the commoditization of life.⁹²

Pressed by foreign ‘advisers’ and institutions, and some national experts, the government later reduced or abolished many subsidies. The urea subsidy continued even after 1998, but the one for (imported) potassium was discontinued in 1993 and the one for phosphate reduced in 1994.⁹³ The publicly guaranteed minimum price for corn was given up in 1991, but the government still kept rice at 20 percent below world market prices in the late 1990s.⁹⁴ The core agenda was kept (urea and rice subsidies), and sideshows were given up – the state had not done much anyway to support corn and cassava farming through pricing.⁹⁵ In many places, small peasants' living standards deteriorated in the 1990s.⁹⁶

The core mechanism for agricultural development was the BIMAS (mass guidance) program, established in 1963, operating since 1965–1966 and later supplemented by the INMAS (mass intensification) program for better-off farmers who did not need credit.⁹⁷ Similar to its 1959 predecessor, BIMAS included the five efforts (*pantja usaha*) for irrigation, improved seeds, mineral fertilizer, pesticides and extension for improved cultivation techniques.⁹⁸ Seeds, fertilizer and pesticides

86 Wing et al. 1994, pp. 174–175.

87 Booth 1988, p. 150; Tabor 1992a, p. 180; Piggott and Parton 1993, p. 315; Hill 2000, p. 94.

88 Timmer 1989, p. 39.

89 For its development 1969–1979, see Mears and Moeljono 1981, p. 44.

90 Ahmed and Rustagi 1987, p. 110; Mears 1981, pp. 255, 259, 279–280, 308; Jatileksono 1987, pp. xi, 90; Abbott 1992, p. 133.

91 Booth and Sundrum 1981, p. 193.

92 Sjahrir 1986, p. 55.

93 Gérard and Ruf 2001, p. 32; Gérard et al. 2001, p. 287; Repetto 1985, p. 20; see also Asher and Booth 1992a, p. 58.

94 Gérard et al. 2001, p. 287.

95 For corn and cassava, see Gonzales et al. 1993, pp. 25, 30.

96 “Basic Rights to Indonesia” (draft, 1995), Oxfam, Tour Reports Indonesia.

97 Ministry of Agriculture, “BIMAS and its role within agricultural development”, Jakarta, March 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975; D. Armour, “Indonesia”, *Agriculture Abroad* 33 (5), 1978, pp. 11–12, 15.

98 *Indonesia develops* 1969, p. 5; “Subroto” 2003, p. 235. For the earlier program, see Suwidjana 1981, p. 149. Unsuccessful rice self-sufficiency programs had been launched in 1956 and 1962: Bresnan 1993, p. 115.

under the program came as a “package” in inflexible, fixed amounts per hectare rice land; half of the package’s price was for fertilizer.⁹⁹ As the program expanded, this package fit local conditions less and less.¹⁰⁰ Local officials coerced peasants into participating or, for those who did not want to use the entire package, especially pesticides, into doing so fully.¹⁰¹ In the early 1970s, BIMAS concentrated on rice production; corn was included in the second half of the decade, but cassava hardly at all.¹⁰² In some places, officials forced program participants to sow a certain amount of rice.¹⁰³ BIMAS’ focus was on irrigated agriculture. By early 1975, only 3 percent of the area covered was rainfed.¹⁰⁴

The BIMAS/INMAS program went through some years of stagnation starting with 1973.¹⁰⁵ Repayment rates for BIMAS loans sharply decreased after 1974, and more than half of the farmers withdrew or were excluded from the program; defaulters had to turn to INMAS, whose loans were not subsidized. In 1984, BIMAS was discontinued because it incurred losses.¹⁰⁶ Participation in BIMAS peaked in 1974–1975 at 3.6 million farmers, and the area covered varied between 4 million and 4.5 million hectares in 1973–1977.¹⁰⁷ Increasingly, the program included the dry season.¹⁰⁸ After 1976, the credit sum and the number of farm inspectors were expanded.¹⁰⁹ In late 1979, the government launched another program (INSUS) under which groups farming a total of 100–150 hectares managed their own irrigation and decided about their use of inputs.¹¹⁰

Many commentators have considered BIMAS a success. They exaggerated. The rice area under intensification grew in 1970–1988 from 42 percent to 90 percent on Java and from 15 percent to 60 percent elsewhere.¹¹¹ The USAID presented BIMAS as a viable model for providing small loans.¹¹² But BIMAS focused on Java, yet rice yields actually increased initially more off Java and thus outside

99 Suwidjana 1981, p. 150; Aass 1986, pp. 100–101; Bresnan 1993, p. 123; Axelsson 2008, p. 88.

100 Donald 1976, p. 40.

101 Axelsson 2013, p. 101; May 1978, p. 361.

102 Ministry of Agriculture, “BIMAS and its role within agricultural development”, Jakarta, March 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975; Mears and Moeljono 1981a, p. 35.

103 Gerdin 1982, p. 109 (for Lombok).

104 Lanier to USDA, 27 February 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975 DR.

105 Ministry of Agriculture, “BIMAS and its role within agricultural development”, Jakarta, March 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975.

106 See U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta to USDA, 13 January 1978 and 23 July 1979 with enclosure 8, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 79, ID-Indonesia 1978; Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 252; Mosley 2017, p. 34. According to Suwidjana 1981, p. 152 repayment rates dropped steeply after 1976.

107 Ward 1985, p. 82; Mears and Moeljono 1981a, p. 37.

108 Mears and Moeljono 1981a, p. 31.

109 D. Armour, “Indonesia”, *Agriculture Abroad* 33 (5), 1978, pp. 11–12, 15.

110 Suwidjana 1981, p. 153; 5 years n.y., p. 6.

111 Mears and Moeljono 1981a, pp. 31, 35; Gonzales 1993, pp. 23–24.

112 See Donald 1976, p. 279.

the program.¹¹³ Supply and supervision networks were loose; in the wet season in 1971–1972, there was only one extension officer for 512 farms, one bank official for 462 farms, and one kiosk selling fertilizer and pesticides for 187 farms.¹¹⁴ Particularly on outer islands like Sulawesi, the extension service was considered insufficient.¹¹⁵ In 1974, the government tried to supplement agricultural extension with the BUTSI (volunteer service) program aiming at sending young, educated field workers to 22,000 villages (about one-third of the total) to motivate locals to undertake their own development activities.¹¹⁶ However, their top-down practices limited their effectiveness. In addition, there were special radio programs for small peasants.¹¹⁷

Some analysts have argued that BIMAS primarily served well-to-do landowners – or, actually, non-farmers – who received most of the credit.¹¹⁸ Bigger landowners benefited more through doing more multi-cropping, or they misused BIMAS credit for trade, moneylending, buying vehicles and land.¹¹⁹ Some staff members helped with this misuse, and intensification packages’ benefits were small for very small farms.¹²⁰ The conditions for the landless were worsened by the program.¹²¹

One of the government’s motivations for promoting agricultural development was its concerns about growing food imports of rice and wheat. Having hovered around 1 million tons in the early 1960s and then plummeting, annual foreign rice deliveries trebled from 276,000 tons in 1966–1970 to 828,000 tons in 1971–1975, and from 1977 to 1980, they were close to 2 million tons, or one-fifth of world trade.¹²² In 1957–1964, Indonesia imported around 10 percent of the rice it consumed (as was the case in 1900–1935, after which the percentage fell), 5–6 percent in 1965–1975, 10–12 percent in 1976–1980, and 8 percent in 1984.¹²³ From 1973 to 1980, Indonesia’s rice imports cost between US\$327 and \$690 million per year.¹²⁴ But relative costs expressed as a percentage of all imports and of export earnings

113 Mears 1981, p. 22 (data for 1968/69 to 1977/78).

114 Pearse 1980, p. 94; Palmer 1977c, p. 40; Bundschu 1987, p. 30 with even lower data for Bali in 1980.

115 U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta to USDA, 20 August 1976, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 59, ID-Indonesia 76 DR.

116 See Rui 2020, pp. 338–340; Krause 1982.

117 D. Umali, “Adult Education for Rural Development”, 25 July 1972, FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Dir., PR 12/50, vol. I.

118 Antlöv 1996, p. 169; Tabor 1992a, p. 178.

119 Hye 1989, p. 48; Hüsken 1989, p. 310.

120 Suwidjana 1981, pp. 152–153.

121 Gerdin 1982, p. 107.

122 “ESCAP Inter-Agency Team on Integrated Rural Development Country Report: Indonesia” (1976), FAO, RG 15, RAPE, Rural Development 1972–76; Mears 1981, pp. 27, 31; Mears 1984, p. 120.

123 Zahri 1969, p. 127; Mears 1981, p. 27; Jatileksono 1987, pp. 27, 41; FAO 1985, p. 109; van der Eng 1993, p. 22.

124 See Jatileksono 1987, p. 27. See also Lanier to USDA, 9 March 1976, NARA., RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 59, ID-Indonesia 76 DR and Arief and Sasono 1981, p. 141.

decreased in the longer run.¹²⁵ Mostly coming from Southeast Asia and China, almost half of imports were sent to Jakarta in the late 1970s.¹²⁶

A minor share of grain imports were food aid – less than half even in the crisis year 1972–1973.¹²⁷ For example, U.S.-financed food for work projects in Indonesia reached 75,000 workers in 1973, and six dependents for each.¹²⁸ That was at a peak for U.S. food aid; another was in 1978–1981, when the USA sent about \$400 million in food aid to Indonesia at the height of Indonesian mass violence in East Timor (but far from all was for East Timor).¹²⁹

Indonesia reduced its imports of rice (but not wheat) in the first half of the 1980s.¹³⁰ ‘Experts’ were ecstatic. Indonesia accomplished a shaky rice self-sufficiency in the mid-1980s, after having been the world’s biggest importer in the late 1970s. For this, Suharto received an FAO award in 1986 – but his country was back to rice imports in the early 1990s, which reached 1 million tons in 1994 and 1.8 million tons (at very high prices) in 2007–2008, when it was again the biggest rice-importing nation.¹³¹

Compared to production-oriented policies, other ‘food security’ measures played a much smaller role. The government’s main point was to keep rice prices low. While it spent smaller sums to provide armed forces personnel and civil service with affordable rice, its main effort after late 1972 consisted of throwing rice on the market when prices reached a critical point. From 1972 to 1980, these interventions were only partially based on domestic procurement, usually below 1 million tons, which the state supplemented by imports.¹³² At some point, the state subsidized rice for consumers by over 50 percent of what the market price would have been.¹³³ Budget expenditures for this support varied greatly between the early 1970s and the 1980s; usually low, much less than for public investment in private production, it peaked in 1973–1974, 1979–1980 and 1981–1982 to shield Indonesians from high world market prices.¹³⁴ Wheat price subsidies were clearly aiming at urban

125 Jatileksono 1987, p. 27.

126 Mears 1981, pp. 32–33.

127 Kuhl to USDA, 24 January 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 16, ID Indonesia 1973 DR.

128 “The Annual Report on Activities Carried out under Public Law 480, 93rd Congress, as amended during the period January 1 through December 31, 1973”, Ford Library, Paul C. Leach Files, Box 4, Food for Peace (P.L.480).

129 Cohen 1984, esp. pp. 143–148. On p. 149, Cohen asserts that U.S. food aid “helped save the lives of an estimated 200,000 people” in East Timor (the figure appears baseless), but he also states that “hesitancy and US military aid contributed to 200,000 East Timorese deaths from repression, malnutrition and disease” (p. 150). For Official Development Aid to East Timor, see Pedersen and Arneberg 1999, p. 136.

130 Étienne 1986, p. 35.

131 Ratih 1997, pp. 47–48; Nilsson Hoadley and Hoadley 1996, p. 192; Thee 2002, p. 216; Blas 2008.

132 See Jatileksono 1987, pp. 40–43.

133 Palmer 1978, p. 84.

134 Wing et al. 1994, pp. 174–175; see also Jatileksono 1987, p. 40, Mears 1981, pp. 235–236 and Timmer 1989, p. 27. In response to U.S. criticism of public support for rice consumers, an Indonesian delegate emphasized that these subsidies were much smaller than those for agricultural inputs for rice producers who thus benefited from government policies: telegram Tanguy (The Hague) to U.S.

consumers, many of whom were not poor.¹³⁵ This was not so clearly the case with rice because land-poor rural dwellers had to buy much of their rice as well.¹³⁶

The state did not reach its food reserve target figure of 1 million tons, or 7 percent of annual consumption, until sometime between 1978 and 1980.¹³⁷ These stocks were held by the National Logistics Organization BULOG, which kept one-third in private storehouses in 1975.¹³⁸ BULOG had a staff of 5,000 in the early 1980s. Its far-reaching tasks included purchasing rice from farmers, maintaining floor prices for rice producers and ceiling prices for consumers, importing rice and wheat and distributing it to two million military and civil service households.¹³⁹ But its impact was limited by the fact that it received only 22 percent of marketed grain, whereas the rest was bought by private traders.¹⁴⁰ BULOG claimed that Indonesia was the first country that “succeeded in working out comprehensive programs of securing food supplies”.¹⁴¹ This was a daring statement, but it seems that Indonesian price stabilization policies were relatively successful, even though BULOG was criticized for intervening too late repeatedly, for example in 1967, 1969 and 1972, and there were many severe cases of severe embezzlement within this parastatal.¹⁴²

Nutrition programs received comparatively minor funding, although a government-sponsored nutrition “movement”, which had been in its beginnings in 1974, had expanded to 30,000 villages ten years later.¹⁴³ The official POSYANDU child nutrition program included regular weighing and education about food, in some places also immunizations and oral rehydration therapy against diarrheal diseases, but no supplemental feeding and no village gardens, at least not for a long time. Around 1986, this program’s funding was reduced.¹⁴⁴ From 1979 to 1985, another program with supplemental feeding covered between 3,000 and 12,000 villages.¹⁴⁵

State Department, 13 December 1973, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1973THEHA05480_b.html (accessed 23 January 2017).

135 Telegram by Toussaint (Jakarta) to U.S. State Department, 21 April 1973, http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1973Jakarta0474_b.html (accessed 23 January 2017).

136 Christianty 1986, p. 151. In this context, it should be noted that the Indonesian state’s tax burden was heavier for rural dwellers than for urbanites: Booth 1981, pp. 48, 56, 61.

137 See FAO, Committee on World Food Security, First Session, 5–9 April 1976, FAO, RG 15, LUNO, FA 13/2; “National Cereal Stock Policies”, no date (1977), FAO, RG 12, ES, FA 13/1, vol. I; and Jatileksono 1987, p. 41; Mears 1981, p. 503; Pearson et al. 1991b, p. 16.

138 U.S. Agricultural Attache, 8 September 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975 DR. This document reported contradictory figures of food reserves of over one million tons, which was probably exaggerated. Subsidies for stockholding were low, see Siawalla 1988, pp. 86–87.

139 Sjahrir 1986, p. 52; for the staff figure, see Bresnan 1993, p. 127.

140 Piggott and Parton 1993, p. 308 (1980s data).

141 U.S. Agricultural Attache, 8 September 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975 DR.

142 See Crouch 1978, pp. 280–281, 325; Robison 1988, p. 230.

143 Berg and Austin 1984, p. 308.

144 World Bank 1990b, pp. xxii–xxiii, 45, 98, 103.

145 Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, pp. 230–231.

Foreign impact

After 1965, Indonesia, similar to the other case-study countries, financed first all of the development budget with foreign sources (1966–1968) or then more than half (until 1973).¹⁴⁶ In 1973, a U.S. diplomat reported: “On an investment rate of 12% of GDP, more than half is reported to be from foreign sources”.¹⁴⁷ Oil revenue lessened the dependence in the years to follow. During Repelita II (1974–1979), 34.6 percent of the development budget was covered by foreign ‘aid’, 80 percent of which was loans, driving up the national debt.¹⁴⁸ Yet plans to reduce the foreign share toward the end of Repelita II to 16 percent were not implemented,¹⁴⁹ in part because of the Pertamina crisis. Foreign ‘aid’ fell from 27 percent of total budget revenue in 1969–1970 to 14 percent in 1973–1974,¹⁵⁰ but later the proportion was again on the rise, to 15–20 percent in 1975–1985 and 25–30 percent, or 5 percent of GDP, in the years afterwards.¹⁵¹ Part of the background was that gross domestic capital formation was negative 1983–1985. When oil prices dropped in the world market in 1985–1986, the government reduced its own development budget by one-third. The country accumulated much debt and repeatedly devalued its currency.¹⁵² Thus, Indonesia was the world’s largest recipient of ‘development aid’ in 1990, ahead of India and China.¹⁵³ Its national debt grew to US\$20 billion in 1982 and \$45 billion in 1989, which was high in comparison to GNP and export earnings.¹⁵⁴ As interest payment and repayment obligations grew, the overall flow of foreign capital to Indonesia 1970–1986 was negative, according to one observer.¹⁵⁵

Real foreign exchange inflows came primarily from other sources. In 1973–1981, they resulted from oil exports (US\$8.0 billion) and other exports (\$2.95 billion) rather than from foreign ‘aid’ and loans (\$1.3 billion) and foreign private investment (\$163 million).¹⁵⁶ According to “studies” by the IBRD and IMF mentioned in a meeting between Suharto and Kissinger, Indonesia would need US\$70 billion in investment from 1975 to 1980, \$14 billion of which would come from external sources (\$10.5 billion were predicted to be on concessional or semi-concessional

146 Palmer 1978, p. 51.

147 Kuhl to USDA, 24 January 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 16, ID Indonesia 1973 DR.

148 “Indonesia – Annual Report 1978/79”, Oxfam, Box Annual reports Asia (not India), Far East, A-K, file Indonesia – Annual. For 1977, see Lanier report, 23 June 1977, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 67, ID-Indonesia 1977 DR.

149 For these plans, see *Indonesia develops* 1975 (vol. III), pp. 182, 184.

150 Palmer 1978, p. 48, 135.

151 Winters 1996, p. 98; see also Booth and McCawley 1981b, p. 145; Asher and Booth 1992a, p. 48. The trend is uncontroversial, but some authors offer lower figures for the foreign share of development expenditures: Asher and Booth 1992a, p. 58; Hadiwinata 2003, p. 93; Hill 2000, pp. 47–48, 53. For higher data in the late 1980s, see Soesastro 1991, p. 17.

152 Booth 1998, p. 83; Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 50; Hill 2000, pp. 73–74.

153 Thee 2002, p. 206.

154 Thorbecke 1992, p. 67; Dixon 1995, p. 210.

155 Bambang Beathor Suryadi, “Bullets Splattered with Blood”, 1991, in: Chalmers and Hadiz 1997, p. 200.

156 Booth 1992b, pp. 7, 20; see also Hart 1986, p. 52.

terms).¹⁵⁷ Although export earnings financed primarily its recurrent budget, Indonesia as an oil-exporting country needed to rely less on foreign sources for its development than other non-industrialized countries did for at least a decade.

During the 1970s, the annual value of foreign ‘aid’ varied between US\$5 and 13 per capita annually. This sounds substantial, though not overwhelming. But not all of it entered the country, and much of what did never reached the countryside. From 1972–1973 to 1980–1981, only about 15 percent of foreign ‘aid’ was for agriculture, a bit more with project aid.¹⁵⁸ Funding for irrigation was a considerable part of ODA in general and the largest part of ODA for agriculture, for example US\$1.247 billion from 1977 to 1981.¹⁵⁹ Japan was reported to be the only, or one of the few, foreign nations for which a considerable share of its ‘aid’ went to agricultural projects in Indonesia, with a focus on Java.¹⁶⁰ The ‘World Bank’ and the Asian Development Bank provided most agricultural ‘aid’ to the country.¹⁶¹

In the 1970s, the IBRD and IDA were by far the biggest lenders, followed by the ADB, Japan and the USA, both of which had been in the leading positions before.¹⁶² From 1986 to 1991, Japan provided more ODA than all other lenders combined.¹⁶³ Japanese politicians viewed Indonesia as a crucial zone of interest. Japan also claimed the post of the FAO country representative in Jakarta.¹⁶⁴

How did the transmission of ideas about ‘development’ and coordination between ‘donors’ work? This pertains to the Intergovernmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) (1967–1991), one of the first ‘aid clubs’ through which capitalist industrialized nations and certain UN agencies coordinated their development policies and ‘aid’ with each other and the recipient country.¹⁶⁵ The IGGI’s successor from 1992 to 2007 was the Consultative Group on Indonesia (CGI).¹⁶⁶ If I discuss the

157 Secret Kissinger report, “Meeting with Indonesian President Suharto”, 5 July 1975, Ford Library, Temporary Files of Documents from Otherwise Unprocessed Parts of the Collection, Box 13, 7/5/75 Indonesian President Suharto.

158 Eldridge 1980, pp. 32, 41.

159 Carruthers 1983, p. 33 (annual sums were, in that order, US\$167, 267, 255, 366 and 192 million, respectively).

160 Galbraith (Jakarta) to State Department, 2 November 1973, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 479, Aid-Indon 1–1–70.

161 31.4 percent of ADB lending went into agriculture and agroindustry: Kappagoda 1995, p. 50.

162 For the USA, see secret Kissinger report, “Meeting with Indonesian President Suharto”, 5 July 1975, Ford Library, Temporary Parallel Files of Documents from Otherwise Unprocessed Parts of the Collection, Box 13, 7/5/75 Indonesian President Suharto.

163 Hill 2000, p. 92.

164 Markhan to Yriart, 20 September 1973, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div. Subject Files, FAO Cooperation with Japan.

165 Some experts make distinctions between aid consortia/aid clubs, consultative groups and coordinating groups; see Krueger et al. 1989, pp. 103–107; note for the file by Aenishäuslin, “Die schweizerische Beteiligung an Koordinationsgruppen der Entwicklungshilfe”, 4 February 1974, <https://dodis.ch/40223>. The first aid clubs were for India (1958) and Pakistan (1960): Krueger et al. 1989, p. 103; Payer 1974, esp. p. 28. Ceylon had an aid group since 1965, see Bandaranaike to Nixon, 4 December 1970, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 478, AID Ceylon 6 1/1/70.

166 In the CGI, pledges increased initially: Schulte Nordholt 1995, p. 158.

IGGI here in some detail, it is because of the wealth of available sources and the paucity of systematic research on ‘aid clubs’.¹⁶⁷

Much of the research there assumes that external actors exerted tremendous influence through this consortium (and through those concerning other countries).¹⁶⁸ Critical Indonesian students at the time thought so.¹⁶⁹ And when Henry Kissinger became U.S. Secretary of State in 1973, his staff pointed to the IGGI by saying:

[O]ne of the most useful tools that have developed in the aid field is the consortium [...] the existence of these consortia that have to have a deep dialogue with the recipient country really enables the apparatus, including ourselves, to put pressures on that have the implication of reduced aid if things don’t go right.¹⁷⁰

As stated before, the IGGI’s members financed much of Indonesia’s five-year development plans in the 1970s.

How did the IGGI function? On the one hand, its membership included certain international organizations – like the IBRD, IDA, IMF and Asian Development Bank –, on the other hand, the IGGI itself can be regarded as a rarely scrutinized type of a half-informal international organization with regular meetings and procedure and a fixed membership of countries, though there was no charter or permanent secretariat; some involved praised its flexibility.¹⁷¹ In addition to Indonesia and the international organizations mentioned earlier, the IGGI in the mid-1970s had 13 member countries and a few observer countries. Meetings were large; one, for example, involved about 80 foreign representatives (four to nine per country from various ministries and institutions).¹⁷² Unlike many other aid groups, the IGGI was not chaired by the ‘World Bank’ but by the Netherlands. It met twice a year in Amsterdam or The Hague. Unlike in other aid consortia, Indonesian representatives were never asked to leave the room during lenders’ discussions.¹⁷³ But each meeting was preceded by a flurry of informal, preparatory meetings, mostly of a bilateral character, either with Indonesian representatives or among lender countries.¹⁷⁴ The latter led to some political coordination among lenders. In the 1980s, voluntary agencies formed the Inter-NGO Conference on IGGI Matters,

167 For IGGI, the early phase is covered comparatively best. See Posthumus 1971; Posthumus 1972; Palmer 1978; Prawiro 1998, pp. 64–71; Payer 1974, pp. 81–90 (and her book on consortia in general); for the latter period, see Schulte Nordholt 1995.

168 For example, see Payer 1974.

169 See Chalmers and Hadiz 1997, pp. 139, 190.

170 “East Asia Chiefs of Mission Conference – Tokyo, Japan, Thursday, November 15, 1973, Morning Session”, NARA, RG 59, Ex Secretariat, Briefing Book 1958–1976. Kissinger, who did not need such advice, knew such consortia well.

171 Prawiro 1998, pp. 64, 76.

172 List of participants of December 1970 meeting, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 480, AID 9 Indon 2/1/71.

173 Posthumus 1971, p. 24.

174 See, for example, Masters to Secretary of State, “World Bank Briefing on Indonesian Economy”, 30 November 1978, https://wikileaks.org/plus/cables/1978JAKART16442_d.html (accessed 23 January 2017).

which convened before IGGI meetings.¹⁷⁵ The Development Center of the Council of Indonesian Churches had its own consortium of foreign ‘donors’ as well.¹⁷⁶

Originally, policies of capitalist countries served to support Suharto’s anti-communist regime and support its financial stabilization program of the late 1960s. From 1968 onwards, the IGGI gave financial support for the Indonesian government’s development policies for infrastructure, industry, agriculture, forestry and social services. After program aid dominated in the late 1960s, project aid became dominant for most of the 1970s; IGGI members also pledged food aid.¹⁷⁷ Their ‘aid’ came in the form of grants, soft and commercial loans. In most years, lenders’ commitments exceeded what Indonesia requested but they met only 50–75 percent of their pledges.¹⁷⁸ They pledged US\$600 million in 1970, after which the annual amount grew continuously, except for a dip in the early 1980s.¹⁷⁹ Members coordinated their loans; they did not pool them.

Negotiations in the IGGI do not confirm that foreign powers determined the development policies of Suharto’s Indonesia. The Indonesian government reported about its major policies and programs, and others (especially the IBRD and IMF) submitted reviews of these policies and programs. Pledges for annual transfers were made in the spring meetings. According to the minutes, specific projects were rarely discussed in the general meetings.¹⁸⁰ Nor were important political events such as the invasion of East Timor and the Malari affair. However, the IGGI seems to have organized a “transmigration seminar” in March 1985.¹⁸¹ Foreign lenders committed themselves to funding specific projects that they selected from lists drawn up by BAPPENAS, the Indonesian planning authority, with the advice of the IBRD and ADB.¹⁸² In the meetings, which were about general lines of policy, members usually agreed with Indonesia’s development policies and strategies, though there was occasional criticism, especially of financial and banking policies.¹⁸³ In turn, the

175 Office comments to Indonesia Annual report of 1987, Oxfam, Box Annual Reports Asia (not India), Far East, A-K, file Indonesia – Annual.

176 Rui 2020, pp. 212–259.

177 Palmer 1978, p. 32; Lanier to USDA, 6 March 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 40, ID Indonesia 1974 DR.

178 Lanier to USDA, 27 February 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975 DR.

179 Agricultural Attache Jakarta to USDA, 10 December 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975 DR; Soesastro 1991, p. 18; Eldridge 1980, p. 40; Oxfam Indonesia annual reports for 1980–81 through 1982–83, Oxfam, Box Annual Reports Asia (not India), Far East, A-K, file Indonesia – Annual.

180 See various material for 1970 to 1973 meetings in the files NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 480, AID 9 INDON 12/1/71 and 1–1–73; Payer 1974, esp. p. 82.

181 Otten 1986, p. 139. See the end of the chapter for transmigration (organized domestic migration).

182 See, for example, Opening Statement by C. Boertjen, 21 December 1972, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 480, AID 9 INDON 1–1–73; USADB Manila (Edmond) to Secretary of State und U.S. Embassy Jakarta, “DCC Multi-year Assistance Strategy Paper for Indonesia”, 20 September 1978, http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978MANILA16552_d.html (accessed 23 January 2017); Posthumus 1971, pp. 38–39.

183 See already Brewster to Kissinger, 24 December 1970 (secret), NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 480, AID 9 INDON 1/1/70. See also Henriques Girling 1985, p. 85.

Indonesians did not have their way when it came to untying ‘aid’. In 1978, the U.S. ambassador Masters complained: “GOI [the government of Indonesia] is clearly not seeking the consultation or participation of donors in the final stages of the [Five-year Development] Plan’s preparation and related policy decisions”.¹⁸⁴ Foreigners did not formulate Indonesia’s policies and socioeconomic planning, nor, the material also suggests, did they have the institutional means or expertise to do so. In particular, the IGGI seems to have had little impact on Indonesia’s agricultural policies. In 1973–1974, most members agreed that the alleviation of poverty (through intensive farming) should be a major goal but Indonesia had already adopted this policy.¹⁸⁵ However, members did use the IGGI to gather strategic internal information on Indonesia’s planning to further their national business interests.¹⁸⁶

Scholars have also discussed the IGGI concerning aid conditionality.¹⁸⁷ It was the IGGI’s Dutch chairman, Jan Pronk, who made human rights abuses of Suharto’s regime an issue, first briefly in the early 1970s and more insistently when he again held the post in the early 1990s.¹⁸⁸ This led Indonesia to refuse Dutch aid and demand a change in the chairmanship, which ended the IGGI though the CGI soon succeeded it. Generally, political conditionality was strictly limited. The whole point of the consortium was to back a regime that had slaughtered at least half a million alleged communists, precisely because it had done so. And the IGGI’s response to Indonesia’s brutal invasion of East Timor in late 1975 was to enormously *expand* loans to Indonesia in 1976 to enable Indonesia to deal with its public debts, which had suddenly doubled due to Pertamina’s factual bankruptcy.¹⁸⁹

The story of the IGGI illustrates the fact that development policies had to work through national government policies, that the development strategies of industrialized nations and non-industrialized countries overlapped, and that policies were not imposed but settled through dialogue.

Scholars emphasizing Indonesian dependency have argued that Indonesian government economists (also called the technocrats) worked with foreign models¹⁹⁰ and pointed to U.S. influence in particular. Many Indonesian technocrats had been trained at U.S. universities like Harvard and Berkeley in the 1950s and early 1960s. Some called them the Berkeley boys or “Berkeley mafia”.¹⁹¹ After the military takeover in 1965 and the mass murders, the Netherlands, too, opened an additional

184 Masters to State Department, 21 November 1978, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978JAKART16036_d.html (accessed 23 January 2017).

185 “Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia Meeting held in Amsterdam on May 7–8, 1973, Summary of proceedings”, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 480, AID Indon. 1–1–73; Erath and Kruijt 1988, p. 47.

186 Stated openly in note for the file by Aenishäuslin, “Die schweizerische Beteiligung an Koordinationsgruppen der Entwicklungshilfe”, 4 February 1974, <https://dodis.ch/40223>.

187 See Schulte Nordholt 1995.

188 See “Dutch warn” 1975; Pronk 2015 (with some degree of self-heroization).

189 “Half-Yearly Report, Oxfam Field Director in Indonesia, March–September 1975”, 12 September 1975, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, Feb 1970–Oct 1976; Arief and Sasono 1981, p. 124; Soesastro 1991, p. 18; Lewis 2007, p. 106.

190 For example, Crouch 1978, p. 321.

191 Green 1990, p. 98 (quote); Simpson 2008; Ransom 1975.

100 positions for Indonesian students in Dutch universities.¹⁹² In the early years of Suharto's regime, there existed also a "Harvard University Development Advisory Group in Jakarta", one of whose members was Gustav Papanek, who had earlier been an economic advisor to Ayub Khan's military regime in Pakistan.¹⁹³

However, the question remains whether these intellectuals just applied foreign models like "balancing the budget, removing subsidies for state enterprises, and encouraging foreign investment".¹⁹⁴ In fact, Indonesia maintained its subsidies and its control of – and sometimes restrictions to – foreign investment. U.S. economists' wisdom clashed with the judgment of "many Indonesian planners, who prioritized agricultural self-sufficiency and rural employment over technological modernization".¹⁹⁵ Among Indonesian experts, who were certainly not unaware of economic thinking abroad, there was a lot of debate over decades as to what 'developmental' path to take and what means to apply.¹⁹⁶ Intellectuals like Sajogyo opposed the 'World Bank's' attempts to 'prove' that poverty in Indonesia had decreased in 1970–1976.¹⁹⁷ And influential figures such as Mohammed Hatta, co-founder of the nation, Muslim nationalists and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce also criticized the fields of foreign investment in the early 1970s.¹⁹⁸ For example, President Suharto had to explain carefully to the public in 1979 why the country still needed foreign 'aid', when its foreign debt was already US\$13 billion.¹⁹⁹

The 'World Bank' became Indonesia's biggest foreign funding institution in the 1970s. Indonesia attracted Robert McNamara's special attention. 'The Bank's' large field office in Jakarta (once small with only 12 resident staff in 1968) was under Bernard Bell who reported directly to McNamara.²⁰⁰ Between 1967 and 1994, IBRD and IDA credits amounted to US\$21.3 billion.²⁰¹ Loans for rural development targeted, above all, irrigation projects and fertilizer factories.²⁰² Of US\$500 million spent from 1968 to late April 1974, 186.9 million was for agriculture – including 59 million for estate rehabilitation, 50 million for sugar industry rehabilitation, 50.5 million for irrigation and only a mere 12.8 million for smallholder agriculture. Despite the Bank's talk of directing money to the poorest 40 percent of the population, most of its funding went to big capital, industry, transportation and infrastructure.²⁰³ In the late 1970s, the IBRD turned in part to integrated rural

192 "Bericht über den Inhalt der Februar-Nummer von 'Tanah Air', der Zeitschrift für Indonesier im Ausland" (1966), PA AA 37, IB5, vol. 255.

193 Donges et al. 1974, p. 1; see also Arief 1977, p. 7.

194 Green 1990, p. 100.

195 Simpson 2008, p. 23; see also Bresnan 1993, pp. 75–85.

196 See Chalmers and Hadiz 1997; Robison 1988.

197 See Eldridge 1980, pp. 14–17.

198 Palmer 1978, pp. 157–158.

199 Masters to State Department, "President Suharto's National Day Speech: Economic Aspects", https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979JAKART13149_e.html (accessed 23 January 2017).

200 Kraske 1996, p. 178; Thompson and Manning 1974, p. 56.

201 Lawyers Committee 1995, p. 53.

202 R. Dorrett, "Indonesia", *Agriculture Abroad* 30 (4), 1975, p. 8; Lanier to USDA, 23 June 1977, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 67, ID-Indonesia 1977 DR; Confederation of British Industry 1975, p. 23; Thompson and Manning 1974, p. 70.

203 See Thompson and Manning 1974, pp. 64, 79.

development projects.²⁰⁴ Arguably, this may have included large dam and transmigration projects.²⁰⁵

The USAID and other foreign agencies channeled increasing amounts of their money through Indonesian NGOs.²⁰⁶ Some of these were religious. The Council of Indonesian Churches (whose primary sources of funding were Western European Protestant churches) ran its own village development program, which sent ‘motivators’ to at least 89 villages in the 1980s.²⁰⁷ However, Christians’ ‘development’ work, like that of other NGOs, was similar to the government’s approach until the mid-1990s when they did “some genuine soul searching” and became open for more of a “transformation approach”, according to an Oxfam observer.²⁰⁸

The foreign presence and organizational setup differed between development agencies. In 1987, USAID employed 50 U.S. citizens and 60 locals in Indonesia to manage projects whose budget totaled US\$57 million, whereas 20 Japanese administered projects for \$700 million.²⁰⁹

The effectiveness of the foreign-funded projects was debatable. For example, a USAID field officer for a large rural electrification project suspected that it would mostly benefit the wealthy.²¹⁰ One Oxfam observer judged that foreign ‘aid’ did not help reduce inequality because it was lost in corruption.²¹¹ A 1978 report, according to which “this country had not suffered from lack of international support in the past”, quoted an unnamed “veteran UN officer” as saying: “This is a mission-stricken country which is literally cluttered with pilot projects”.²¹² The influence of foreign guidance is, again, subject to debate. The ‘World Bank’ advised the government to deregulate the economy in 1980, which first led to a major conflict with the government in Jakarta and then, for some years, in substance to little. Government measures after 1986 did resemble what the ‘World Bank’ had recommended, but this was the product of long policy debates within Indonesia.²¹³

As mentioned earlier, the Suharto regime had the reputation of pursuing an open door policy toward foreign private investment. This reversed the policies until 1965, when the government repeatedly expropriated foreign, in particular

204 U.S. Embassy Jakarta to State Department, 8 February 1979, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979JAKARTA02094_e.html (accessed 23 January 2017).

205 See Lawyers Committee 1995, pp. 4, 7; Adler 1979, p. 189.

206 [Oxfam,] “Annual Report – Indonesia (FY 1982/83)”, Oxfam, Box Annual Reports Asia (not India), Far East, A-K, file Indonesia – Annual.

207 Rui 2020, pp. 264–393, 327; Krause 1982.

208 “Summary – Annual Report, Oxfam – Indonesia”, n.d. (1995?), Oxfam, Box Annual Reports Asia (not India), Far East, A-K, file Indonesia – Annual.

209 Nuscheler 1990, p. 91.

210 Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 36.

211 Glen Williams, “Indonesia – Annual Report 1978/79”, 10 December 1979, Oxfam, Box Annual Reports Asia (not India), Far East, A-K, file Indonesia – Annual.

212 ESCAP Inter-Agency team on Integrated Rural Development Country Report: Indonesia, n.d. (1978), FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Rural Development 1972–1976.

213 See Winters 1996, pp. 147–180.

Dutch, firms.²¹⁴ Foreign direct investment in Indonesia rose from US\$900 million in 1971 to \$5.76 billion in 1978, according to possibly overstated UN data. Most of that growth occurred from 1973 to 1976. New investment declined markedly after 1975 but peaked again in 1982–1983 and 1987. The outflows resulting from those investments rose from US\$128 million in 1970 to \$3,257.7 billion in 1980, accumulating to \$15 billion over the decade.²¹⁵ According to UN data, 38.3 percent of the capital stock of transnational corporations in 1980 was from the USA, 20.9 percent from Japan, 12.6 percent from Great Britain, 6.8 percent from the Netherlands and 5.2 percent from Australia. Other sources suggest a higher Japanese share, a lower from the USA and a sizable percentage from Hongkong. The latter is also supported by data on Indonesia's approvals of foreign investment in 1967–1982 (35 percent were for Japanese capital, 14.4 percent for North American firms and 11.4 percent for companies from Hongkong).²¹⁶ Sixty percent of all approved foreign investment was in Jakarta and West Java.²¹⁷ However, less than half of the investment approved in 1968–1985 was actually made.²¹⁸ In 1994, after foreign investment had become easier, the origin of investments shifted further – in 1994, nearly 60 percent of approvals were for capital from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea. Often this was for export-oriented industries in which domestic capital also played a big role (more than 60 percent of Indonesia's exports in 1970–2000 were for Asia). Most East Asian capital flowed into manufacturing (primarily garments and textiles, secondarily food and forest products), whereas most Euro-American capital was invested in mining.²¹⁹ But the large FDI inflows in 1991–1997 were offset by an equally dramatic disinvestment in 1998–2003.²²⁰

One aspect of multinationals' activities goes to the core of this study but occurred before my period of investigation. In the absence of reliable official delivery systems and due to a shortage of foreign exchange, the Indonesian government contracted with foreign multinationals to supply new agricultural inputs for entire regions. This program under the misleading headline of "BIMAS gotong

214 But nominally, a decree of 1970 excluded foreign firms from most sectors of Indonesian trade, including import and export, though it was only to be applied after the end of 1977: U.S. Agricultural Attache, 31 October 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID-Indonesia 1975 DR; Robison 1988, p. 185.

215 UNCTNC 1983b, pp. 290, 309; Chalmer and Hadiz 1997, p. 34 note 21. Winters 1996, p. 117 suggests much lower FDI figures; see also Arief and Sasono 1981, p. 124. For the decline, see also Bresnan 1993, p. 252.

216 UNCTNC 1983b, p. 331; Frank 1980, p. 15 (data for 1976); Forbes 1986, p. 115; Confederation of British Industry 1975, p. 5; Tsurumi 1980a, pp. 318–319.

217 Hill 2000, p. 231.

218 Winters 1996, p. 114; Hill 2000, pp. 76–77.

219 Bowie and Unger 1997, p. 63; Wolf 1992, pp. 39–40; Hill 2000, pp. 90–91; for cumulative figures, see Lewis 2007, p. 197; for loosening restrictions, see Herkenrath 2003, p. 206; for export destinations, see Lewis 2007, p. 195 and Hill 2000, p. 86; for sectors, see Tsurumi 1980a, pp. 298, 302, 320 and Hill 2000, p. 78. But in 1988, most of the textile and garments production was under domestic ownership: Hill 2000, p. 168.

220 Thee 2012, pp. 191, 210; see also Lewis 2007, p. 118.

royong” (Mutual Aid Mass Guidance) started in South Sulawesi with a contract with Ciba (later Ciba-Geigy) from Switzerland in June 1967. Mitsubishi, Hoechst and two other European companies were added in 1969–1970 to deliver the inputs for 1 million hectares, over 20 percent of Indonesia’s wet rice land, which included 300,000 hectares on Java under contract with Ciba-Geigy. The companies provided producers with standardized packages of seeds and fertilizer disregarding varying soils and other natural conditions. Peasants were “drafted without choice”. Companies also aerially sprayed pesticides over entire areas when they saw fit. Farmers received the inputs on credit, paid for by the Indonesian state, later to be recovered by producers paying one-sixth of their harvest to BULOG.²²¹ According to Hoechst executives, the company had increased sales with a “‘modest’ expenditure of funds”. Some Indonesian military officers benefitted by collecting bribes.²²² Ciba charged US\$15.75 million, or \$52.50 per hectare, in 1968–1969. Indonesians could have done this business much cheaper, but Ciba incurred high costs through 100 locals and 50 expatriates on their staff and maintaining 12 aircraft, 100 vehicles, 150 motorcycles and 1,300 bikes.²²³

The program was discontinued in May 1970 for economic and financial reasons – yields were much smaller than expected, which led to financial losses of US\$60 million to the Indonesian state.²²⁴ “There was tremendous resistance to the CIBA program by the farmers [. . .]. The farmers objected to the arbitrary decisions that aerial spraying imposed on their activities”.²²⁵ Peasants resisted the compulsion and disregard for local needs plus high costs, foreign firms lacked connections to local agricultural officers, and village leaders were overwhelmed with the organization at the village level.²²⁶ Repayment rates on BIMAS credits went downhill in the late 1960s.²²⁷ Despite clear signs that things were going wrong – peasants could not make the obligatory deliveries to BULOG, some places lacked adequate deliveries of inputs and fertilizer piled up in village stores elsewhere – the government expanded the area under Ciba’s contract in mid-1969.²²⁸ In addition, charges of corruption surfaced in the press, and Suharto allegedly visited a program site incognito to get his own picture.²²⁹ All analysts agree that the scheme was a huge failure. Multinationals, which were inflexible, interested only in profit and had little regard for customers, were obviously incapable of organizing such an undertaking.

221 Palmer 1977c, pp. 31–36; Franke 1974, p. 45; Pearse 1980, p. 93 (quote); Gerdin 1982, p. 106; Crouch 1978, p. 290; Donald 1976, pp. 71–72; Ministry of Agriculture, “BIMAS and its role within agricultural development”, Jakarta, March 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975.

222 Solomon 1978, p. 162; Crouch 1978, p. 291.

223 Palmer 1977c, pp. 31–34.

224 Gerdin 1982, p. 106; Crouch 1978, p. 291; Hansen 1971, p. 398; Suwidjana 1981, p. 151.

225 Donald 1976, pp. 71–72.

226 Crouch 1978, p. 324; Mubyarto 1982a, pp. 38–39; Palmer 1977c, p. 35.

227 J.D. Drilon, Jr., “The Aftermath of the Green Revolution”, paper for the Third Asian Management Congress (ca. 1973), FAO, RG 15, RAFE, Green Revolution 1973–74.

228 Djle Saran, 19 September 1969, quoted in an undated Savingram, ANA, 3034/2/9/1, part 1, p. 301.

229 Maurer 1986b, p. 47; White 2000, p. 87; Palmer 1977c, p. 36.

After this disastrous experience with multinationals in 1968–1970, the government restricted foreign direct investment in agriculture on Java and Madura and outlawed it in seed development and input production for rice. Joint ventures were permitted, but staff had to be mostly Indonesians. Foreign investment in agriculture at the time was small and largely in forestry. Mining and, secondarily, manufacturing drew much more foreign capital.²³⁰ The Malari affair in 1974 led to more restrictions across economic sectors, tightening some restrictions already included into the 1967 investment law.²³¹ Nonetheless, a delegation of British capitalists saw opportunities in 1975 in the processing of agricultural products, in consultancy in agriculture and irrigation, construction equipment for irrigation, and small pumps and other equipment for small farmers,²³² though probably not much came of it. In general, domestic investment was much larger than foreign, and ODA surpassed all foreign private investment inflows.²³³

Economic developments

Rice was Indonesia's main staple. The conditions of production differed. In 1978, 39 percent was irrigated, 45 percent was rainfed wet rice and 16 percent was rainfed upland rice.²³⁴ Production increased modestly from 13.1 million tons in 1970 to 15.9 million tons in 1978, was more or less stagnant in 1974–1977, then rising more steeply to reach 24.0 million tons in 1983. In 1973–1975, 1980 and 1981, it exceeded even the ambitious plans.²³⁵ In Java, 14.7 million tons were harvested in 1983, off-Java 9.3 million tons.²³⁶ And 1983 was not the end: paddy production reached 45.2 million tons in 1990 and 49.9 million tons in 1995.²³⁷

On Java, the 1970–1983 increase was largely based on the intensification of farming since the harvested area grew only by about 7 percent, but on the outer islands, higher output was also because of growing acreage (16 percent) – yield increases were steadier, but not so pronounced 1976–1982.²³⁸ In 1960 and 1965, yields on Java and the outer islands were almost the same; they diverged especially

230 Decree of the [Indonesian] Minister of Agriculture, "Capital Investment in the Agricultural Sector", 6 November 1973, with cover letter Lanier to USDA, 28 December 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 16, ID Indonesia 1973 DR. See also Arief 1977, p. 148; Confederation of British Industry 1975, p. 5; for Cargill's poultry raising activities, see Kneen 1995, pp. 80, 83, 102–103. For other restrictions, see Herkenrath 2003, pp. 203–204, 209.

231 Herkenrath 2003, p. 205; Robison 1988, pp. 184, 335.

232 Confederation of British Industry 1975, p. 11. A more sobering outlook is in "Summary Record of the Semi-Annual Meeting of the FAO/Bankers Programme", 9–10 October 1972, FAO, RG 9, V (Misc.), Private Banks.

233 Hill 2000, pp. 76–78, 81.

234 Capistrano and Marten 1986, p. 11.

235 Mears 1984, pp. 126, 131; Lanier to USDA, 29 December 1975, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975 DR; *ICN* [Indonesia Commercial Newsletter], no. 110, 25 September 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 79, ID-Indonesia 1978. See also Thee 2002, p. 216.

236 Maurer 1986a, p. 62.

237 Than 1998, p. 7.

238 Mears 1984, p. 128; Gonzales 1993, p. 21.

after 1968 and again around 1980, and in 1983, yields on Java were almost 50 per cent higher than in the rest of the country.²³⁹ Productivity rose faster for lowland rice than for upland rice. Overall, it climbed from 2.25 tons per hectare in 1969 to 3.85 tons in 1983 and 4.3 tons in 1990.²⁴⁰

Rice production per capita hovered between 80 and 100 kilograms annually from 1950 to 1968. From 91 kilograms in 1963, it grew to 117 kilograms in 1973 and 153 kilograms in 1983, while production of other staples fell from 72 to 65 kilograms per capita.²⁴¹ However, national economy perspectives, consumer and private business outlooks were not necessarily identical. During the rice boom of 1976–1980, income from rice per hectare declined strongly at least in the Yogyakarta area, despite steep increases in labor productivity, because of inflation, including the prices of inputs.²⁴²

The picture for other staples was different. Though Indonesia's rice yields were higher than in most other South and Southeast Asian countries, its yields of corn, cassava and sweet potatoes were average or lower.²⁴³ Most of the country's corn was grown in East and Central Java and on the eastern islands, and most sweet potatoes in the eastern islands as well.²⁴⁴ Only corn saw a steady large increase in its yield, 60 percent from 1973 to 1983 (sweet potato yields rose only 20 percent).²⁴⁵ Maize productivity per hectare, which was 1.0 tons in 1970, increased further in 1980–1988 (from 1.5 to 2.1 tons per hectare, or 40 percent). Demand for corn emerged also from the feeds industry, and returns on investment were on the rise.²⁴⁶ Gains in cassava yields were apparently lower, but still considerable at 60 percent in 1970–1987, though much of it was before 1973 with near-stagnation in the next decade.²⁴⁷ Cassava and corn yields in 1974 were higher on the outer islands than on Java.²⁴⁸ Producers used “relatively poor, unirrigated lands for these crops”, where investment did not seem promising.²⁴⁹ Nationally, Repelita I and II neglected these secondary food crops – despite government propaganda to the contrary.²⁵⁰ Experts and the IGGI recommended to pay more attention to them.²⁵¹

239 Maurer 1986a, p. 62; Mears 1984, p. 128.

240 See Jatileksono 1987, pp. 57, 137; Gérard et al. 2001, p. 285; Cribb and Brown 1995, p. 117.

241 Maurer 1986a, p. 65; Jatileksono 1987, p. 144 with slightly different data.

242 Axelsson 2013, pp. 94–96.

243 See Afiff et al. 1980a, p. 407 (data for 1975); Cock 1985, p. 5; Falcon et al. 1984b, p. 164.

244 Chernichovsky and Meesok 1984, p. 63.

245 Maurer 1986a, p. 64; see Mink and Dorosh 1987, p. 43.

246 Tabor 1992a, pp. 187–188; Booth 1988, pp. 167–168.

247 See Tabor 1992a, pp. 187–188; Maurer 1986a, p. 64; and Jatileksono 1987, p. 25. Roche 1984b, p. 9 sees yields increasing especially 1972–1975. But see data in note 8/254.

248 Anwar et al. 1976, p. 137.

249 Quote from Mears 1984, p. 135.

250 Mears 1984, p. 129; Anwar et al. 1976, p. 111; see also Green to Sullivan, 21 November 1972, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, 1970–73, Box 470, AGR Indon 15 1/1/70 and *Indonesia develops* 1975, vol. III, p. 187; and data in 5 years n.y., p. 17.

251 See U.S. Embassy The Hague, “Press Communique – Meeting of the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia, Amsterdam, May 22–23, 1978”, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978THEHA02921_d.html and U.S. State Department to various U.S. embassies, “Carnegie/INR Sponsored Indonesian Rural Development Seminar”, 10 December 1978, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978State312035_html (both accessed 23 January 2017).

Corn production grew from 2.8 million tons in 1970 to 3.7 million tons in 1973 to 5.1 million tons in 1983 and 6.6 million tons in 1988. It was primarily consumed in the eastern islands, parts of Sulawesi, East and Central Java and Madura²⁵² and almost exclusively for direct human consumption by rural, usually poor Indonesians, for whom it was a substitute for rice or mixed with it. Farmers sold half of the crop.²⁵³ Cassava production was high but for a long time almost stagnant (10.5 million tons in 1970, 15.2 million tons in 1987, a good year). Because sweet potato production dropped in 1973–1983 from 2.4 to 2.2 million tons, daily per capita consumption of starchy roots declined slightly from 547 to 534 calories.²⁵⁴ Cassava was mostly grown rainfed for direct human consumption in marginal uplands, predominantly eaten by rural dwellers (like corn), but relatively often marketed.²⁵⁵ It was a relatively drought-resistant crop for poor people that provided calories efficiently, but with low prestige. Growing cassava brought peasants normally only a modest income in the 1980s, yielded decreasing returns in 1976–1985, and surplus producers were prone to price collapses.²⁵⁶ However, from 1971 to 1977, income terms of trade developed highly positive for root crop staples, better than for corn and dry rice.²⁵⁷ Nonetheless, acreage for the cultivation of cassava was often on the decline, especially in Java.²⁵⁸

In summary, there was less intensification in the farming of staples other than rice.²⁵⁹ Their yields increased more slowly and were primarily the result of new varieties and secondarily of moderate growth in the use of fertilizers but not of irrigation. Development policies and farmers' choices made rice more important to the Indonesians' diets than ever before.²⁶⁰

It seems that peasants with more land started to adopt intensive methods earlier than those with less.²⁶¹ By 1978, the former still grew more often high-yielding varieties, but the latter applied more fertilizer.²⁶² Scholars found that small to

252 Prabowo 1983, p. 270; Tabor 1992a, p. 188; Dorosh et al. 1987, pp. 27, 31; Monteverde and Mink 1987, p. 114, 122–123.

253 Monteverde and Mink 1987, pp. 113–115, 119, 124, 139, 141; "Marketing" 1987, p. 197.

254 Tabor 1992a, pp. 187–188; Maurer 1986a, pp. 64, 68; Palmer 1978, p. 85. Tabor's claim of high gains in the early 1970s is in contrast to "Production of and demand for rice, corn and cassava", *ICN* [Indonesia Commercial Newsletter] No. 110, 25 September 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 79, ID-Indonesia 1978. This in combination with a U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta report, 30 December 1971, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 16, ID Indonesia 1971 with data for 1960–1971 and Anwar et al. 1976, p. 112 points to stagnation (also with data on sweet potatoes).

255 Dixon 1982, pp. 363–366; Pearson et al. 1981, pp. 2, 5; Dixon 1984, p. 67; see also Chernichovsky and Meesok 1984, p. 13; Timmer 1987b, p. 282.

256 Benoit et al. 1989, p. 261; Tabor 1992a, p. 187; Falcon et al. 1984b, pp. 165, 168; Booth 1988, pp. 167–168.

257 According to Booth and Sundrum 1981, p. 193. Hill 2000, p. 133 states that gains in productivity 1969–1992 were higher for cassava than for rice and corn.

258 Gonzales 1993, p. 31.

259 For cassava, see Gonzales 1993, p. 89.

260 See Chernichovsky and Meesok 1984, p. 3.

261 Hayami 1990, p. 419 (on 1971–72); Maurer 1986a, pp. 109, 177. Palmer 1977c, p. 68 and De Koninck 1979, p. 279 are more ambivalent.

262 Manning 1988, pp. 11–12; see also Hüsken 1989, p. 321.

medium farmers had higher yields and returns per unit area,²⁶³ but farm incomes increased stronger on bigger holdings, whereas mini farms invested proportionally more, which brought some into financial difficulties.²⁶⁴ Also, small cultivators were at a disadvantage because they paid higher interest on loans and had to sell their output at low prices at harvest time.²⁶⁵

Irrigation was arguably the foundation for the intensification of food crop cultivation in Indonesia. Irrigation systems had a long and great tradition in Java, and if Anne Booth finds Indonesia's good agricultural performance in recent decades less surprising than others but the "continuation of a long process of relatively successful agricultural development", this depended undoubtedly on irrigation and the hard efforts by generations of Indonesians.²⁶⁶ But from 1955 to 1975, the percentage of arable land under irrigation virtually stagnated at 23–24 percent and the high percentage of the rice area under irrigation increased only slightly (from 82 percent to 86 percent).²⁶⁷ However, the total acreage expanded, and the total irrigated area increased from 4.1 million in 1961–1965 to 4.84 million hectares in 1976 and to 5.42 million hectares in the mid-1980s, 30 percent of the cultivated area.²⁶⁸ Most of the increase was on the outer islands, where there was much less irrigation to begin with.²⁶⁹ Still, cropping intensity on Java increased greatly in 1969–1987.²⁷⁰ But more than two-thirds of Indonesia's cultivated area remained rainfed, much of it in the outer islands or at high altitudes.²⁷¹ Irrigation – a huge investment of money and labor – had limits, even on Java.

The rehabilitation of irrigation systems took center stage in the 1970s. These efforts concentrated on Java, where more than half of all irrigation systems were overhauled from 1969 to the early 1980s, compared to about 20 percent of those in the outer islands.²⁷² After 1977–1978, however, the emphasis for several years was new construction – part of it in the outer islands, including for river and flood control.²⁷³ Small-scale irrigation projects (mostly involving less than 300 hectares) called *sederhana* – less costly and time-consuming to construct – concentrated on the outer islands, first Sumatra and Sulawesi, later also Kalimantan, but included some projects on Java. Initiated by Indonesia's government in 1974 and supported by the USAID, who covered 40 percent of the costs (usually US\$140 to US\$900 per hectare), the program was declared to help small landowners. Local projects suffered from bad reporting, resistance from farmers close to the water source against extending canals to colleagues further away, burdening women and girls with an additional workload (a common effect of new irrigation in Indonesia) and

263 Abdoellah and Marten 1986, pp. 303, 305; Booth 1988, p. 165; Manning 1988, p. 11.

264 De Koninck 1979, pp. 281–284; Cribb and Brown 1995, p. 148.

265 Pincus 1996, pp. 150–153.

266 Booth 1988, p. 2.

267 Hayami and Kikuchi 1981, p. 43.

268 Carruthers and Clark 1981, p. 84; Ahmed and Rustagi 1987, p. 106. *Feeding the World's Population* 1984, p. 180 lists 5.42 million hectares for 1981 and 4.37 million hectares in 1970.

269 For 1963 to 1973, see Bose 1982, p. 59. See also Anwar 1976, p. 113; Booth 1988, p. 145.

270 Heytens 1991, p. 111 (from 1.25 to 1.84).

271 For data from the provinces, see Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 106.

272 Ward 1985, p. 95; Booth 1988, p. 144.

273 See Jatileksono 1987, p. 61; Gonzales et al. 1993, p. 25.

a lack of on-farm canal works by peasants who waited skeptically until the bigger works reached their fields. Though the program irrigated over 400,000 hectares by the early 1980s, the effects on production were often disappointing.²⁷⁴

In many places, irrigation caused tensions. Individuals often tried to channel water from public schemes onto their own land in unauthorized ways, which sometimes led to violent conflict.²⁷⁵ Unlike in Bali, the government took greater control of irrigation systems in most of Indonesia in the 1970s and 1980s and sidelined village-driven efforts.²⁷⁶ Where there was no public irrigation scheme, the private installation of a deep well could earn the owner a fortune, since it could more than pay for itself in one dry season.²⁷⁷

Often under pressure by the authorities, most cultivators turned to the use of high-yielding rice varieties in the 1970s and 1980s. These seeds were supposed to serve as trailblazer for the adoption of intensive farming. From 1970 to 1988, the proportion of rice land under intensification programs grew from 42 to 90 percent on Java and from 25 to 60 percent on the other islands (though with stagnation in 1973–1976 and 1983–1987; the first slowdown was because the new seeds were susceptible to the brown planthopper, and some peasants, who lost several harvests, had to sell their land).²⁷⁸ According to other data, the percentage for the entire country went from 11 percent in 1970 to 39 percent in 1974, 58 percent in 1980 and 74 percent in 1983. It was highest in East and Central Java, lowest on Kalimantan, parts of Sulawesi and southern Sumatra.²⁷⁹ Rice HYVs were grown on 0.8 million hectares in 1970 and 6.8 million in 1984 (when 4.1 million hectares were fertilized and 4.9 million under irrigation), and the proportion of farmers using HYVs increased from 50 percent to 85 percent in 1975–1985.²⁸⁰ Traditional rice varieties were still grown because of better taste and fetching higher prices, and they grew better on certain soil types.²⁸¹ And HYVs were not, or rarely, grown in upland areas, for example of Lampung, Sumatra.²⁸² In some places of central Java, community seed banks preserved old varieties and bypassed regulations to grow new seeds.²⁸³ From 1984 to the early 1990s, the use of HYVs in irrigated and lowland rice fields fell from close to 100 percent to 80 percent.²⁸⁴

274 Holloran et al. 1982, esp. pp. iv, vi, 6–7, 11, and appendices D-3, D-7, D-8, D-13; Ward 1985, p. 97. For initial Indonesian plans, see also U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta, 19 August 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 40, ID Indonesia 1974 DR. For women in general, see also Bose 1982, p. 64 note 10.

275 Krause 1982, p. 53.

276 World Bank 1990b, p. 139; Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 250.

277 Collier et al. 1982, p. 95.

278 Gonzales 1993, p. 24; Collier et al. 1977, pp. 99, 101. See also Hayami and Kikuchi 1981, p. 44.

279 Jatileksono 1987, p. 22, cf. pp. 142, 151.

280 Chadha 1994, p. 65 (Jatileksono 1987, p. 52 with different data); Tabor 1992a, p. 173.

281 U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta, “Indonesia: Annual Grain and Feed Report”, 19 August 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 40, ID Indonesia 1974 DR; Gerdin 1982, p. 128.

282 Jatileksono 1994, p. 164.

283 Fowler and Mooney 1990, p. 212.

284 David and Otsuka 1994a, pp. 18–19.

Less new seeds were grown for other crops. Corn growers planted only 30 per cent of their acreage with ‘modern’ varieties in 1989–1991,²⁸⁵ and officials began to distribute high-yielding cassava varieties only in early 1972.²⁸⁶ Consequently, HYVs grew on ‘only’ 31 per cent of the country’s cropland in the late 1970s, slightly less than in India and far less than in the Philippines.²⁸⁷

Indonesia already developed its own ‘improved’ strains of rice from 1940 to 1965. In the 1970s, it was IRRI sorts IR8 and particularly IR5 and later IR36 that were grown. These and the own pelita variety were vulnerable to pests.²⁸⁸ Indonesia’s spending on rice research until 1974 was Southeast Asia’s lowest per unit area of rice cultivation. Then, the government intensified its efforts (with foreign assistance) with the aim of becoming independent of foreign HYV seeds by the late 1970s,²⁸⁹ but the expenditures for agricultural research were much reduced again in the 1980s.²⁹⁰ For example, only a few dozen government-funded staff conducted research on corn in the 1990s, which was chiefly in public institutions.²⁹¹

Fertilizer was another point of emphasis of development policy. In 1965–1966, fertilizer use was still low at 6.3 kilograms per hectare cropland. It rose to over 29 kilograms in 1972, 44 kilograms in 1979 and 116.6 kilograms in 1989–1990. It was higher for *sawah* (wetland rice) – on Java, 126 kilograms per hectare in 1976, 277 kilograms in 1980, and 345 kilograms in 1983; on the other islands, approximately 40 kilograms, 104 kilograms and 157 kilograms per hectare, respectively.²⁹²

But from 1973 to 1976, this growth stalled, and policies were uncertain.²⁹³ In 1974, fertilizer consumption lagged behind the adoption of high-yielding varieties for a number of reasons. Distribution was largely organized through BIMAS and INMAS, transportation was expensive, the fertilizer arrived sometimes too late in the villages to be used, and some peasants who failed to repay their loans were excluded from the programs and others withdrew from them.²⁹⁴ In the villages, fertilizer was sold either by small retailers or by village enterprises (KUD), and Bank Rakyat Indonesia offered villagers low-interest seasonal credit to buy it.²⁹⁵

285 Dowswell et al. 1996, p. 165.

286 U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta, 9 February 1972, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 16, ID Indonesia 1972 DR.

287 Hayami and Kikuchi 1981, p. 44.

288 IR8 in turn was developed from an Indonesian variety. Ward 1985, esp. pp. 13, 17, 41–42, 51, 53; Jatileksono 1987, pp. 19–21; 5 years, pp. 11–13; Dalrymple 1986, pp. 26–29, 47–50.

289 U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta, 10 December 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975 DR; cf. Bresnan 1993, p. 122; Evenson and Flores 1978, p. 245; Pearson et al. 1991b, p. 18; Ward 1985, pp. 23–30 for increasing funding after 1974.

290 World Bank 1990b, p. 62.

291 Dowswell et al. 1996, pp. 65, 68.

292 Drilon et al. 1975, p. 26; Grigg 1986, p. 231 (but see p. 209); Hayami and Kikuchi 1981, p. 46; Booth 1988, p. 150; Chadha 1994, p. 65; Heytens 1991, p. 103 with differing data.

293 “Annual Report 1976, Oxfam Field Director in Indonesia”, 4 April 1977, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee Nov 1976–Jan 1980.

294 Lanier to USDA, 6 March 1974, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 40, ID – Indonesia 1974 DR; Brewer 1979, pp. 220–221; Aass 1986, pp. 101–102; “Annual Report 1976, Oxfam Field Director in Indonesia”, 4 April 1977, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee Nov 1976–Jan 1980.

295 Cheong-Yeong Lee, FAO, RAFE, “Fertilizer Marketing for Small Farmers in Asian Countries – Institutional Aspects”, June 1975, FAO, RG 15, RAFE, World Fertilizer Sit./Fertilizer. The U.S.

But the – panterritorial – price for fertilizer distributed independently was one-third higher than through BIMAS/INMAS.²⁹⁶

Fertilizer use in 1974 also stagnated because poor farmers could not afford the increasing prices.²⁹⁷ The government halted imports and tried to renegotiate the prices fixed in existing contracts (with Japan, Eastern Europe, the USA and North Africa).²⁹⁸ In 1975, fertilizer subsidies were reduced given Pertamina's financial problems and in order to limit subsidies for rice purchases at a time when more rice was produced than buffer stocks could take.²⁹⁹

In reversal, the fertilizer subsidy was raised again in 1977, although its overall cost to the state remained low until 1979. Still, the paddy–urea price ratio went up, making fertilizer use for peasants profitable when it basically remained cheap in an environment of other prices rising.³⁰⁰ Subsidies of 50–60 percent of world market price, raised in nominal terms 30 times in 1976–1988, drove consumption to more than quadruple (from 0.9 million tons in 1976 to 3.8 million tons in 1986).³⁰¹

In 1978–1979, two-thirds of the nation's fertilizer was applied to rice (concentrating on BIMAS/INMAS programs, lowland rice and irrigated areas), another 20 percent to plantation products, and 80 percent was used in Java.³⁰² The gap between Java and the other islands – which was also pertaining to chemical fertilizer input per rice produced – narrowed in the 1980s. For example, high doses of chemical fertilizer were used in some places of Sumatra, plus 500–3,000 kilograms of manure per hectare.³⁰³ Peasants outside BIMAS/INMAS programs used as much manure as those inside.³⁰⁴ In particular, manure was much applied to cassava.³⁰⁵ Though generally rising, the use of mineral fertilizers on non-rice crops was considerably lower, for corn at 43 kilograms per hectare in 1989–1991 (but 71 kilograms in 1978–1979), and it varied but was still lower for cassava.³⁰⁶ Peasants with

Agricultural Attache saw private retailers only authorized in 1976: Fraser to USDA, 13 January 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 79, ID-Indonesia 1978.

296 Mears 1981, p. 128; Jatileksono 1994, p. 142.

297 Dana Dalrymple, "The Demand for Fertilizer at the Farm Level in Developing Nations", draft, 24 November 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. IV.

298 U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta to USDA, 8 August 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID – Indonesia 1975 DR; see ditto, 27 February 1975, *ibid.*

299 U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta to USDA, 12 May and 10 December 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 59, ID – Indonesia 1976 DR.

300 See Sjahrir 1986, p. 55 and Tabor 1992a, p. 183 for the price ratio; U.S. Ag. Att. Jakarta to USDA, 13 January 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 79, ID – Indonesia 1978 for the reversal; and Wing et al. 1994, pp. 174–175 for expenditures.

301 Tabor 1992a, pp. 173, 180, 182; Booth 1988, p. 150; Jatileksono 1987, p. 55.

302 U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta to USDA, 23 July 1979, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, *ibid.*, Box 79, ID – Indonesia 1979; ditto, 13 January 1978, *ibid.*, ID – Indonesia 1978; Jatileksono 1987, p. 56; Jatileksono 1994, p. 154. See also Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 114.

303 Benoit et al. 1989, pp. 229, 233, 253; Booth 1988, pp. 145, 147; Jatileksono 1994, p. 154. For inputs per rice produced, see Kano 1994, p. 55 (data for 1975).

304 Jatileksono 1987, p. 56.

305 Roche 1984c, pp. 189–192.

306 Dowsell 1996, p. 165; Booth 1988, p. 147; Roche 1984b, p. 12; Mink 1987b, p. 89. Fertilizer application on corn grew especially in Java: Mink and Dorosh 1987, p. 47.

the smallest rice holdings used the highest doses of fertilizer in 1982–1983; use fell as farm size increased.³⁰⁷ Total fertilizer consumption grew from 85,000 tons in 1969 to 6.57 million tons in 1991.³⁰⁸ In summary, with massive state support, food production, and rice in particular, became strongly based on chemical inputs.

To meet demand, and because the country had large natural gas reserves, the government built a fertilizer industry to make Indonesia self-sufficient in urea and ammonium sulfate. In addition to two existing big plants near Palembang, South Sumatra (constructed until 1964 and 1975, respectively, with money from the IBRD and other sources) and their extensions, three new factories were planned (in part using loans from Iran), two on Java (one in West Java for urea and one in East Java for phosphate-based fertilizer) and one planned to float off the coast of Kalimantan built by Belgian and British firms.³⁰⁹ Indonesia's fertilizer output expanded nearly in the speed envisioned, with a take-off in 1977–1979, and the country seems to have become a net exporter (mainly to the Philippines and India) already in 1977.³¹⁰ Production increased from 1.6 million tons in 1978 to 5.9 million tons in 1988. But 45 percent of the industry's revenue in the 1980s was state subsidies.³¹¹ In principle, it was state-owned,³¹² though the ASEAN had minority ownership of one factory in Aceh.³¹³

Pesticides were another important part of the intensification of food cultivation in Indonesia. Most insecticides were used on rice, herbicides were for rice, cash crops and vegetables.³¹⁴ Both were applied more commonly on irrigated fields than on rainfed ones.³¹⁵ Pesticide use doubled in 1968–1974 to 1,200 tons but it took off from 1979 to 1983, reaching 14,000 tons in 1983 and 17,000 tons in 1986.³¹⁶ In 1989, 89 percent of the amount of pesticides was for wetland rice.³¹⁷ Application methods included large-scale aerial spraying in the late 1960s and the 1970s, as advertised in commercial films by the Swiss corporation Ciba-Geigy.³¹⁸ BIMAS/INMAS distributed less than half of the stock in 1982–1983; cooperatives and

307 Booth 1988, p. 166.

308 Hill 2000, p. 157.

309 U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta to USDA, 28 February, 27 March, 16 June and 8 September 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID – Indonesia 1975 DR; ditto, 17 April 1976, *ibid.*, Box 59, ID – Indonesia 76 DR; UNCTNC 1982, p. 59; Palmer 1978, p. 134; Palmer 1977c, p. 49.

310 U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta to USDA, 19 August 1974, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 40, ID Indonesia 1974 DR; ditto, 30 September 1977, *ibid.*, Box 67, ID – Indonesia 1977 DR; ditto, 23 July 1979, *ibid.*, Box 79, ID – Indonesia 1979; Arief 1977, p. 111.

311 Tabor 1992a, pp. 180–181.

312 World Bank Archive, A 1991 030#2, Transcripts (of CGFPI), 3, July 23, 1975, p. 9; Robison 1988, p. 219.

313 The capital of P.T. ASEAN Aceh Fertilizer was 60 percent Indonesian, 13 percent each Philippino, Malaysian and Thai, and 1 percent Singaporean. See Kumar 1981, p. 189; UNCTNC 1982, p. 59.

314 *Indonesia develops*, vol. II, p. 23; Repetto 1985, p. 20; Farah 1994, p. 25.

315 Jatileksono 1994, p. 154.

316 Jatileksono 1987, p. 35; Anwar et al. 1976, p. 116; Timmer 1989, p. 39; Tabor 1992a, p. 178.

317 Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 115.

318 Oka 1997, p. 185; films mentioned in FAO, RG 9, ICP, IP 22/8, Ciba-Geigy A.G. vols. I and II.

commercial retailers supplied the majority.³¹⁹ Many peasants bought pesticides in small shops, where the containers stood next to food, and took it home in whatever vessel was available.³²⁰

These agents caused many cases of poisoning and 26 officially acknowledged deaths in 1976 and 32 in 1986.³²¹ They also killed frogs in the rice fields, which had been an important source of proteins.³²² Given concerns about overuse, health hazards and environmental consequences, Indonesia turned – with Suharto’s personal support – to integrated pest management in 1985–1986, starting with the rice crop. It banned 57 pesticides for rice, set up integrated pest management mechanisms and started public information campaigns and dialogues with farmers about substitute measures.³²³ By 1991, total pesticide consumption decreased by 56 percent, and participating farmers had reduced the number of applications from 16 to 20 per year to two or three.³²⁴ Subsidies that had once surpassed 80 percent of pesticide prices, peaking at over US\$120 million (Rp175 billion) in 1987, or almost one-third as much as the state paid for health improvement measures, were gradually eliminated until 1989.³²⁵

Indonesia became an important market for pesticides, with a size of over US\$140 million in 1982, accounting for 5 percent of the consumption in all non-industrialized countries (far more than in Bangladesh, Tanzania and Mali, but less than Brazil and India).³²⁶ It imported US\$19.1 million of insecticides in 1968–1969 and \$25.6 million in 1973–1974.³²⁷ In 1970, Swiss firms (especially Ciba/Ciba-Geigy) dominated the Indonesian market,³²⁸ but as in Bangladesh, this company could not maintain this position. In 1975, the country’s first herbicide factory opened near Medan with a projected output of 4,000 tons per year. Much of the national production was controlled by Pertamina.³²⁹ Three years later, 70 percent of Indonesia’s pesticide production was still in the hands of four big foreign corporations (Bayer, ICI, Dow Chemical and Chevron), who imported most of their ingredients.³³⁰

319 Repetto 1985, pp. 9, 19.

320 Weir and Schapiro 1981, p. 15.

321 Oka 1997, p. 186.

322 Perelman 1977, pp. 157, 159.

323 See Oka 1997, pp. 188–198 and Winarto 2004, esp. pp. 22–23 for affirmative studies; Tabor 1992a, p. 178. For general developments of integrated pest management programs, see Bull 1982, pp. 124–142.

324 Oka 1997, pp. 192, 197–198.

325 Timmer 1989, p. 39; Gonzales et al. 1993, pp. 13–14; Oka 1997, p. 189; Tabor 1992a, p. 178; Farah 1994, p. 12; Repetto 1985, pp. 5–7.

326 Knirsch 1987, p. 37.

327 *Indonesia develops*, vol. II, p. 24.

328 Memo Born to Donald, Jr., 26 August 1970, NARA, RG 59, SNF 1970–73, Box 457 AGR 3 FAO, 8/14/70.

329 U.S. Agricultural Attache to USDA, 8 September 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975 DR; Wing et al. 1994, p. 60.

330 UNCTNC 1983b, p. 219.

Agrarian structures in Indonesia were not conducive to mechanization. Tiny scattered plots did not lend themselves to the use of tractors, and small holdings did not generate the capital to buy one. Two-wheel or hand tractors (also called power tillers) were more practical and became available in the 1980s.³³¹ However, whether in the outer islands or Java, tractors and power tillers combined worked less than 10 percent of the cultivated land in the 1980s.³³² Typically, studies until the 1990s found tractors only in a few villages.³³³ This was also because this machinery was expensive as it was apparently not subsidized, and because small peasants preferred family labor over tractor rental agreements.³³⁴ Mechanization was more rapid in West Java. It started in the late 1970s, later also in Yogyakarta province and parts of Sulawesi, but the use of tractors and power tillers did not increase productivity per unit area or cropping intensity,³³⁵ though it did lower labor demand.³³⁶ Tractors were not needed for Indonesia's agricultural boom, given a rich supply of labor and low wages. Draught animals remained more important for a long time; there were 8.5 million cattle and buffaloes in 1973 and 10.7 million in 1982 and especially many in East and Central Java.³³⁷ But only 26 percent of rural households kept them in 1983. Thus, plowing for hire became a profession in many places.³³⁸

In addition to the supply of imported vehicles, the Japanese companies Yanmar and Kubota began to assemble power tillers and tractors in Indonesia in the 1970s, but their investment was small and the plants' output minimal, below 1,000 units annually.³³⁹ Most Indonesian production under foreign licensing was machinery for logging and earth moving equipment.³⁴⁰ The domestic production of water pumps in the second half of the 1970s was also miniscule.³⁴¹

Two other steps of rationalization in the 1960s and 1970s in rice production are notable. First, the *bawon* system of harvesting – under which many local women cut the stalks with small knives and each could keep a share of what they had reaped – was replaced by the *tebasan* system of wage contracts for male work gangs reaping with sickles. In one estimate, this also cut the demand for harvest labor by half and thereby eliminated seven million part-time jobs, which were equivalent to full-time work for 1.2 million people.³⁴² This change – which was preferred by

331 Blackwood 2008, p. 20.

332 Booth 1988, p. 181; Heytens 1991, p. 101; Manning 1988, p. 39; Axelsson 2008, p. 99.

333 Collier et al. 1982, pp. 93–95; Axelsson 2013, pp. 102–103 (Yogyakarta area).

334 Heytens 1991, p. 101; Manning 1988, p. 41.

335 Chadha 1994, p. 85; Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 110; White 2000, p. 79; Axelsson 2008, p. 99; Morris and Anwar 1978, pp. 168–169; Jatileksono 1987, p. 3.

336 Arief and Sasono 1981, pp. 84–85.

337 See Mink 1987, p. 146; Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 110; and for example, Bundschu 1987, pp. 112–113.

338 Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 118; Cederroth 1995, pp. 100–101.

339 UNCTNC 1983a, pp. 91–92, 96.

340 See Butler 2002, pp. 102–106, 110–111.

341 UNCTNC 1983a, p. 90.

342 Palmer 1977c, pp. 145–151; Gerdin 1982, pp. 55, 128–129; Stoler 1977, p. 696 note 17; Heytens 1991, pp. 107–109. Manning 1988, pp. 43–47, 56 doubted that so much labor was displaced and pointed to higher wages.

landowners because it required less supervision, involved less ‘stealing’, less conflict with workers and a lower wage sum – was also for technical reasons because high-yielding rice varieties had shorter, thicker stems that were hard to cut with a knife.³⁴³ In some places, the old method remained in use, and the increase in efficiency of the new system was disputed.³⁴⁴ The change in harvest organization was not only a technical and economic question but also a matter of class struggle, in which many landowners succeeded in bringing harvesters’ wages per unit down.³⁴⁵

The second increase in efficiency was in food processing. The introduction of rice hullers replaced women pounding rice by hand. This change was good for surplus farmers but hurt wives of small peasants and the landless, who, according to one estimate, lost 125 million hours of employment annually.³⁴⁶ Rice for domestic consumption was still often hand pounded.³⁴⁷ After all of these changes, labor supply for rice remained constant, but seven billion work hours produced 11 million tons in 1969, compared to 24 million in 1987.³⁴⁸ The new rice economy thus changed technology, work organization and social relations.³⁴⁹

In Indonesia, there was less of a dearth of official credit than in the other case studies, though not everybody had access who needed it. In particular, this was true for very poor people. In the 2000s, opening a bank account was comparably unbureaucratic, and there were 464 accounts per 1,000 adults.³⁵⁰ In 2005, micro-credit providers had 3.3 million Indonesian borrowers.³⁵¹

Banking became also common in the countryside after hundreds of rural credit and savings programs were launched, some by NGOs, in the 1970s and 1980s.³⁵² BIMAS provided loans which reduced farmers’ dependence on exploitative moneylenders. But about one-third of rural families sought informal credit in the 1970s, and probably more in the 1980s. Minifundists primarily borrowed for consumption, whereas less poor landowners who owned 0.5 hectares or more borrowed more often working capital or to invest.³⁵³ According to a 1976 study, the sources of most informal credit were relatives and neighbors, only rarely wealthy landowners and merchants who demanded exorbitant interest.³⁵⁴ Much of the usury worked through the informal *ijon* system, based on repayment in kind from a grown crop and with high real credit costs. One of the goals of the BIMAS program was to root

343 Lewis 1981, pp. 60–61; Gerdin 1982, pp. 55, 128–129, 132, 211; Bundschu 1987, p. 158 note 2; Collier et al. 1977, pp. 92–94.

344 See Hayami and Kikuchi 1981, pp. 158–166; White 2000, p. 79.

345 Pincus 1996, pp. 123–124, 137.

346 Collier et al. 1990a, pp. 321–322; Arief 1977, p. 95; Mears 1981, pp. 5–8, 105, 185–186, 190; Palmer 1978, p. 90; Stoler 1977, p. 696 note 17; Manning 1988, p. 38.

347 Ahmed 1985c, p. 332.

348 Naylor 1991a, p. 148; Heytens 1991, p. 110.

349 Poffenberger and Zurbuchen 1980, pp. 99–102.

350 IBRD 2009, pp. 4, 89.

351 Landingin and Lapper 2007.

352 Patten and Rosengard 1991, p. 4; Bhaskara 1989, p. 199; Prawiro 1998, p. 142; Rice 2004a, pp. 82–87.

353 Mears 1981, p. 4, 339; for the 1980s, see Bundschu 1987, pp. 122–123.

354 Mears 1981, pp. 330, 344.

out this system.³⁵⁵ However, in some places, rich people obtained large sums of subsidized official credit under the BIMAS program that they then lent out at high interest.³⁵⁶ Private moneylending was still “thriving” in the 1990s, especially in the lean weeks before the harvest.³⁵⁷ On the other hand, over 90 percent of petty traders apparently financed their business only relying on own savings.³⁵⁸

The leading rural lending institution was the Bank Rakyat Indonesia (Indonesian People’s Bank, BRI), state owned until the 2000s. Founded in 1969, BRI’s village program comprised 3,357 village units and 524 village posts in 1994 and similar numbers already around 1970. Bank clerks traveled to villages by motor-bike. Each village office was supposed to do its own accounting and work profitably.³⁵⁹ However, the program had its ups and downs and, after a reorientation away from agriculture, served only one-tenth of the cultivated area in 1983 it had in the mid-1970s.³⁶⁰ At least until 1974, BRI made agricultural production loans only for certain crops, including rice and corn but not vegetables, and they had a maximal life of seven months.³⁶¹ In 1990, the program encompassed seven million savings accounts, which was about half of the bank’s total number.³⁶² In 1994, 33 percent of BRI’s borrowers were reportedly from “poorer” households,³⁶³ but despite special programs for the poor, after the transition from subsidized to commercial credit in 1983–1986, BRI did not focus on lending to the absolutely poor. This was indicative of the country in general – in 2001, 82 percent of microcredit services were of a commercial character, compared to 42 percent in Bangladesh. In the 2000s, the BRI reportedly had 30 million customers and operated profitably.³⁶⁴

Before 1983, BRI had a credit program for intensified farming of staple foods, but it was primarily wealthy entrepreneurs who benefitted from this cheap credit. The fact that they highjacked the program was visible in the decrease in the number of farmers participating and the parallel drop in repayment rates that began slowly in 1975–1976 and accelerated in 1981. This misuse seems to have been behind the bank’s ending subsidized credit. That program peaked at 3.6 million participant households,³⁶⁵ which was only a minority of farming families. But already earlier, borrowers owned more land than the average.³⁶⁶

355 Partedireja 1974, pp. 63–66; Ministry of Agriculture, Badan P. Bimas, “BIMAS and its role within agricultural development”, Jakarta, March 1975, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 51, ID Indonesia 1975.

356 Gerdin 1982, p. 127.

357 Mosley 2017, pp. 38, 66; for pre-harvest season, see Hart 1986, p. 139.

358 Alexander and Booth 1992a, p. 308.

359 Mosley 2017, p. 58; Harper et al. 2011, pp. 21–22; Hansen 1971, p. 398 note 18; Partedireja 1974, p. 57.

360 Patten and Rosengard 1991, p. 64; Mosley 2017, pp. 34, 40–43.

361 Partedireja 1974, pp. 56, 61.

362 Patten and Rosengard 1991, p. 3; Wright et al. 1997, pp. 311–312.

363 Harper et al. 2011, pp. 21–22; see also Wright et al. 1997, pp. 311–312.

364 Harper 2007b, p. 36.

365 Jatileksono 1987, p. 54. Suwidjana 1981, p. 152 displays different and in part lower repayment data. Repayment rates were already declining in rice programs in 1965–1969: J. Drilon, “The Aftermath of the Green revolution”, n.d., FAO, RG 15, RAFF, Green revolution 1973–74; Hansen 1971, p. 393 note 10.

366 Arief and Sasono 1981, p. 92.

The *Badan Kredit Desa* and the *Badan Perkreditan Rakyat* catered to the poor more than the BRI.³⁶⁷ Half of the customers of another subsidized institution, *Badan Kredit Kecamatan* (founded in Central Java in 1970), which allegedly worked for poverty reduction, owned land in 1982 (in average amounts), but loans were – like in similar public programs – largely for financing non-agricultural activities like petty trading, construction, producing handicrafts, running food stalls and purchasing vehicles, in addition to things like chicken raising. Sixty percent of the BKK’s clients were women.³⁶⁸ Some lending programs who claimed that their mission was poverty reduction denied loans to their poorest applicants because local officers argued that they would not repay (while in reality, it was the rich whose repayment ethics were the lowest).³⁶⁹ In 1990, the ‘World Bank’ still spoke of a lack of credit for Indonesia’s rural poor, and in 1996, Paul Mosley found that even specialized programs hardly reached the very poor.³⁷⁰

Cooperatives in Indonesia were much discussed by experts but played a minor role in capital accumulation because their tasks were largely in marketing and in the distribution of inputs. The best known were the village cooperatives (*Koperasi Unit Desa*, KUD), operating under strict government control. They increasingly received some official credit from which they sometimes made small loans to members.³⁷¹ Only 10 percent of farmers were members in KUDs in 1983, which often involved only a minority of farmers in their village and had a “bias in serving mostly upper-income farmers”, although the government want them to become BULOG’s prime source of food products and thereby to marginalize rural traders.³⁷² But in the 1980s, KUDs received only 11 percent of cereals (22 percent of marketed amounts) and sold 60 percent of what they received to BULOG and 40 percent to private traders.³⁷³ Two Indonesian critics called the KUDs “top-down organizations dominated by the landlords and rich farmers”.³⁷⁴ Many KUD managers apparently embezzled cooperative funds.³⁷⁵

Social change

The social situation in Indonesia’s rural areas, at least on the inner islands, was determined by people’s access to land. Many farms were too tiny to feed a family. For example, in Lombok, where a famine had killed 8,000 in 1966, 33.3 percent of the families owned no land in the 1970s, and another 44.1 percent owned less than

367 See Gundelfinger 2010, pp. 18–21, 24–26, 36, 48–49.

368 Patten and Rosengard 1991, pp. 20, 24–25, 48; Mosley 2017, pp. 35, 38, 47, 54.

369 See Narayan and Petesch 2000, p. 197; see also Suwidjana 1981, pp. 152–153.

370 World Bank 1990b, p. 63; Mosley 2017 (1996), p. 68.

371 “Subroto” 2003, p. 236; Bundschu 1987, pp. 77, 85 (see Bundschu also for other types of cooperatives).

372 Sajogyo 1993a, p. 48 (quote); Booth 1988, p. 153; Mears 1981, p. 397; Nilsson Hoadley and Hoadley 1996, pp. 193–194; Bundschu 1987, pp. 65–87. For the number of KUDs, see Hadiwinata 2003, p. 123.

373 Piggott and Parton 1993, p. 308.

374 Arief and Sasono 1981, p. 91. See also Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, pp. 268–269. Bundschu 1987, pp. 137–140 with a more differentiated judgment.

375 Pincus 1996, p. 175 (Subang regency).

1 hectare. In 1976, 52 percent of families had no rice field. Only 20 percent had more than 1.3 hectares – enough to produce rice sufficient for a family of six.³⁷⁶ In Java, most farm holdings consisted of two or three different little plots.³⁷⁷ Expert discussions have focused on wetland rice (*sawah*), less on dryland and upland fields. Garden land (*pekarangan*), a considerable part of cultivable land, calorie supply and income providing high returns to labor in Java, is often ignored in considerations about the social situation, food availability and labor input.³⁷⁸

In how far did land ownership patterns change? The data are not entirely clear. From 1963 to 1983, the number of farms rose in Java from 7.9 million to 10.1 million and in the outer islands from 4.2 million to 7.5 million.³⁷⁹ In 1963, 79 percent of 10.2 million agricultural households on Java and Madura had less than 1 hectare, 51 percent had less than 0.5 hectares, 40 percent had less than 0.2 hectares, and 13 percent were landless.³⁸⁰ Amazingly, this pattern of farm sizes was almost identical with that 60 years before.³⁸¹ Whether it changed much in the decade after 1963 is subject to debate.³⁸² Some data suggest that farm sizes became smaller. According to them, there were fewer mini-fundists on Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi than on Java, and average farm sizes were 0.64 hectares on Java, 1.34 hectares on Sumatra, 1.38 hectares on Sulawesi and 2.71 hectares on Kalimantan.³⁸³ Some experts saw little change in average farm sizes on Java in 1963–1983 (for those who owned land), and possibly until the 1990s, but on other islands, they possibly shrank by 1983.³⁸⁴ Bresnan argues that one quarter of the population was full-time farmers, half were part-time farmers and farm laborers, and a quarter were not active in farming in 1980.³⁸⁵ The peasants' lobby was strong. When Minister of Agriculture Affandi announced in 1984 a policy to abolish all farms below 0.5 hectare, it had to be abandoned within weeks.³⁸⁶

Data about landlessness are even more confusing. It was clearly on the increase and more widespread in Java than the outer islands. However, employing different criteria, estimates of landlessness on Java in 1971/1973 varied between 16 percent and 40.5 percent, and on Sumatra between 3.4 percent and 20.5 percent.³⁸⁷ One author claims that by 1973, rural landlessness had increased to 38.9 percent on

376 Gerdin 1982, p. 85, 100; Brennan 1984, pp. 15–16.

377 Hartmann 1981, p. 92 (data for 1973).

378 See Stoler 1981; White 1977, pp. 133, 170–173.

379 Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 202; cf. Thorbecke 1992, p. 26.

380 Lyon 1976, pp. 16–17; Kartodirdjo 1984, p. 60; see also Pearse 1980, p. 137.

381 Hainsworth 1979, pp. 25–26; Booth 1988, pp. 47, 52 and Palmer 1977b, pp. 210–211 with slightly different data.

382 Bose 1982, p. 54. Data in Hayami and Kikuchi 1981, p. 61 and Roche 1984b, pp. 15, 18 indicate the contrary.

383 Arief 1977, pp. 76–77, 189–190; Tabor 1992a, p. 168.

384 Manning 1988, p. 19 and p. 27 note 18; Hüsken and White 1989, pp. 255–256. See data in Sajogyo 1993a, p. 45; Tabor 1992a, pp. 164, 167; Chadha 1994, p. 64. For the 1990s, see Bourgeois and Gouyon 2001, p. 318; Axelsson 2013, p. 98.

385 Bresnan 1993, p. 132. Farid 2005, p. 11 unrealistically asserts that landlessness quintupled 1973–1980 (see also Sjahrir 1986, p. 21 who arrived to this by assuming a very low initial value of 3.2 percent).

386 White 2005, pp. 176–177.

387 Booth and Sundrum 1981, pp. 187, 189.

Java and Madura (being especially high in the northeast and center of West Java, in northern Central Java, and in southeastern and central East Java). The rate was lower on the outer islands, for example 17.4 percent on Sumatra and 17.7 percent on Bali, but relatively high in West Nusa Tenggara and East Kalimantan.³⁸⁸ Various data seem to indicate that landlessness then also increased in the outer islands. This may have had to do with landless people who had moved from Java to other regions. Landlessness was higher in irrigated lowland than in rainfed, upland and tidal land.³⁸⁹ In 1995, 11 million out of 29.7 million rural households in Indonesia owned no land though the proportion was relatively low in eastern Indonesia.³⁹⁰ The number of microfarms declined after 1970.³⁹¹ All of this is to say, a large and increasing number of rural households in Java lost all of their land, while about ten million kept theirs. Many of the latter needed some additional income, although average farm sizes were no longer shrinking, unlike in Bangladesh. The rise of landlessness on the outer islands was similar though less dramatic. But the fact that most of Indonesia's irrigation water came from canals rather than wells (which were prone to waterlordism, see Chapter 7) helped contain the growth of big farms at the expense of small ones.³⁹²

Land reform could have addressed some of the injustice of unequal land ownership. In many places, 10 or 20 percent of farms owned half of the land. However, the limited land reform passed in 1960 was not fully implemented until 1965 and, after the mass murders of suspected leftists, not only largely aborted but even reversed.³⁹³ In addition, the Agrarian Land Reform Law of 1960 itself also led to the privatization of hitherto communal land, including rice land.³⁹⁴ The issue of land reform was not publicly discussed again until 1977, when the Indonesian Farmers Union called for it and some political parties, newspapers, students and universities also expressed concern about unequal landownership.³⁹⁵ In some places, a land reform process was still ongoing in the 1990s.³⁹⁶ Before and after 1965, landowners in collusion with officials invented 'customary' land rights, registered land with family members, officially undervalued land and made fake sales to evade the law.³⁹⁷

The market for land indicated social change. In 1988, Anne Booth noted: "Land sales have increased, particularly sales from small or marginal farmers to those

388 Kano 1994, pp. 49, 51. See Bresnan 1993, p. 132 with high data for Java in 1980; see also Hye 1989, p. 48.

389 Chadha 1994, p. 71 with figures for all provinces; see Sudaryanto and Kasryno 1994, p. 120; Jatileksono 1994, p. 153.

390 Booth 2004b, pp. 17–18, contrary to the assumption in Kano 1994, p. 72.

391 Booth 1988, pp. 55, 58.

392 For irrigation, see Bundschu 1987, p. 125.

393 Robinson 1995, pp. 253–256; Gerlach 2010, pp. 44, 51; Leksana 2020, esp. pp. 466, 469. For the limited character of the reform, see Sudjarmiko 1992, p. 143; Lim 1976, p. 238; Palmer 1977c, pp. 133–136.

394 Collier et al. 1977, pp. 27, 139; Wijaya 1985, p. 175; Cederroth 1995, pp. 49–50.

395 National Labour Institute [of Indonesia], "Studies on Landless Labourers etc.", no date (1978), Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, Nov 1976–Nov 1980.

396 Putra 2003, pp. 159–160 (for Bali).

397 Putra 2003, pp. 159–160.

already owning substantial holdings”. Land became also concentrated in the hand of absentee owners.³⁹⁸ Cropland prices rose to very high levels after the early 1970s, especially for irrigated rice land, and they were also high for rainfed rice fields (compared to uplands or tidal land).³⁹⁹ In the area of Lampung, large parcels of farmland, often all that families owned, were sold. From 1970 to 1986, land prices rose eight times more than rice prices.⁴⁰⁰ Those who sold were described as “petty heirs” and farmers “with non-farm aspirations”.⁴⁰¹ Farmers who sold land to companies to build industrial sites used the proceeds often either for consumption or for other land.⁴⁰²

Land rents were also rising.⁴⁰³ Sharecropping and tenancy decreased – from high levels – from 1963 to 1973, while farms that owned all the land they tilled rose from 59 to 73 percent, and there was little absentee landlordism.⁴⁰⁴ Wage labor replaced sharecropping, and thus, monetized relationships replaced personal ties.⁴⁰⁵ For example, (mostly male) paid workers did much of the labor in raising corn. Rice cultivation in Java was “primarily a wage labor economy”.⁴⁰⁶ To employ wage labor appeared more profitable to landlords (though they were smallholders by international standards), but it was also that sharecropping became unattractive to sharecroppers because of increasingly unfavorable, in fact oppressive, terms, under which landlords often received between two-thirds and 80 percent of the harvest. The poorer the sharecropper, the worse the conditions.⁴⁰⁷ For landowners, a combination of sharecropping and semi-bonded labor through contracts allowed high profits.⁴⁰⁸ However, as late as in 1981–1982 in Bali and even much later in West Sumatra, there was a variety of (sometimes more agreeable) sharecropping and tenancy arrangements, including prosperous peasants taking in additional land, but also very poor, landless people working small portions of land provided as a favor by female or male relatives and friends, who could have cultivated this land themselves.⁴⁰⁹

With landlessness rising and sharecropping in decline, how were the poor to live? First of all, it is important to note that after the mid-1970s, there were few subsistence farmers who actually lived just on what they produced. The percentage

398 Booth 1988, p. 188; Antlöv 1996, p. 167; Thorbecke 1992, p. 52; White and Wiradi 1989, p. 283.

But see Pincus 1996, pp. 163, 166 for a different local picture.

399 Sudaryanto and Kasryno 1994, p. 125; Jatileksono 1994, p. 164; Kartodirdjo 1984, pp. 61–62.

400 See Jatileksono 1994, p. 164; Hayami and Kawagoe 1993, p. 78.

401 Antlöv 1996, p. 167.

402 Hilmy 1995a, pp. 73–75.

403 Sudaryanto and Kasryno 1994, p. 125.

404 Bose 1982, p. 55; Manning 1988, p. 25.

405 Gerdin 1982, pp. 96, 107, 171 on Lombok; Booth 1988, p. 168; Aass 1986, p. 171.

406 See Mink et al. 1987, pp. 66, 77. Quote in White 1985, p. 119, see also *ibid.*, p. 129.

407 Kartodirdjo 1984, pp. 62, 82; Bundschu 1987, p. 199 in contradiction to p. 126; Booth 1988, p. 168.

408 See Hartmann 1981, pp. 38, 48–51.

409 Bundschu 1987, pp. 100–103 (Bali); for the latter phenomenon, see also Blackwood 2008, pp. 26–27 (West Sumatra, 2000s). Roche 1984b, p. 18 suggests that the former phenomenon was frequent.

of marketed food production (and of landlessness) had been elevated in the early 20th century but declined from the 1930s to the 1950s, as did off-farm work; the landed elites were in decline. After the 1950s, the gap between rural rich and poor was widening again. The situation was very dynamic, a far cry from the static “involution” and “changeless change” that Clifford Geertz diagnosed.⁴¹⁰ There had already been social differentiation and wage labor in Java in the 18th and 19th centuries.⁴¹¹ Contracting out the harvest to work teams was known, and sometimes practiced, since the early 20th century.⁴¹²

A study of Bali in 1981–1982 found that 40 percent of farming households sold rice, and the poorest 28 percent had to buy rice to supplement what they grew.⁴¹³ Estimates for rice consumed on-farm varied; according to one, it was 80 percent in the early 1970s, others spoke of 30–50 percent in the second half of the 1970s and the 1980s. The minor crop in the second harvest was usually eaten by its producers, but if it was corn, it was often marketed.⁴¹⁴ Because they operated so little land, people had to be deeply involved in capitalist exchanges. One local study of West Java found that even well-off farmers purchased 14.6 percent of the calories they consumed – poor ones bought 42.2 percent.⁴¹⁵

One might expect that the combination of population growth, rising landlessness and a decline in sharecropping in concert with a repressive regime would depress laborers’ wages. Most studies found this to be the case in the early 1970s. This meant that additional income generated through the new cropping technologies was reaped by landlords and owner-cultivators.⁴¹⁶ Still, agricultural labor earned ruralites probably a higher net income than sharecropping – at least for men,⁴¹⁷ even though much of this work was seasonal.⁴¹⁸ And after about 1978 (1982 in West Java), agricultural wages were actually substantially increasing, followed by stagnation in 1985–1992.⁴¹⁹ This increase accompanied higher rice production and productivity, the intensive use of technical inputs and better transportation.⁴²⁰ But wage increases were probably higher in wet rice production than elsewhere

410 Belshaw 1965, p. 76; Jatileksono 1987, p. 96; Svensson 1991, pp. 169–170, 173, 175; Hüsken and White 1989, pp. 240–243; White 2005, pp. 168–171. Quote: Geertz 1968, p. 96.

411 Hüsken and White 1989, p. 239.

412 White 2000, pp. 81–88, 94.

413 Bundschu 1987, p. 128.

414 Drilon 1975, p. 99; Jatileksono 1987, pp. 97–100; Piggott and Parton 1993, p. 301; Ahmed and Rustagi 1987, p. 113.

415 Christianty et al. 1986, p. 151.

416 Arief 1977, pp. 89–93; Arief and Sasono 1981, p. 88; Collier et al. 1982, p. 92; Sinaga and Sinaga 1978, p. 109; White 1985, p. 134; Hill 2000, p. 208. See also “Indonesia Annual Report 1977/78”, 8 April 1978, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee Nov 1976–Jan 1980. Hüsken 1989, 329 note 13 found that real wages in 1978 were below the 1956 level.

417 Benoit et al. 1989, pp. 231, 263 for Lampung, Sumatra, around 1980.

418 For example, see Gerdin 1982, pp. 98, 123–126.

419 Axelsson 2013, p. 97; Chadha 1994, pp. 78, 83, 237; Cheetham and Peters Jr. 1993a, p. 27; Sjahrir 1986, p. 53; Manning 1988b, p. 69; White and Wiradi 1989, pp. 286–288. Bourgeois and Gouyon 2001, p. 316 also see an increase 1985–1993. Others do so for 1987–1996 but speak of stagnation before: White and Wiradi 2002, pp. 8, 10. See also Axelsson 2008, p. 119.

420 Collier 1982, p. 84.

in agriculture.⁴²¹ Real wages remained lowest in Central Java, rose everywhere especially for weeding and stagnated for hoeing in West Java.⁴²² Non-agricultural wages also increased, though higher expenses may have taken away part or all of the additional earnings.⁴²³ Though less than for other groups, living conditions improved also for the landless, some of whom started to build brick houses and own radios and vehicles.⁴²⁴ Jean-Luc Maurer thus described 1968–1977 as a period of “differentiation and inequality” and 1978–1984 as one of “diversification and distribution”.⁴²⁵

This clear statement needs some modification. According to some studies, farm laborers’ real wages were already rising in the first half of the 1970s.⁴²⁶ However, the fact that agricultural employment was often only seasonal relativized the increase of wages, and, according to some, wages only went up for plowing and transplanting rather than harvesting, hoeing and weeding.⁴²⁷

The rise of wages occurred despite the fact that the agricultural workforce was growing. The cultivated area per male workforce already declined in 1961–1971.⁴²⁸ Little over 25 million laborers worked the land in 1971, compared to almost 40 million in 1990, after which the number declined.⁴²⁹ On Java, agricultural employment – particularly of women – was already falling in 1976–1982 (from 18.4 to 17.5 million) but, fueled by transmigration, among other things, it was rising in the outer islands (9.9 million to 13.3 million).⁴³⁰ There is no agreement about whether the proportion of paid employees among that workforce – men and women in Java and the outer islands – rose or fell in 1971–1980,⁴³¹ although estimates are that 40–60 percent of families needed to engage in wage labor.⁴³²

There were heated debates about inequality. The Gini coefficient data from Indonesia – more or less constantly low in 1965–1996 – seem worthless to me because of the obvious contradictions they produce.⁴³³ Also, the ‘World Bank’ manipulated some data about inequality in Indonesia to let developments appear in a positive light.⁴³⁴ Among the Indonesian public, there was the “common perception

421 Pincus 1996, p. 130–131, 200, 202.

422 Naylor 1991a, pp. 79–83. High-yielding rice varieties required more weeding: Prabowo and Sajoyo 1981, p. 74.

423 Breman 1995, pp. 33–34.

424 Prabowo and McConnell 1993, pp. 15, 42, 65–67, 71; Bourgeois and Gouyon 2001, p. 316; Breman 1995, pp. 29–32, 42.

425 Maurer 1986a, pp. 73–76.

426 Axelsson 2013, p. 97; Booth and Sundrum 1981, p. 193 (except for some provinces); Wing et al. 1994, p. 3. Bose 1982, pp. 64–65 saw no clear trend in six West Javan villages.

427 Collier et al. 1982, pp. 92–93; Sudaryanto and Kasryno 1994, p. 125; Hart 1986, p. 198.

428 Booth 1988, p. 5. The 1961 level was the same as in 1901, although there had been ups and downs in the meantime.

429 Thee 2002, p. 200; see Tabor 1992a, p. 164. 1971–1976 the increase was slight: Bose 1982, p. 58.

430 Thorbecke 1992, p. 27; Booth 1988, p. 57.

431 Jatileksono 1994, p. 135 and Gerdin 1982, p. 98 tend to the former view, Booth 1988, p. 50 holds the latter.

432 Bose 1982, p. 55.

433 See, for example, the data in Thee 2002, p. 227 and Cheetham and Peters Jr. 1993a, pp. 20–21.

434 See Pincus 1996, p. 91.

of a growing gap between rich and poor” and of ongoing social polarization.⁴³⁵ But the country climbed in Human Development Index rankings for some time.⁴³⁶ It is more indicative that the 20 percent of the population with the lowest income increased their share of national consumption in the 1970s and further to 1987, from 6.9 to 9.2 percent.⁴³⁷ One scholar found that income inequality was reduced in 1970–1990 but rose in the 1990s.⁴³⁸ Behind any such aggregate trends, new agricultural methods probably led to deeper inequality in some places, while in others, it became smaller.⁴³⁹ Their effects also differed according to group – in 1971–1976, landless wage workers of all sorts saw their incomes drop while that of smallholders and larger farmers rose.⁴⁴⁰ A study on Lombok found that the income gap between landlords, sharecroppers and agricultural wage workers widened with the advent of the new methods.⁴⁴¹ Countrywide, rural earnings in the 1970s increased for all income groups but less for the poor than for the wealthy.⁴⁴²

The poor who got by – not everybody did – did so through income diversification. Non-farm income was particularly important to limit social polarization.⁴⁴³ Many people had multiple, often casual jobs through the year that alternated seasonally (doing wage labor mostly in the dry season); different jobs during the week or day were less common.⁴⁴⁴ In other cases, most individuals had just one occupation⁴⁴⁵ though one can assume that family members pursued activities in different sectors. Contrary to many ‘experts’ conclusion that there was underemployment, adults in the countryside usually worked long hours in low-return jobs and other activities.⁴⁴⁶ Long hours of child labor were important to free adults for income-generating tasks. Girls were active in handicrafts, did household work, and took care, like boys, for animals and smaller siblings, and boys also collected firewood.⁴⁴⁷ The Indonesian journal *Kompas* reported in 1976 that over 55 percent of farmers on Java and Bali needed additional income.⁴⁴⁸ There was a variety of – mostly unattractive – options. Agricultural labor was one, but soon on the decline in relative terms. Especially in the 1990s, trade and services were gaining importance

435 Chalmers and Hadiz 1997, p. 20 (quote); Thee 2002, p. 227.

436 Friend 2003, p. 151.

437 Wing et al. 1994, p. 3.

438 Leinbach 2004b, p. 7. Axelsson 2008, p. 144 sees a rise in income inequality in 1985–1997.

439 Jatileksono 1987, pp. 8–11. Breman 1995, pp. 8–9, 35 finds a rise in inequality, based on the situation 1990, in the same village where Hayami and Kikuchi 1981 had concluded the opposite.

440 Dapice 1980a, esp. p. 77; Papanek 1980b, pp. 56–60. See also Arief and Sasono 1981, p. 71.

441 See Gerdin 1982, pp. 121, 124, 132.

442 Sundrum 1979, pp. 139–140.

443 Leinbach 2004b, p. 9. The data in Pincus 1996, pp. 63–69 are contradictory.

444 Bose 1982, p. 56; Wolf 1992, p. 51; Aass 1986, pp. 121–122; Naylor 1991a, pp. 61–62; Cederroth 1995, pp. 75, 99–133.

445 See Guest 1989, pp. 89, 91 with contradictions as to whether more men or women held multiple jobs.

446 White 1977, pp. 90–91; see also Cederroth 1995, pp. 87–88.

447 White 1977, pp. 271–310, esp. 281–282, 285, 288, 363; Cederroth 1995, pp. 109–110.

448 Poffenberger and Zurbuchen 1980, p. 111 note 29. See also Mooij 2001, p. 222; for Lombok, see Brennan 1984, p. 16.

and, secondarily, industrial labor.⁴⁴⁹ This included food processing and sale, handi-crafts (both fetching particularly little money), repair shops, collecting forest products and work in mining.⁴⁵⁰ Another important sector was work in construction.⁴⁵¹ Some industrial work paid well enough to draw workers from agriculture.⁴⁵² But in many jobs, whether agricultural or not (and especially in jobs open to anybody), returns were so low that people needed many sources of income.⁴⁵³ Workers were commuting to some of the new jobs that they had in cities and towns.⁴⁵⁴ In the early 1990s, there were also more jobs in non-staple agricultural pursuits, for example, cash crops, vegetables and dairy farming.⁴⁵⁵

When real agricultural wages were probably still declining (until 1978) and informal local food security mechanisms fell by the wayside, many ruralites took on off-farm jobs, migration to towns and cities increased, and seasonal labor shortages in the countryside emerged – also because the new technologies accentuated certain peaks of labor demand.⁴⁵⁶ Non-farm incomes, and incomes in general, were higher in irrigated rice areas, and inequality was reportedly lower.⁴⁵⁷

Part of rural employment was generated by small-scale rural industries in a variety of sectors. It was primarily women who were employed in manufacturing, trade, hostels and restaurants, while more men remained primarily active in agriculture.⁴⁵⁸ Among the small businesses that emerged those in manufacturing (including food processing) survived longer than in trade, services and especially transportation; manufacturing was more profitable than food processing and trade.⁴⁵⁹ At some point, the BAPPENAS and UNDP began to support such rural enterprises, which was also recommended by the ‘World Bank’.⁴⁶⁰ However, as Robert Rice commented: “The vast majority of these enterprises fail, and those who do not realize little growth. Thus, they are more important in poverty alleviation than in contributing to economic growth”.⁴⁶¹

Some scholars have attributed rising real income after 1978 more to multiple occupations than rising agricultural wages.⁴⁶² The growing importance of non-agricultural

449 Saraswati 2002, pp. 170–171; Manning 1988b, pp. 51, 53–54, 73; White and Wiradi 1989, pp. 294–297; Breman 1995, p. 10, 22–25; Breman and Wiradi 2002, pp. 47, 49, 54–55, 99–101, 109. For differing wage levels, see Guest 1989, p. 96; for the earlier predominance of agricultural wage labor and sharecropping, see Lyon 1976, pp. 25, 27.

450 Poffenberger and Zurbuchen 1980, pp. 110–120; Peluso 1984, pp. 14, 58, 61; Brewer 1979, pp. 281, 294, 298, 324–327 Hadiwinata 2003, p. 9.

451 Collier et al. 1982, p. 101; Poffenberger and Zurbuchen 1980, pp. 110–120; Manning 1988b, pp. 62–67.

452 Naylor 1991a, pp. 66–73.

453 White 1981, pp. 138–140; White 1977, p. 205.

454 See Manning 1988b, p. 62.

455 See Prabowo and McConnell 1993.

456 Collier et al. 1982, pp. 87, 90–91, 96–97; Bose 1982, p. 58.

457 Jatileksono 1994, pp. 168, 171; see Hayami and Kikuchi 1981, p. 174.

458 Rice 2004a, p. 62.

459 See Singh et al. 2004, pp. 160, 162.

460 See Evans 2004; World Bank 1990b.

461 Rice 2004a, p. 61.

462 For example, Chadha 1994, pp. 224–227, 245.

work seems to have led to little upward social mobility, rather reproducing existing differences because the new activities depended strongly on the capital available in a family, although educational achievements could alter one's fate.⁴⁶³ With reference to the many wage workers, some argue that a rural "proletariat" emerged, forced by the conditions to be highly mobile.⁴⁶⁴ On the other side, village elites further improved their social position, empowered by programs like BIMAS. It was mostly wealthier farmers who occupied posts in the village administration, including the headman.⁴⁶⁵ For example, large landowners, who often also controlled local trade, used community land when being appointed village officials.⁴⁶⁶ For receiving preferential access to credit, inputs and licenses, village elites offered services to the state by policing and administering their settlement. Village heads, appointed under Suharto, exerted greater power locally than before.⁴⁶⁷ Even the 'World Bank' acknowledged in 1990: "An upper stratum of high-ranking officials and better off farmers dominates village affairs both politically and economically".⁴⁶⁸

Inequality fed into conflict. In the mid-1960s, many thousands had been slaughtered in the struggle for land. Later, under military repression, signs of intra-social violence were less obvious. "In rural Java, land became the primary issue and provided the basis upon which not only economic battles, but also religious and political ones were fought".⁴⁶⁹ When the rice was getting ripe on Madura in the 1970s, armed young men guarded the fields day and night against poor pilferers.⁴⁷⁰ As noted before, one reason why the *bawon* form of rice harvest was abolished was landowners' concern about their lack of control (and where *bawon* was denied, poor people sometimes responded with violence). Theft and burglaries were common in the countryside.⁴⁷¹ Patrick Barron et al. concluded, "development and conflict inevitably go hand in hand. Development projects and programs introduce resources into poor areas, and intergroup competition for such resources can lead to tensions". In two areas of East Java and East Nusa Tenggara, they linked 73 killings in 2001–2003 to the struggle for land and other resources.⁴⁷²

Rural poverty and hunger declined, especially in 1976–1984,⁴⁷³ though it persisted for many. During an academic conference in late 1978, most participants, as the U.S. State Department summarized, "agreed that [. . .] lot of rural poor had not improved since 1970", which was contrary to 'World Bank' statements, and that there was an "apparent decline in carbohydrate consumption and

463 See Van Helden 1995a, pp. 125–128; Elizen 1995a, p. 177; Holzner 1995b, p. 212; Hayami and Kawagoe 1993, pp. 66–67; Breman 1995, p. 8.

464 Breman 1995, pp. 39–41 (quote p. 39); Breman and Wiradi 2002, p. 223.

465 Guest 1989, p. 31; Hüsken 1979, pp. 145, 149.

466 Cribb and Brown 1995, p. 148; see also Hüsken 1989, p. 322.

467 Hart 1989, p. 33; Hüsken and White 1989, p. 250.

468 World Bank 1990b, p. 27.

469 Lyon 1976, p. 38.

470 Gerdin 1982, p. 113.

471 Cederroth 1995, p. 200.

472 Barron et al. 2011, pp. 138 (quote), 142–143; for violent reactions, see White 2000, p. 80.

473 Cheetham and Peters Jr. 1993a, pp. 20–25.

growth of landlessness".⁴⁷⁴ That year, households in the provinces of Central Java, East Java and Yogyakarta reported a daily intake that averaged to merely about 1,600 calories, compared to 2,097 in West Java, over 2,200 on Bali, Sulawesi and in Nusa Tenggara, and over 2,400 on Sumatra and Kalimantan.⁴⁷⁵ Fifty-four percent of the population was deficient in calories: over 70 percent in East Java, Central Java and Yogyakarta (where other nutritional deficiencies were also very high) and over 50 percent in Bali, Nusa Tenggara, Maluku and Irian Jaya. 68 percent of household income was spent on food, which was still the level for the biggest (viz. the poorest) income groups in 1984.⁴⁷⁶ Prices of foodstuffs had risen "consistently" since 1969.⁴⁷⁷ In 1975, Indonesia's Minister of Research Sumitro was quoted as saying that 40 percent of Indonesians lived on less than Rp400 annually or US\$55.⁴⁷⁸ U.S. diplomats reported that peasant incomes in Central Java were below the minimal costs of living.⁴⁷⁹ Often there was public criticism of existing poverty, and political leaders acknowledged that it was widespread.⁴⁸⁰ In his 1990 Independence Day address, President Suharto said that while 24 million Indonesians had lifted themselves out of poverty, 30 million were still poor.⁴⁸¹

Regional disparities in nutrition were also accentuated. For decades, a smaller part of the population had suffered from chronic hunger in the outer islands than in Java.⁴⁸² This changed in the early 1980s⁴⁸³ for a number of reasons, including the dynamic economy on Java and the government's transmigration program, which exported not only poor people but also poverty to the outer islands. On the latter, the official number of the poor stagnated at over 11 million in 1976–1985.⁴⁸⁴ The "average prosperity" on the outer islands, one influential Indonesian analyst claimed, had been 35 percent higher than on Java, but in 1987, the rate on Java surpassed the former by 25 percent, and the poorest region was Lampung, a principle destination of transmigration where people had few other sources of income than

474 State Department (Christopher) to various U.S. embassies, "Carnegie/INR Sponsored Indonesian Rural Development Seminar: Summary, Conclusions and Implications", 10 December 1978, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978State312035_d.html (accessed 23 January 2017); see also U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta to USDA, 28 December 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 79, ID-Indonesia 1978.

475 Chernichovsky and Meesok 1984, p. 20.

476 Chernichovsky and Meesok 1984, pp. 9, 25; Naylor 1991b, p. 154. Similar data in Hart 1986, p. 137.

477 Soemardjan 1988, p. 119.

478 "Half-Yearly Report, Oxfam Field Director in Indonesia", March–September 1975, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, Feb 1970–Oct 1976.

479 U.S. Agricultural Attache Jakarta to USDA, 9 March 1976, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Counselor Reports, Box 59, ID-Indonesia 76 DR.

480 Bresnan 1993, p. 212.

481 Soeharto, "The State of the Nation", 16 August 1990, in: Chalmers and Hadiz 1997, p. 184.

482 Chernichovsky and Meesok 1984, p. 45 (for 1978); Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 200 (for official poverty rates in 1980). See also Booth 1988, pp. 192–193.

483 Booth 1992c, pp. 347–348, 353–354. See also Chadha 1994, pp. 86–87.

484 Booth 1992c, p. 347.

agriculture.⁴⁸⁵ Eastern Indonesia emerged as a new center of poverty.⁴⁸⁶ In 1995, when a little more than half of the rural families on Java earned money only from agriculture, the proportion was about three quarters on Sumatra and the eastern islands and approximately two-thirds on Sulawesi and Kalimantan. The previous decade saw the farming share of total income rise in the transmigration destinations of South Sumatra, Jambi and South Sulawesi.⁴⁸⁷

The available official data on differences between rural and urban poverty are contradictory. It is more plausible that rural poverty increased substantially between 1963 and 1967, plateaued and then fell steeply after 1978; urban poverty started its steep decline in 1970.⁴⁸⁸ According to official data, the income disparity grew in favor of the cities in 1970–1976 and again in the early 1990s.⁴⁸⁹ Whatever the differences, poverty continued to have diverse faces: in 1990, there were ten million poor each in the uplands, in the plains and in the cities.⁴⁹⁰

With changes in work, the rest of rural life changed as well. Motorcycles, bicycles and transistor radios became more common.⁴⁹¹ Neighborly help, for example in house construction, could no longer be relied on,⁴⁹² and the magic involved in work rituals gave way to the shallow magic of money.⁴⁹³ But around 1975, the government still classified 45 percent of villages as traditional, 50 percent as transitional and only 5 percent as developed.⁴⁹⁴ Planners anticipated a long process and hoped that, by 2010, all of the country's villages would be "more advanced", the third category on a four-part scale, though by 1980, only 19 percent had purportedly reached that stage.⁴⁹⁵

Poor women in particular were displaced as workforce by the new harvesting, planting and milling technologies and practices.⁴⁹⁶ It is unclear how much irrigated farming's greater labor requirements offset this.⁴⁹⁷ Their job losses also undermined their importance in their families as co-earners. How did they cope? Many may have initially reacted like the women who said in an interview: "We will eat

485 Position paper by Soedjatmoko, 1992, in Chalmers and Hadiz 1997, p. 196.

486 Hill 2000, pp. 220, 226–227; World Bank 1990b, pp. 29, 31.

487 Booth 2004b, pp. 19, 32.

488 Lal and Myint 1998, p. 179; see also Booth 1992c, p. 348. Cf. Thee 2002, p. 226 and for Yogyakarta province Hadiwinata 2003, p. 9.

489 Thee 2002, p. 228.

490 Friend 2003, p. 268.

491 "Visit to Indonesia 6th to 24th May 1976", Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, Feb 1970–Oct 1976.

492 Koentjaraningrat 1982, p. 49; Aass 1986, p. 171.

493 For rituals, see Brewer 1979, pp. 49–62, 105, 133–134, 200, 269; for magic beliefs, see also Berninghausen and Kerstan 1984, pp. 104, 107.

494 "ESCAP Inter-Agency Team on International Rural Development, Country Report: Indonesia" (1975), FAO, RG 15, RAFF, Rural Development. This resembles the state in Tanzania at the same time.

495 Steigerwald 1987, pp. 58–59.

496 "Indonesia Strategic Plan 1992" (handwritten note: „Public version“), p. 6 of the document, Oxfam, Box Annual Reports Asia (not India), Far East A–K, file Indonesia – Annual; Berninghausen and Kerstan 1984, pp. 104–107; Wolf 1992, pp. 48–49; Arief and Sasono 1981, pp. 84–87. For transplanting rice, see Sajogyo 1988, p. 224.

497 Bose 1982, pp. 62 and 69 note 10; Holloran et al. 1982, p. 7.

more carefully".⁴⁹⁸ But poor women found a great variety of ways to earn money. Traditionally, many traders were women.⁴⁹⁹ In the 1970s, there were as many women working in agriculture as men, and almost as many in manufacturing and trade, but far fewer in transportation, construction and mining.⁵⁰⁰ According to other data, far more women than men worked in trade and industry/manufacturing in 1980.⁵⁰¹ That year's unrealistically low census data on (self)employment found that of 73.8 million females, 8.5 million worked full-time in agriculture, 3.1 million in trade, 2.5 million in "services", 1.8 million in industry, and 1.8 million were agricultural workers.⁵⁰²

Including household work, women worked longer hours per day than men, a practice that started in mid-childhood.⁵⁰³ But many did not stay at home. Since most mobile traders who bought farmers' produce and carried it to markets to sell were women, they were also engaging in transportation. One local study of Java found that women were generally more mobile than men.⁵⁰⁴

In the 1980s and 1990s, many women left agriculture, which seems to have become more of a male domain, also because female labor there was badly paid.⁵⁰⁵ This was in continuation of a long-term decrease in the proportion of women in the agricultural workforce that began in the 1920s.⁵⁰⁶ Given that many women, when employed, were in the lowest wage groups, many tended to seek self-employment. Artisanal production at home was one new field of activities.⁵⁰⁷ More women than ever were bazar vendors, peddlers and vegetable stall owners or sold processed food, which made the business far harder, more competitive and gave rise to conflicts between younger and older female traders.⁵⁰⁸ Such self-employment could lead to migration.⁵⁰⁹

Young women often turned to factory work either in rural places nearby or in cities. Diane Wolf found that this was often the individual's, rather than the family's, decision, and that these women spent more of their income on their individual consumption than on remittances and savings for the own marriage. Her findings show that assumptions that households act united, without relation to individual interest, need to be questioned; intra-household conflicts were probably on the rise.⁵¹⁰

498 Quoted in Bose 1982, p. 63.

499 Dewey 1962, pp. 7–8; see also Gerke 1992, p. 83.

500 Wolf 1992, p. 43 with data for 1971 and 1980.

501 Williams 1990, p. 38; Wolf 1992, p. 44.

502 Republic of Indonesia 1985, pp. 37–38, 58; Sajogyo 1988, p. 225.

503 See Prabowo and Sajogyo 1981, pp. 136–137; White 1977, pp. 209, 281–282, 288.

504 Dewey 1962, pp. 7–8; Rotgé 2000, p. 134.

505 Williams 1990, p. 33; Rotgé 2000, p. 154; Sajogyo 1988, p. 224. But see Pincus 1996, pp. 243–244, somewhat in contradiction to *ibid.*, p. 103.

506 Hadiwinata 2003, pp. 177–178 with reference to William Collier.

507 Wolf 1992, pp. 68, 101–102.

508 Gerke 1992, esp. pp. 102–110; Peluso 1984, pp. 14, 28; Wolf 1992, pp. 101–102; Guest 1989, p. 49; White 1977, p. 192; Hayami and Kawagoe 1993, p. 134; Cederroth 1995, pp. 142, 163.

509 See case study in Guest 1989, p. 69.

510 See Wolf 1992, esp. pp. 5, 12–16, 182, 185, 191–192; Guest 1989, p. 14.

Women chose their occupation on the basis of the point at which they were in their life cycle, their family duties at that point and how much capital the family had already amassed. Older women thus usually worked in the better types of merchant activity or handicraft than younger ones. Many women seem to have earned more money than their husbands.⁵¹¹

The divorce rate was very high in some places for various reasons. Men sometimes left their wives because they could not provide a living, or wives divorced because they did not want to join their husband on transmigration. The number of female-headed households was considerable.⁵¹² After all, women could and did inherit and own land.⁵¹³

The new economic dynamics and links in Indonesia's countryside in the 1970s and 1980s rested to no small extent on the industriousness of women. And yet, government policies had apparently little influence on these changes in the lives of women. Repelita IV (1984–1989) was the first five-year development plan that specifically included considerations on how it might influence women. In 1983, a state minister for women's affairs was installed but without portfolio.⁵¹⁴

As my discussion of rural women has indicated, rural merchants were not a homogenous social group. Some – often from (relatively) large landowner families – were rich, pulling the average income of rural trading households well above the general population's, but over half of the traders earned less than the average Indonesian, and about 90 percent of itinerant merchants used no credit and financed their operations from own savings.⁵¹⁵ Marketing margins declined in the 1970s, and for most merchants' profits remained small in the 1980s.⁵¹⁶ Many products were traditionally bought on farm by first-stage small traders, who were often women part-time traders.⁵¹⁷ The risk that their business failed and they had to seek wage labor was high.⁵¹⁸ Indonesia had about 60,000 market places, most of which were in the countryside and badly equipped,⁵¹⁹ but new and better roads made trading easier.⁵²⁰

All of these social changes affected Indonesians' nutrition.

511 Peluso 1984, pp. 2, 30–34, 57–58, 61 (on Yogyakarta region, 1976–1977).

512 Dewey 1962, p. 33; Breman and Wiradi 2002, p. 24; White 1977, pp. 393; Wolf 1992, p. 58.

513 Wijaya 1985, p. 173; Cederroth 1995, p. 55 found this not a frequent occurrence.

514 *The Impact* 1988, p. 70. Smyth 1993a, p. 118 sees development planning concerning women since 1978.

515 Alexander and Booth 1992a, pp. 300–301, 308; Hayami and Kawagoe 1993, pp. 165–166, 171; Cederroth 1995, p. 164; see also Dewey 1962, p. 17. Most traders in the countryside were non-Chinese due to government restrictions from the 1960s.

516 Streeten 1987, p. 27; Hayami and Kawagoe 1993, pp. 10–11; cf. Dewey 1962, p. 39.

517 See Dewey 1962, esp. pp. 7–8, 79, 114; Mangkuprawira 1981, p. 100.

518 Cederroth 1995, p. 162.

519 FAO, "Rural Markets: A Critical Link for Small Farmer Development: Report on the FAO/DSE Joint Planning Meeting on Rural Market Centre Development in Asia, held in Bangkok, Thailand, 6–9 September 1978", FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 32, RU 7/46.33 Annex.

520 Peluso 1984, pp. 28–29.

Table 8.1 Data on food consumption in Indonesia in 1960–2007⁵²¹

	1960	1961-63	1965	1967	1968	1969	Oct. 1969- April 1970	1969-71	1970	1971	1972	1972-74
Average daily calory consumption	1,946	1,743	1,742	1,730	2,034 2,035	2,019 2,132	1,847	1,790 2,013	2,104	2,089	1,900 2,032 2,052	2,031 2,033
Daily protein consumption in grams					43	42.2	43	38	44.9			42
	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1980	1979-81	1982	1983	1983-85	1985
Average daily calory consumption	2,209 2,247	2,126 2,227	2,142	2,237	2,278	2,100 2,412	1,794 2,315	2,441	2,438	2,565	1,798 (1984) 2,504	2,533
Daily protein consumption in grams	45.6					47.6			45.6	52		
	1988	1989	1990	1990-92	1991	1993	1995	1995-97	1997	2000-02	2005-07	
Average daily calory consumption	2,712	2,750	2,781	2,390	2,848	3,151	2,752	2,570	2,886	2,480	2,540	
Daily protein consumption in grams	60		61.8	65.4		69.8			67			

521 UN World Food Conference 1974a, p. 61; Almeida et al. 1975, p. 104; Marei 1976, p. 9; van Ginneken 1976, p. 32; FAO, Committee on World Food Security, Third Session, 24–28 April 1978, FAO, RG 12, Economic and Social Policy Division, FA 13/1, vol. 1; Esman 1978, p. 22; U.S. Embassy Jakarta to State Department, 30 November 1978, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978JAKART16442_d.html (accessed 23 January 2017); Mears 1981, p. 56; *Feeding the World's Population* 1984, p. 182; Maurer 1986a, p. 68; Sjahrir 1986, p. 58; Jatileksono 1987, p. 30; Parikh and Tims 1989, p. 13; Timmer 1991, p. 148; Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, pp. 18, 214 (for low data in 1980 and 1984); Prawiro 1998, p. 357; Than 1998, p. 2; Booth 1998, p. 130; DeutscheWelthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 166–171; Thee 2002, p. 202; Chartsbin, <http://chartsbin.com/view/1150> (accessed 22 March 2018). Cf. Ravallion 1995, p. 299.

As Table 8.1 shows, calorie intake dropped to a very low level during the 1960s but increased strongly for two decades afterwards, particularly during the 1980s.⁵²² The trend is less clear from the 1990s onwards, but average calorie intake was clearly above requirements (which it first exceeded in the late 1970s⁵²³). Protein supply rose from a low to a satisfactory level, again especially so in the 1980s.

Rice was the most important staple.⁵²⁴ From below 100 kilograms of rice per year until 1968, and a drop perhaps close to 80 kilograms in the mid-1960s, per capita annual supply rose to 153 kilograms in 1983. While cassava and sweet potato consumption decreased, that of corn (a traditional staple in East Java) spread and wheat became more popular from the 1960s to the 1980s, especially among urban consumers. People also ate more fruit, vegetables, fish and meat, though these amounts remained small.⁵²⁵ Overall, staple food availability thus rose less impressively than that of rice alone in the decade after 1968.⁵²⁶ Household expenditure for food still exceeded 73 percent until 1976 but averaged 60–63 percent in 1981–1990.⁵²⁷

Nonetheless, not everybody had – and has – enough to eat. There was substantial inequality among social groups and regions. The nutritional intake of most farmers was reportedly below minimum requirements.⁵²⁸ Only a minority of Java's farmers reached the caloric equivalent of 180 kilograms rice annually per person.⁵²⁹ But for a long time, urbanites ate substantially less than rural dwellers – only 1,633 calories on average, according to a survey in October 1969 to April 1970.⁵³⁰ In the 1950s and 1960s, consumption was below 1,400 calories in the Yogyakarta area.⁵³¹ Energy and protein intake was considerably lower on Java than on the outer islands. In 1969–1970, those on Java who ate the least, 1,400 calories on average, were no less than 56.71 percent of the population; on the outer islands, that group – 27.68 percent of the population – received 1,560 calories per day.⁵³² From 1970 to 1976, rural food consumption increased considerably on the outer

522 For a different take on the 1980s, see Tabor 1992a, pp. 168–169; Ravallion 1995, p. 299. But see Sjahrir 1986, p. 58.

523 FAO 1985, pp. 179–180.

524 Mears 1981, p. 59.

525 Maurer 1986a, pp. 64–68; with different data Mears 1981, pp. 55, 126, 130; van Ginneken 1976, p. 32; Palmer 1977b, p. 208. See also “The Food Situation (Cereals) in RAFF Region – 1972”, revised, FAO, RG 15, RAFF, World Food Situation-Fertilizer 1973–76; Gérard et al. 2001, p. 289; Mears 1981, p. 1; 5 years, p. 6. For cassava consumption, see Cock 1985, p. 11; Afiff et al. 1980a, p. 412. For additional food, see Hill 2000, p. 205.

526 Afiff et al. 1980a, pp. 420–421.

527 Hill 2000, p. 205.

528 Van der Wel 1985, p. 221 note 1.

529 Van der Wel 1985, p. 221 note 1.

530 FAO 1985, p. 103; van Ginneken 1976, pp. 32–33.

531 Palmer 1977b, pp. 206–208.

532 Palmer 1977b, p. 209; Arief 1977, pp. 178–179; Prawiro 1998, p. 210 note 7; Booth and Sundrum 1981, p. 206.

islands but fell slightly on Java; and for the bottom 40 percent of both populations, it decreased slightly below 1,600 calories.⁵³³ Twenty-five million people received less than 60 percent of their caloric requirements in 1976, with landless laborers affected worse than others.⁵³⁴ In 1978, 72 percent of East Java's adult population and 54 percent of the entire nation's consumed fewer than 2,100 calories per day, and it was not much different in 1982.⁵³⁵ In 1976, poor Javans ate much less rice than others, substituting it with cheaper cassava and corn (as they did in 1973, 1974 and 1983).⁵³⁶ Most peasants on Madura in the 1970s did not attain what locals considered a good living standard, which would have enabled them to have three rice meals per day.⁵³⁷

Nutritional problems continued in later decades. In 1999, during the economic crisis, the Minister for Food and Agriculture estimated that 17.5 million Indonesian families (about one-third of the total) could not afford as much as eating twice per day.⁵³⁸ In 1986/1987, about 13 percent of the population were found to suffer from protein-energy malnutrition, with higher percentages in Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, West Irian and Kalimantan. This was mostly about preschool children.⁵³⁹ Despite significant improvements, many under five still suffered from short- and long-term malnutrition.⁵⁴⁰ These rates had decreased further by 2010–2015, but 45 percent of deaths among children under five in that period were due to malnutrition, although the number of such deaths fell, as Table 8.2 shows.⁵⁴¹

Many people also lacked micro-nutrients. In some provinces, most were deficient in iodine, and most children and pregnant mothers nationwide lacked iron.⁵⁴² But poor people who relied more on their garden land than rice fields, though they did not consume enough calories and proteins, showed only small deficiencies in micro-nutrients because they ate many fruit and vegetables.⁵⁴³

533 Booth and Sundrum 1981, p. 208; see also Minutes of Meeting of Field Committee for Asia, 2 June 1976, Oxfam, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970–October 1976 (travel report by Skinner, 1,650 calories on average in Java and 1,350 in one area).

534 Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, pp. 163, 165.

535 Ravallion 1990, p. 491; Sjahrir 1986, p. 80.

536 Mears 1981, p. 77, 243–244; Afiff et al. 1980a, p. 417; Falcon et al. 1984b, p. 169.

537 Gerdin 1982, pp. 173, 194–195.

538 Breman and Wiradi 2002, p. 23.

539 World Bank 1990b, p. 102; Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 19 and for 1980, pp. 221–223.

540 See Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 178–183.

541 "Indonesia – Nutrition at a Glance", n.d. (2015), documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/401571468266368081/Indonesia-Nutrition-at-a-glance (accessed 9 May 2018).

542 Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, pp. 20, 223, 227 (North and West Sumatra, East Java and Bali).

543 Stoler 1981, pp. 250–251. This was probably not so where almost all vegetables were sold, see Hayami and Kawagoe 1993, p. 120. But in Yogyakarta province, the area under vegetables – promising high profits, but risky to grow – decreased 1976–1994. Axelsson 2008, pp. 116, 130–133. For risks and profits in vegetable cultivation, see Cederroth 1995, pp. 80–81.

Table 8.2 Data on life and death in Indonesia in 1940–1997⁵⁴⁴

	1940	1960	1961	1965	1969	1970	1971	1972/1973	1976	1977	1977/1978	1980	
Crude death rate	20.0	21.4				19.4							
Life expectancy		40		44	47	49	46.5			53		52.5	
		41		45.5								53	
												55	
												56	
Infant mortality per 1,000		138	137		132	118	132	110	110		112	92.2	
		139					152					98	
		156										102	
												112	
												115	
Under five mortality per 1,000													
	1983	1985	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1995	1996	1997	2010–2015
Crude death rate													
Life expectancy				61	60.5	64	60	62.7		64	65	65	69
					61								
Infant mortality per 1,000	71	71	71	58		51	68	58				47	
	90.7					63	74					68	
	101					69							
Under five mortality per 1,000					ca. 100				56				32

544 Johnston and Kilby 1975, p. 79; Republic of Indonesia 1985, p. 48; Sjahrir 1986, pp. 17, 63–64; Booth 1988, p. 194; Benoit et al. 1989, pp. 151, 153; Hull and Hull 1992a, p. 429; Thorbecke 1992, p. 52; Smyth 1993a, p. 120; Thomas et al. 1994, pp. 58, 74; Ravallion 1995, pp. 299–300; Young 1997, p. 31; Prawiro 1998, pp. 181, 190; Nishigaki and Shimomura 1998, p. 239; Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 190–195; Hill 2000, pp. 6, 217; Thee 2002, p. 202; Friend 2003, pp. 147, 149; “Indonesia – Nutrition at a Glance”, n.d. (2015), documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/401571468266368081/Indonesia-Nutrition-at-a-glance (accessed 9 May 2018).

Though these data include many contradictions and outliers, which may reflect their political nature, it is clear that things did not change for the better in 1940–1960, improvement was slow from the mid-1960s to 1980, but there was a breakthrough to lower death rates in the 1980s, followed by stagnation in the 1990s.⁵⁴⁵ So, most of the Indonesian Planning Commission's targets for life expectancy and infant and child mortality rates in the mid-1990s and 2000 were missed.⁵⁴⁶ By contrast, UNICEF data suggest that the mortality rate for children under five decreased steadily from 1990 (84/1,000) to 2017 (25.4/1,000), except for one year (2004, when a tsunami hit Sumatra).⁵⁴⁷

The data mask significant differences between the sexes (females had a higher life expectancy than males), urban and rural areas (life expectancy was lower in the latter), social classes and regions (East Java had less small child mortality than West Java and some provinces on the outer islands performed well while others, like East and West Nusa Tenggara, trailed behind Java).⁵⁴⁸ The percentage of small children who were adequately nourished decreased with age.⁵⁴⁹ Diarrhea, pneumonia and tuberculosis claimed the lives of many children for a long time and were possibly increasingly so in the 1970s.⁵⁵⁰

In any case, beginning in the 1970s, Indonesia fared much better than the other three countries subject to my case studies. For example, Indonesia overtook Bangladesh in terms of lower infant mortality in the 1950s and in regard to life expectancy at birth in the 1960s. By 1990, the average Indonesian lived more than ten years longer than the average Bangladeshi.⁵⁵¹

Migration

Indonesia experienced an enormous amount of migration of different sorts from the 1970s to the 1990s. Much of it was state organized, often with dramatic consequences, but most was private migration from countryside to city (often within the region) or circular migration between them. Many ruralites also commuted to towns and cities.⁵⁵²

The country's urban population grew from 15 percent in 1960 to 17 percent in 1971, 31 percent in 1980 and 36 percent in 1995.⁵⁵³ This was despite official resistance – for example, Jakarta's mayor declared the city closed to new

545 Sjahrir 1986, p. 63, mentions an average life expectancy 1961–1971 of 46.5 years and 1971–1975 of 51.8 years. Prosterman 1984, p. 16 gives the following data of infant mortality per 1,000 for the five-year periods 1950–1955 to 1980–1985: 165.5; 154.9; 144.8; 129.9; 111.9; 98.7; 86.7.

546 The data are mentioned in Hull and Hull 1992a, p. 431.

547 See UNICEF website, <https://data.unicef.org/country/idn/> (accessed 29 August 2019).

548 Smyth 1993a, p. 120; Hull and Hull 1992a, p. 429; World Bank 1990b, pp. 89–90 (for class); Benoit et al. 1989, pp. 151, 153; Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 225.

549 Hull and Hull 1992a, p. 430.

550 Hull and Mantra 1981a, p. 281; Sjahrir 1986, p. 65.

551 Ravallion 1995, pp. 299–300.

552 Rotgé 2000; Spaan 1995a, p. 52. For circular migration, see Mantra 2000, p. 189.

553 Saraswati 2002, p. 148; Young 1997, p. 71.

residents from 1972 to 1978, but to no avail.⁵⁵⁴ Most families, too, did not favor outmigration as a strategy but chose it when too little employment made survival difficult.⁵⁵⁵ A study of four Javanese villages in 1985 found that 58.7 percent of their migrants were male; over 70 percent were younger than 30; and almost 70 percent were the children of their household's head, but more than half were already married.⁵⁵⁶ Sixty-five percent migrated to cities, usually in the same province. Often, this migration was short term.⁵⁵⁷ This resembled tendencies in the 1970s.⁵⁵⁸ According to a 1990 study of East Java, the youngest were the circular migrants and female emigrants; male emigrants were older, and most commuters were married and over 30 years old.⁵⁵⁹ Many rural migrants who came to cities and towns switched their sector of employment, primarily moving into trade and transportation, females also into prostitution, domestic work and manufacturing.⁵⁶⁰ Rural places where land distribution was relatively equitable experienced more outmigration than less equitable villages, but the latter saw more *permanent* outmigration.⁵⁶¹ However, the aforementioned 1990 study also found that all types of migration (circular, international and commuting) tended to rise with the size of family landholdings.⁵⁶²

Remittances, which were often considerable, were often used by families for building houses; celebrations; education; and productive investment in cattle, agricultural inputs and, rarely, in land (a greater share of labor emigrants' remittances went into land and agriculture).⁵⁶³ After long periods away, many returnees in the 1970s gave personal reasons for coming back, such as missing family and friends and wanting to retire in the village, and more practical ones (receiving an inheritance in the village or having completed schooling).⁵⁶⁴ Migration was part of a larger set of social changes that began in the 1970s with increasing mobility of both labor and capital between rural and urban areas, which some called "integration".⁵⁶⁵ Rural-rural labor migration became more frequent, too; men went for harvesting and women for transplanting rice. Sometimes, this led to violence between migrants and locals.⁵⁶⁶

554 Hainsworth 1979, p. 31.

555 Guest 1989, p. 190.

556 Guest 1989, p. 138. White 1977, pp. 321, 355 with similar data.

557 Guest 1989, p. 138; Speare, Jr. 1981, pp. 205–206.

558 Aklilu and Harris 1980a, p. 127.

559 Spaan 1995a, pp. 50, 59. Circulatory male migrants were 16–30 years, female ones 11–25 years, female international migrants 16–25 and male international migrants 20–45 years old. See also Speare, Jr. 1981, p. 207.

560 Aklilu and Harris 1980, pp. 129–130; Speare, Jr. 1981, p. 207.

561 Guest 1989, pp. 144, 181; Spaan 1995a, p. 65.

562 Spaan 1995a, p. 62.

563 Hugo 1979b, p. 207; Mantra 2000, p. 189; Spaan 1995a, pp. 61–62. For labor emigration, see Hugo 2004a, pp. 121–122; Banzon-Bautista 1989, pp. 153–155.

564 Hugo 1979b, p. 205.

565 Spaan 1995a, p. 75; the quote is in the title of Rotgé 2000.

566 Breman 1995, pp. 13–22, 27–28.

Although rural dwellers, especially women, were facing bad conditions of work abroad, they left because of a lack of employment opportunities at home.⁵⁶⁷ Most Indonesian emigrants turned to neighboring countries, especially Malaysia (where many men toiled on plantations), or Saudi Arabia (where men did construction work, women worked as housemaids), but few went to OECD countries. Labor emigration grew rapidly after the 1998 crisis, and remittances with them (from between US\$1.2 and 1.3 billion in 1997–1999 to \$3 billion in 2005). Estimates of the number of Indonesians working abroad in the mid-2010s differed widely from four million to nine million (the latter including estimates of undocumented emigrants), half of them female, with most working in Arab countries, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong. In the latter three, as well as Malaysia, many women were maids and care workers.⁵⁶⁸ This emigration meant that a substantial part of Indonesians were proletarianized abroad, but their percentage of the population was smaller than in Bangladesh and Mali, because Indonesians became urban wage earners in larger numbers domestically.

However, believing that the country's cities provided limited employment opportunities, Indonesia's government organized a type of rural–rural migration called *transmigrasi*. This was to resettle millions from Java and Bali to the outer islands for a number of interrelated reasons: to relieve the inner islands of what was perceived as population pressure; to increase agricultural production; to colonize the outer islands with settlers; to make settlement areas development poles; and to change the ethnic composition in the outer islands and bring them politically more under central government control.⁵⁶⁹ Transmigration was an old Dutch colonial project rehashed by all of the governments during the Republic, which reached its peak in the 1980s.

Under the program, about 379,000 Indonesians were resettled in 1950–1965, 574,000 from 1969 to 1978–1979 (Repelita I and II), 2.14 million from 1979–1980 to 1983–1984, 2.25 million from 1984–1985 to 1988–1989 and 840,000 from 1989–1990 to mid-1993, which was almost six million people in 1969–1993.⁵⁷⁰ Some of the plans called for more. Drunken with success, Suharto ordered in 1983 that 13 million people be resettled (which would have cost the equivalent of US\$60 billion at current prices), and the targets for Repelita III through VI (1979–1998) added up to 3.5 million families or about 20 million individuals.⁵⁷¹ Such unrealistic goals had already before the Suharto era resulted in underfunding and badly prepared land.⁵⁷² When a decline in oil proceeds in 1986 enforced a reduction in Indonesia's development budget, the transmigration program was greatly downsized, but the number of spontaneous transmigrants not sponsored by the state increased.⁵⁷³

567 Breman and Wiradi 2002, pp. 115–128.

568 See Hugo 2007; Hugo 2004a, p. 107; World Bank Indonesia 2017; Spaan 1995a, pp. 55–56.

569 Hancock 1989, p. 203; “Subroto” 2003, p. 233; Levang 1997; Hardjono 1977, pp. 16–21.

570 Levang 1997, pp. 373–374; IMBAS 1988, p. 19.

571 IMBAS 1988, pp. 25, 27, 31.

572 Hardjono 1977, p. 93.

573 World Bank 1988b, pp. xxii–xxiii, xxxviii, 11, 15, 142.

Following older traditions, the settlement of transmigrants concentrated on Sumatra, which always remained the prime destination though other islands (primarily Sulawesi) later also came into play.⁵⁷⁴ Repelita III (1979–1983) called for the resettlement of half a million families, and the IBRD was to cover half of the costs or US\$1 billion.⁵⁷⁵ There were a number of sub-programs, including one for retired army personnel, one called general migration, and another for spontaneous (private) transmigration.⁵⁷⁶ According to official propaganda, “[t]hose given priority to be transmigrated are the landless people, the poor families in over-crowded areas and the victims of natural disasters”, all of whom received a “package” that included implements, seeds, fertilizer, pesticides and food aid for one year.⁵⁷⁷ Candidates had to be married.⁵⁷⁸ According to one study, between 54 and 66 percent of the resettled actually had owned no land at all at their place of origin, and most of the rest less than 0.25 hectares.⁵⁷⁹ Another study found many elderly people, widows, divorcees and ill people among the resettlers.⁵⁸⁰ Not all of them knew how to farm. Resettled families were supposed to get 2 hectares of land; initially, it was often 1.25 hectares, with 0.75 hectares added later.⁵⁸¹ The program’s average costs per family was US\$500 in 1974, \$5,000 to \$6,000 in 1978, and \$4,700 according to Repelita IV (of 1984).⁵⁸² Much of these costs was for experts doing things like aerial photography, mapping and consultancy.⁵⁸³ And according to the ‘World Bank’, the “food crops – input package” constituted only 5 percent of the costs, compared to 19 percent for relocation transportation, 14 percent for road construction, 13 percent for land clearing, 11 percent for housing, 11 percent for initial subsistence supplies and 9 percent for “site selection”.⁵⁸⁴

According to observers, some transmigrants were forcibly resettled.⁵⁸⁵ In one variant, thousands of rural families were moved from Java to Sumatra and Irian

574 Levang 1997, p. 375; Hugo 1979a; Hardjono 1977, pp. 26, 40.

575 Masters to State Department, “Indonesia National Development Plan, 1979–83 (Repelita III): Status of Planning on Key Development Issues”, 21 November 1978, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978JAKART16036_d.html (accessed 23 January 2017). In World Bank 1988b, p. xx, the institution claimed to have only provided US\$107 million of total costs of \$2.3 billion.

576 Pauline Eccles, “Tour Report to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Maharashtra, September 13–October 16, 1973”, Oxfam, Box Tour Reports Asia (not India), file Tour Report – Multi-country tours. Benoit et al. 1989 emphasize the extent of spontaneous migration.

577 Republic of Indonesia 1985, p. 64.

578 World Bank 1988b, p. xix.

579 Levang 1997, p. 89.

580 Benoit et al. 1989, p. 267.

581 Pauline Eccles, “Tour Report to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Maharashtra, September 13–October 16, 1973”, Oxfam, Box Tour Reports Asia (not India), file Tour Report – Multi-country tours; Hardjono 1977, p. 41; Sajogyo 1993a, p. 50.

582 World Bank 1988b, p. 8; State Department to various embassies, 10 December 1978, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978State312035_d.html (accessed 23 January 2017); Otten 1986, p. 56; IMBAS 1988, p. 31. Hainsworth 1979, p. 33 estimated US\$2,000–2,500.

583 See Otten 1986, pp. 57–58; note for the file, “Visit of Mr. A. Denton-Thompson, SAA/FAO Country Representative in Indonesia – 9 October 1974”, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 13, Mitsubishi.

584 World Bank 1988b, p. 42.

585 Otten 1986, pp. 67–71; Pauline Eccles, “Tour Report to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Maharashtra, September 13–October 16, 1973”, Oxfam, Box Tour Reports Asia (not India), file Tour Report – Multi-country tours.

Jaya in 1985–1993 to make way for three new dams. Many of these ended up with smaller holdings and much lower incomes than before.⁵⁸⁶ Many transmigrants (including some volunteers) were not informed of the date of their move, their destination and the conditions there.⁵⁸⁷ In the early 1970s, many resettlers returned to Java because of disorganization and inadequate conditions in their new settlement areas.⁵⁸⁸

The program's problems were manifold. Resettlers were often given land at isolated places and with inadequate assistance.⁵⁸⁹ Provided with small landholdings, often with poor soil or insufficiently cleared, and improper housing or none, many men needed to earn money elsewhere, like on plantations and in logging. This put the farming burdens on women.⁵⁹⁰ According to Indonesia's Statistical Office, only 32.5 percent of the resettled lived from agriculture alone in 1985. Various studies found that 40–80 percent of their income came from agriculture. Poverty forced many to sell their land.⁵⁹¹ About half of the resettlers remained poor at their transmigration destination, and it got worse after a few years of their stay.⁵⁹² Gradually, such conditions made growing numbers of resettlers join more profitable tree-crop schemes, mostly in oil palm cultivation.⁵⁹³ Often, serious conflicts emerged between resettlers and locals. Where the latter practiced shifting cultivation or were hunters and gatherers, the program sought to make them sedentary or displace them and/or absorb them ethnically.⁵⁹⁴ In reality, resettlers and locals often clashed over claims to land. Sometimes, these conflicts, ethnically charged, culminated in killings.⁵⁹⁵

The 'World Bank's' massive support and encouragement for the transmigration program are notorious.⁵⁹⁶ Despite officially adopting new, more cautious policies on resettlement, the 'World Bank' participated from 1986 to 1993 in at least 192 projects in which 2.5 million people were relocated, many of them in Indonesia.⁵⁹⁷ By 1984, it had provided US\$444 million for *transmigrasi*. By 1992, the total was 820 million.⁵⁹⁸ At least once, the IGGI also "welcomed" the transmigration

586 Lawyers Committee 1995, pp. 7, 61, 64, 96–97; Otten 1986, p. 79.

587 Otten 1986, p. 64.

588 Note for the file, "Visit of Mr. A. Denton-Thompson, SAA/FAO Country Representative in Indonesia – 9 October 1974", FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 13, Mitsubishi; see also Hardjono 1977, p. 64; Otten 1986, p. 5; World Bank 1988b, pp. xxvii, 34.

589 "Subroto" 2003, p. 234; Sajogyo 1993a, p. 50; Hardjono 1977, pp. 64, 81.

590 Dawson 2008, p. 53; IMBAS 1988, pp. 51–60; Levang 1997, p. 36; Otten 1986, pp. 25, 107–108.

591 IMBAS 1988, pp. 31, 54; World Bank 1988b, p. xxvii.

592 World Bank 1990, pp. 73–74; World Bank 1988b, p. xxxvi.

593 World Bank 1988b, pp. xx, xxxv, 13–14.

594 IMBAS 1988, pp. 80–100; see also World Bank 1988b, p. xv.

595 Hardjono 1977, pp. 39–40; Otten 1986, pp. 87, 157–163.

596 Sharma 2017, pp. 120–121; Otten 1986, pp. 58–59. See also telegram U.S. Embassy The Hague to State Department, "Report on 16th Meeting of Inter-Government Group on Indonesia, May 7–8, 1974", 10 May 1974, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1973THEHA02354_b.html (accessed 23 January 2017).

597 Lawyers Committee 1995, pp. 21–23; Hancock 1989, p. 207.

598 IMBAS 1988, p. 33; Fearnside 1997, p. 558. Otten 1986, p. 59 mentions \$520.5 million by 1985, World Bank 1988b, p. 159, \$560 million in "the past decade".

program.⁵⁹⁹ Other lenders who supported it included British, Dutch and West German agencies, the FAO, the UNDP, the Asian Development Bank and the World Food Programme, who contributed over US\$100 million.⁶⁰⁰ There was also U.S. support.⁶⁰¹ And Oxfam, too, aided the transmigration program early on by providing a ferry that could transport 2,000 people per year.⁶⁰² In fact, it is hard to find a foreign agency that did *not* support the program.⁶⁰³ In the final analysis, it did little to lower the population density or relieve the lack of land in Java, but it did bring changes – and conflicts – to the outer islands.

Indonesian ‘development’ policies in East Timor were even far more violent than anywhere else and closely linked to migration.⁶⁰⁴ In December 1975, Indonesian troops invaded this former Portuguese colony, with U.S. military aid and technology and foreign diplomatic support, to oust from power a leftist liberation movement that it never defeated completely, which resulted in heavy fighting until 1982. In 1998, Indonesia gave up the formerly annexed province after the population voted for independence. An international team of researchers concluded in the 2000s that Indonesia’s policies there had caused 102,800 deaths – fewer than often reported, but over 10 percent of the population – of which more than 80 percent were caused from hunger and disease due to the conditions of life these policies imposed. Most victims died between 1976 and 1983.⁶⁰⁵ At the same time when pursuing policies against hunger domestically, the Indonesian authorities created a deadly famine in East Timor.

Most East Timorese deaths occurred in places where Indonesian troops had forcibly concentrated the population, first in 139 so-called reception centers in the late 1970s and then in 442 strategic villages, most of which were located in the disease-prone lowlands.⁶⁰⁶ The inhabitants of both were denied sufficient land to grow food (in order to prevent their contact with the guerrilla) and given starvation rations. This was not only because of military considerations, Indonesian anti-leftism and racism but also a matter of ‘development’ policies. These relocations of over half of the population meant to change the entire settlement structure; before 1975,

599 Telegram Middendorf to State Department, “IGGI-14 Press Release”, 9 May 1973, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1973THEHA02133_b.html (accessed 23 January 2017).

600 “Progress Report on FAO Activities in Asia and the Far East 1973- (mid)1974”, FAO, RG 12, ES, FA 8/3, vol. II; ICP, “List of Government Projects approved by the UNDP Governing Council in June 1972”, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 11, General File; IMBAS 1988, p. 33; Levang 1997, p. 6.

601 OPIC, “Annual Report Fiscal 1972”, pp. 16–17 of the document, NARA, Nixon papers, FG 264, EX FG 264, 1/1/71, file 3; Otten 1986, p. 58.

602 “G.W.A. Asian Tour November-December 1969”, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee, Feb 1970-Oct 1976.

603 However, a higher percentage of Indonesian government funds and provincial government funds in particular were channeled to transmigration in the 1980s than of foreign ‘aid’: World Bank 1990b, p. 177; World Bank 1988b, p. xxx.

604 The following section draws from Gerlach 2023.

605 *The Profile* 2006, pp. 3, 11. The study arrived at a figure of 18,600 direct killings.

606 Taylor 1999, pp. 88–98, 157–158. The fact that many East Timorese were exposed to starvation and Indonesian attacks after they fled to mountains and bush, particularly in 1977–1979, also claimed many victims.

there had been 1,700 smaller villages, many remotely placed in the uplands.⁶⁰⁷ Considerable financial transfers from Jakarta to East Timor resulted in the establishment of a school system and the construction of some other infrastructure, but agricultural production – primarily of food crops, especially corn, secondarily of coffee – remained low and inefficient. The Indonesian state did not extract many resources from East Timor. Outside farming, most East Timorese came to work for military authorities or in construction. The area remained Indonesia's poorest, and illness widespread.⁶⁰⁸ That perhaps 60,000 people from Bali and Java were resettled to East Timor had a limited economic impact but helped introduce a kind of apartheid system dividing Indonesians and locals and generated conflicts over land.⁶⁰⁹ East Timor was an example of reckless developmental social engineering, which caused the most intense misery.

Conclusion

Among the countries in my case studies, Indonesia comes closest to successfully implementing an intensive farming program for small peasants. The use of chemical inputs became widespread, irrigation was expanded and productivity greatly increased. Food production per capita rose substantially. The rates of public and domestic private investment were very high. Some industries were built. Malnutrition was reduced and life expectancy rose more than in the other case-study countries. The breakthrough in terms of intensification of farming took approximately place between 1978 and 1984, together with an increase in agricultural wages.

Like the Indonesian state, foreign agencies focused their rural development funding and ideas for Indonesia on fertilizer, irrigation and transmigration. There was no major difference between international and national rural development policies, and many policies enacted were the result of existing dialogical structures rather than a foreign imposition. Moreover, the core of agricultural development, the BIMAS program, was a genuinely Indonesian path that the state developed in the face of the inability of foreign forces (in this case, transnational corporations) to transform agriculture. Indonesian mass murder in the name of 'development' was not opposed by foreign actors, on the contrary.

However, the Indonesian case also shows major contradictions in the small peasant approach. The Indonesian government pursued an "avowdly productionist strategy".⁶¹⁰ The intensification of farming concentrated on irrigated rice cultivation on Java. It was much less applied to – and even if applied, less successful with – other staples (corn, cassava and sweet potatoes), rainfed agriculture, and in Java's uplands and on the outer islands – which was most of the country's territory. Transmigration, in as much as it was a farming intensification and poverty

607 See *The Profile* 2006, pp. 3, 14; Pinto and Jardine 1997, p. 260 note 3.

608 See Gerlach 2023.

609 See Otten 1986, pp. 204, 207–214; Pedersen and Arneberg 1999, p. 54; Rio 2001, p. 28; Hamilton 2004; "Aidwatch Briefing Note" 2001; Fearnside 1997, p. 556.

610 Breman and Wiradi 2002, p. 91.

alleviation program, failed. The small farmer approach reduced poverty only to a certain point and reached its limits in the 1990s. Indonesia's rural non-farm economy was strengthened, but the country remained far from fully industrializing, which was the ultimate development goal.

Social processes in Indonesia were similar to the other case studies in many important ways. Many farms became too small to feed a family, which forced people to seek other jobs in trade, services, construction, transportation and manufacturing. Income diversification was more a sign of poverty than a road to social ascent. Landlessness increased. The growth of a proletariat was in part externalized through labor emigration. But despite the enrichment of elites, including rural ones, with ties to the regime, income diversification did more than in, for example, Bangladesh to help poor rural dwellers get by and stop the concentration of land ownership. As a result of foreign influences, but particularly of fierce domestic debates, Indonesian development policies shifted several times. From the late 1960s to the mid-1970s (and again in the 1990s), they tended to exacerbate inequality, but they had the contrary tendency from the mid-1970s to 1980s.

That a murderously anti-communist regime pursued statist policies that aimed, with some success, at the well-being of the masses is only surprising at first glance. It was precisely the communist challenge that repeatedly drove the regime's policies to the 'left', and not only in words. This challenge made politicians receptive to the national experts and foreign actors who advocated tackling poverty and want. But where the supposed communist threat was externalized, as it was in East Timor, 'development' policies could easily become murderous, precisely through inducing hunger.

9 Tanzania

Impoverishment after enforced villagization

Tanzania is another country whose rural development concepts were internationally highly influential and where many foreign agencies were operating. Characterized by political stability, a rainfed agriculture that saw little intensification from the 1970s to the 1990s and a persistently poor population whose food intake decreased for decades, Tanzania embodies unforeseen changes in a society after a state's failed attempt of especially far-reaching social engineering.

This East African country, a British colony in 1918–1961, united by Swahili as a lingua franca, is diverse in regional livelihoods and ethnicities. The population, which was around 15 million in the mid-1970s and 33 million in 1999, is now about 60 million. From 1967 to 2002, population density increased from 9 to 39 persons per square kilometer.¹ Among its many mineral resources are gold and natural gas. In 1993, the 'World Bank' ranked Tanzania the second poorest country in the world.²

With about 943,000 square kilometers, Tanzania is large, but much of it is not well suited for crop production due to poor- to medium-fertility soils, low rainfalls (below 800 millimeters annually), and endemic malaria and trypanosomiasis.³ Conditions vary greatly, and it is especially the scattered highlands and areas in the west that are cultivated. Despite statistical problems, it is safe to say that only a small part of the country, much less than the arable percentage, was under permanent cultivation in the late 1970s while around 40 percent was grasslands and almost half woodlands.⁴ Though the cropland for cereals, roots, tubers and pulses was expanded by over 60 percent in 1975–1980 and further in the following decades, the percentage of the land under cultivation remained small until recently.⁵

1 UNCTAD 2002, p. iv; Mhando 2011, pp. 468–469; Van Arkadie 2019a, p. 71.

2 Seppälä 1998, p. 56.

3 Ponte 2002, p. 38.

4 Dr. Walid Sharif, FAO, "Crop Production in Tanzania", n.d., FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 23, RU 7/46.25 Annex; McHenry Jr. 1979, p. 52; Rugumamu 1991, p. 73 with even lower figures. According to Bryceson 1987, p. 157, 68,000 sq. km or less than 8 percent of Tanzania's territory were under permanent cultivation; Sijm 1997, p. 110 writes it was only 3.5 percent in 1992, Van Arkadie 2019a, p. 73 mentions 12 percent in 2007/2008.

5 Founou-Tchuiğoua 1990a, pp. 200–201; Ahmed and Rustagi 1987, p. 106; van der Geest and Köttering 1994, p. 76; Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 66; UNCTAD 2002, p. 60; Rajabu et al. 2017, p. 100, with varying data.

The population was overwhelmingly rural. Mainly because of the lack of labor, rather than land, it was a country of small farms. In the mid-1960s, 2.5 million peasant families, often living in scattered settlements, worked 2–3 hectares on average. In the mid-1980s, there were 3.5 million farms.⁶ State-owned and private plantations covered a minor area.

From independence in 1961 until 1992, mainland Tanzania had politically a one-party system.⁷ It was ruled by the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) until 1977, when it merged with the Afro-Shirazi Party of Zanzibar into the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Party of the Revolution). The TANU had an estimated 2.5–3 million members in 1970, as did the CCM in 1990, a sizable part of all (male) adults.⁸ The party has been in power until now. In effect, Tanzania was a dictatorship until the 1990s.⁹ President Julius Nyerere (1962–1985), whose national and international reputation is still that of a benevolent and peaceful visionary, was, despite his rhetorics of freedom and participation, often harsh in tone (inter alia, calling peasants idle) and legitimated, and was responsible for, the use of force.¹⁰ As examples of authoritarianism, strikes were prohibited after 1964 (although they did occur) and ‘preventive’ detention widely used for economic offences.¹¹

After the TANU’s Arusha Declaration of 1967, Tanzania’s government pursued what it called African socialism, but was “attempting to build socialism without a revolution” and without a base for revolution in bureaucracy or society.¹² Scholars have called this “a type of idealistic, utopian socialism”, a “vision” that existed only in ideas.¹³ Nationalizations in 1967, apparently with compensations paid, affected primarily citizens of South Asian heritage and some foreign firms – commercial banking and insurance, import and wholesale trade and also large- and medium-scale grain milling. This brought about 85 percent of large- and medium-scale economic units under public ownership.¹⁴ However, agriculture was overwhelmingly not; thus, large parts of the economy – those that matter here – were “in private hands, and the economy as a whole remains integrated into international capitalism”.¹⁵ Government revenue was estimated at 18 percent of GDP in 1970 and 20–21 percent in the early 1980s, or 28 and 40 percent of monetary GDP

6 Michalski 1974, p. 415; Kjærby 1986, p. 188.

7 Tanzania emerged from the fusion of Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

8 McHenry Jr. 1994, p. xv, 52.

9 For TANU’s authoritarian character, see McHenry Jr. 1979, pp. 61–70.

10 See Schneider 2014, pp. 78–83; for example, see quotes of his speech during WCARRD in D. Umali, “Follow-Up Action for WCARRD”, early November 1979, FAO, RG 12, ES, PR RU 7/46.1, vol. II; Nyerere 1968. Yeager 1989 argues that Nyerere could not carry his leftist ideas into effect due to resistance within the TANU and the state apparatus.

11 Hyden 1980, p. 158; Havnevik 1993, p. 45. Purported cattle thieves, hoarders, smugglers and corrupt persons were among those detained: Coulson 2013, p. 267.

12 Clark 1978, p. xi (quote), 206.

13 Boesen et al. 1977, p. 12 (first quote); McHenry Jr. 1994, p. 15 (second quote), 23.

14 Green 1978, pp. 18–19, 23. Nationalizations in particular of real estate led to unsuccessful British attempts to block ‘World Bank’ loans to Tanzania in the early 1970s: *ibid.*, pp. 32–33. On U.S. pressure because of nationalizations and Tanzania’s stand on Zionism, see 94th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 44.

15 The quote is from Clark 1978, p. xi. See also Biermann and Wagao 1986a, p. 140.

(excluding ‘subsistence’ production)¹⁶ – which illustrates that this was not socialism in the sense of public ownership of the main means of production.

Tanzania pursued a foreign policy of non-alignment and maintained relations to countries with political systems of all kinds. The East African Community, established in 1967 with neighboring Kenya and Uganda, broke up in 1977, and Tanzanian troops invaded Uganda repeatedly after 1979. Tanzania also supported South African and Mozambiquan political exile groups and prepared for an invasion from the south.¹⁷ All of this led to high military spending in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁸

The rural infrastructure is very poor. As late as 2005, no more than 7 percent of the population had access to electricity, and probably hardly anybody in the countryside.¹⁹ The road network is small, most roads were and are unpaved and in poor condition. This has led to high transportation costs and to more ‘development’ investment in transportation after the late 1980s.²⁰ The situation concerning rural water supplies – one point of emphasis of Tanzanian policies in the 1970s and 1980s, pursued primarily with assistance of the Swedish government – is better, but it deteriorated for some time after the early 1980s for lack of maintenance and unfeasible technology (42 percent of households had access to safe water in 1985).²¹ In the late 1960s, problems with transportation and water supplies were already called major obstacles to ‘development’.²²

Scholars have described various situations in the history of independent Tanzania as famines, usually limited to one or a few districts, in the mid-1960s, 1969–1971, 1980–1982, 1984, 1988, 1999 and in 1995–1996, when 700,000 were in need of assistance. But since few deaths were reported, one should rather speak of shortages in most cases.²³ The shortages of 1973–1974 (see Chapter 3) had arguably the biggest political fallout.

Even compared to other non-industrialized countries, and African countries in particular, foreigners regarded Tanzanian statistics as exceptionally unreliable; “rough estimates at best”, as a Canadian observer put it. In addition to data about the GNP, this included agricultural production figures.²⁴ Statistics were “poor

16 Svendsen 1986, p. 65. These figures are questionable because they indicate low estimates of subsistence production. Sender and Smith 1986, pp. 83–84, Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, p. 142 and Faaland and Parkinson 2013 (1986), p. 88 offer different data but confirm the picture.

17 See Lal 2015; for foreign policy, see also Yeager 1989, pp. 125–145.

18 See Lipton 1988b, pp. 215–216; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, pp. 4, 24; ILO 1982, p. 18.

19 “ABB” 2005, p. 9.

20 See Lohmeier 1982, p. 29; Lele et al. 1989, pp. 24, 34; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, p. 119; Sijm 1997, p. 299.

21 Jennings 2008, p. 93; McHenry Jr. 1994, p. 88; Tschannerl 1979; Mushi 1982, p. 36; Ponte 2002, p. 148; Coulson 2013, p. 262.

22 Lal 2015, p. 146.

23 Iliffe 1987, pp. 252–253; Bryceson et al. 1999, pp. 35–36; Kerner and Cook 1991, pp. 265–266; Shao 1986, pp. 85–86; Ndaro 1992, p. 180; Cheru 1993, p. 54. However, there were reports about many deaths from Manduli district in 1994: Talle 1999, p. 108.

24 Jerven 2013, esp. pp. 51, 65–72; “Africa, Subregional study” (ca. 1972), FAO, RG 12, Comm. Div., IL 7/1, vol. II; Raikes 1988, pp. 15–22, esp. p. 18; Lewis 1988, pp. 97, 117 note 17; Lele et al. 1989, p. 10. Quote: N. Kalish, “Tanzania”, in: *Agriculture Abroad* 33 (5), 1978, p. 31.

numbers”²⁵ chiefly because the state was in no position to record private agricultural production and thus a large part of the economy, given that only a fraction of the crops was sold through official marketing channels. While the FAO relied, as usual, on the data gathered by national authorities, the USDA produced its own, equally questionable ones.²⁶

Initially dynamic, the country’s economy was in crisis for nearly two decades, starting in the late 1970s with high inflation, a trade deficit, budget deficits and low industrial capacity utilization. Foreign-imposed ‘structural adjustment’ aggravated the problems. GNP grew reportedly relatively much in 1965–1973 (or until 1977, according to other figures) and from 1993/1995 to 2008, but it lagged behind population growth in 1978–1982 and in the early 1990s. And since much of the growth in 1995–2008 and later was in mining and urban areas, it had little effect on rural poverty.²⁷ Officially, per capita income dropped by more than two-thirds from 1985 to 1995.²⁸ Official poverty rates were very high – in all but one province, the rate exceeded 36 percent in 1991.²⁹ However, most of these figures did not account for unofficial and illegal economic activities which were apparently on the rise. Maliyamkono and Bagachawa estimated that Tanzania’s shadow economy grew from about 10 percent of the whole in 1977 (probably an understatement) to 31 percent in 1986.³⁰

Scholarship about ‘development’ in Tanzania has been dominated by discussions about ‘self-reliance’, ‘ujamaa’ (familyhood), (failed) ‘socialism’, and ‘structural adjustment’.³¹ It seems to me that these paradigmatic narratives obscure the real processes and I try to avoid using these terms. Rather, I examine actual circumstances of staple food production and economic and social relations.

Rural development policies

Unlike the other case studies, this chapter does not have a separate section on resettlements, because the forced resettlement of the majority of the rural population into villages in the 1970s was the fundamental fact in Tanzania’s rural development policies. This was in spite of the fact that all of the earlier resettlement policies had been failures. During colonial times, they had taken place under the pretexts of combating insurgents or trypanosomiasis, but people resisted.³² Toward the end of the colonial period, development became an official rationale for planning new

25 This is the title of Jerven 2013.

26 Lele and Candler 1981, p. 108.

27 Bryant 1988, p. 78; Biermann and Wagao 1986a, p. 141; UNCTAD 2002, p. 10; Fritz et al. 2015, pp. 174, 178; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, pp. 1–25; Coulson 2013, p. 239; Lofchie 2019a, p. 50; Brockington et al. 2019a, esp. p. 100; Tribe 2019a, p. 226.

28 Kiwara 1999, p. 120; van Donge 2013, p. 345.

29 Sijm 1997, p. 144.

30 Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, pp. 54, 61. Seppälä 1998, p. 187 estimated 20 percent for 1970 and 33 percent for 1988; similar in Sarris and van den Brink 1993, p. 56. See also Bevan et al. 1989, pp. 48–53, 155.

31 For example, see Bjerk 2010.

32 Brooke 1967, p. 342; von Oppen 1996, p. 26; Eckert 2007, p. 10; Kjekshus 1977, p. 271; McHenry Jr. 1979, pp. 14–42.

settlements.³³ In an effort to ‘modernize’ and increase agricultural production, the newly independent country pursued, following the ‘World Bank’s’ qualified recommendation,³⁴ more than 20 small schemes for resettling the population in new villages, but they achieved very little and caused so great financial costs to the government that they were given up in 1965–1966.³⁵

Consistently, agriculture received only a small part of government expenditure, 8–9 percent during the five-year development plans 1964–1969, 1969–1974 and 1988–1993 – and the level was similar in 1981–1987. In the first plan period, about half of agricultural spending was for settlement plans, later on for state-owned farms.³⁶ The state allocated 13.5 percent of its capital investment to agriculture in 1976–1986.³⁷ One foreign regional development plan proposed even lower figures, which the government revised upward. But already in the second five-year development plan, plan figures were markedly higher than actual expenses for agriculture.³⁸ Most of the government’s agricultural investment in 1965–1975 was for export crops, livestock and sugar; 2 percent was for cereals.³⁹ The claim of some scholars that the Tanzanian state channeled more wealth into the countryside than it got back is hardly credible.⁴⁰

Under the guise of the vague concept of community development, which was, supposedly scale-neutral, to improve living conditions through better farming, agricultural policies in the 1960s had in reality concentrated on mid-sized farmers viewed as ‘progressive’.⁴¹ This concentration changed as rural ‘development’ policy started to focus first on collectivization and then on villagization. However, in principle, agricultural policies remained “supply-oriented”.⁴² Officially, villagization sought to greatly expand both food and cash crop production through more ‘modern’ means, such as tractors, also in a claim to famine prevention.⁴³ This is to say, policies were indecisive between intensification of

33 Büschel 2014, p. 213.

34 See Anthony 1988, pp. 47–48; Coulson 1977, p. 86; Payer 1983, pp. 791–794; Jennings 2008, p. 41; IBRD 1961, pp. 51–52, 131–134, 137.

35 Coulson 1975, pp. 54–55; Coulson 1977, pp. 86–89; Mapolu 1990, p. 141; Okoko 1987, pp. 90–91; Bryceson 1982, p. 352; Clark 1978, p. 79; Graf 1973, p. 217; Jennings 2008, pp. 42–45. Cf. Iliffe 1979, pp. 473–474.

36 Clark 1978, pp. 73, 79; van der Geest and Köttering 1994, p. 75; Bryceson 1993, p. 224; Timberlake 1985, p. 75; Bänziger 1987, p. 139; see IBRD 1961, p. 54; ILO 1982, p. 18; Yeager 1989, pp. 103, 111. Jazairy et al. 1992, p. 443 noted a downward trend in Tanzania 1975–1988.

37 Ndaru 1992, p. 170; Malima 1986, p. 130; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, pp. 5, 9.

38 See Stremplat and Stremplat-Platte 1981, p. 21 on the Dutch-authored Shinyanga IRD plan for 1975–1980. For the second five-year plan, see U.S. General Accounting Office 1975, p. 82.

39 Von Freyhold 1979a, p. 109.

40 Thoden van Velzen 1975a, p. 180; Schneider 2014, p. 156.

41 See Collignon 1990, p. 168; Coulson 1981, p. 60; for community development: Büschel 2014, pp. 164–169.

42 Geier 1992, p. 75.

43 “Operation Chunya”, in Daily News, 31 December 1975, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 2315, TAN 64; statement by J. Mungai, 17th FAO Conference, 16 November 1973, FAO, RG 6, film 538, pp. 257–259; Adrian Moyes, “two revolutions per year: a report on a visit to Chunya District, Tanzania”, August 1975, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1974–Oct 1976; Scott 1998, p. 230; Jennings 2001a, p. 127. For famine prevention, see R. Mrope, District Development Director,

farming and enlargement of acreage and between food crops and cash crops. Another prime purpose of villagization (a classical argument, also in colonial times) was to extend government services such as water supplies, education and health services.⁴⁴

Beginning about in 1973, some signs indicated that the government was leaning toward intensive farming. Emphasizing the intention to foster both food and export crop production, Minister of Agriculture Joseph Mungai stated at the FAO Conference in Rome the aim to raise peasants' productivity and draw them into market exchanges (but this announcement may have been for the international audience).⁴⁵ In the following year, the pendulum was swinging toward staples. This resulted in the National Maize Programme in 1975, which included some new investment in technical inputs, and in pricing policies favoring the production of staple foods. But public expenses for tractorization were going up at the same time, indicating an expansion of the cultivated area.⁴⁶

President Nyerere had declared in 1967 that villagization was the true meaning of *ujamaa* and what Tanzanians wanted.⁴⁷ Already in his inauguration speech in December 1962, he had said that people must live in villages.⁴⁸ In 1973, the regional commissioner in Mara called villagization the "only short-cut to development".⁴⁹ Handeni and Rufiji districts, which were prone to food shortages, were among the first areas subject to resettlement. Other early affected regions like Mtwara, Kigoma, Dodoma and Lindi were poor and produced few cash crops.⁵⁰ Villagization was supplemented in 1973 by a law stipulating that a village farmstead could have only one heir. The aim was to prevent land fragmentation, but the law disadvantaged women.⁵¹

After regional population reshuffles, President Nyerere declared on 6 November 1973 moving into villages an "order" and compulsory everywhere, which the TANU had decided at its biennial conference in September 1973.⁵² The bulk of villagization occurred from 1974 to 1976. The population of what were called 'ujamaa villages' was 0.5 million in 1970, 1.6 million in 1971, 2.0 million in 1972 and 1973, 2.6 million in 1974, 9.1 million in 1975, 13.1 million in 1976 and 13.9 million in 1977. In the 18 months from December 1973 to May 1975, the figure rose by 7 million, though sources vary slightly.⁵³ According to instructions, villages were to be placed around existing nuclei in a distance of 8–16 kilometers to each

"Operation Chunya – a surgical phenomenon of development in isolation", 1972, Oxfam, Project files, Box 2315, TAN64 Misc.

44 For example, see Mwapachu 1979a, p. 124–125.

45 Statement by J. Mungai at the 17th FAO Conference, 16 November 1973, FAO, RG 6, film 538, pp. 257–259. Lal 2015, p. 146 sees a decision by TANU for intensification in 1972.

46 Founou-Tchuigoua 1990b, p. 203.

47 Nyerere 1975a (1967), pp. 13, 18.

48 Coulson 2013, pp. 282–283.

49 Quoted in McHenry Jr. 1979, p. 120.

50 Garcia and Spitz 1986, pp. 133, 136; Hill 1975, p. 236; Jennings 2008, p. 52.

51 Jones 1981, p. 206.

52 McHenry Jr. 1994, p. xiii; Schneider 2014, p. 6; Siddiqui 1990, p. 40; Mwapachu 1979a, p. 116.

53 Martin 1988, pp. 110, 113; Bryceson 1990, p. 171; Schneider 2014, p. 88; Young 1982, p. 114; Temu 1979, p. 198; Jennings 2008, p. 52. Figures according to provinces are in Coulson 2013, p. 287.

other. Peasants had to move house on average over distances of 3–5 kilometers.⁵⁴ The concentration of the population that villagization implied also meant that large areas were entirely depopulated, as in Tabora region, according to a regional plan drafted by the Swedish International Development Agency.⁵⁵ General villagization, and to some degree also the National Maize Programme, aimed in the tradition of the second five-year development plan at the development of all regions equally at the same time.⁵⁶

Many observers, and locals, reported that force was used in the resettlement program virtually from beginning to end, contrary to initial public statements.⁵⁷ Threats were abundant, and the houses left behind were often burned or torn down. There were also some reports of looting and noncompliant peasants being killed.⁵⁸ But violence was primarily directed against property.⁵⁹ The main forces carrying out violent resettlement were armed militias and the Tanzanian Youth League.⁶⁰ Legally, it was made impossible to resist when a bill was passed in August 1974 that virtually barred lawsuits against the government. Later, the state offered compensation to 13,000 families whose houses had been demolished – probably a small part of those affected.⁶¹

People were also told that they would be denied famine relief in the future – and thus threatened with death – if they did not move into villages.⁶² Such coercion was part of a longer tradition of compulsion from the 1960s to the 1980s that included verbal threats, fines and strokes for non-participation in officially mandated ‘development’ activities, for example for people who did not adequately weed their fields.⁶³ Some people were expelled from the village or threatened with it; or they were denied the right to relocate.⁶⁴ Local by-laws, often introduced in

54 See Schneider 2014, pp. 190 notes 41 and 44; Thiele 1986, p. 247; for the distance between villages, von Freyhold 1979a, p. 45.

55 Lohmeier 1982, pp. 306–307, 408. Large areas in the central, western and northern parts of Tanzania had a very low population density of below five inhabitants per square kilometer. See Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 130 (1967 data).

56 Harding et al. 1981, p. 128.

57 See U.S. Embassy Dar es Salaam to State Department, 29 August 1970, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, Box 474, AGR T (on Mtwara region); Mwapachu 1979a, p. 119, an admission by a former District Development Director (of Shinyanga); Ellman 1975a, p. 333. For the statements, see McHenry Jr. 1979, p. 106.

58 Kjekshus 1977, p. 280; Buntzel 1976, p. 345; Coulson 1981, pp. 78–79; Jennings 2008, pp. 53–54, 106, 171; Mwapachu 1979a, p. 119; McHenry Jr. 1979, pp. 139–143 (up to 100 killings in Ichungu division); Lal 2015, pp. 181–183.

59 See McHenry Jr. 1979, pp. 117–118, 133–145.

60 See Lal 2015, pp. 81–102 for (para)militarization in the 1960s and 1970s. These groups also used violence against shopkeepers of South Asian descent, wealthy landowners, ‘lazy’ farmers and women allegedly improperly dressed.

61 Bryceson 1982, p. 564 note 24.

62 Hill 1975, p. 243; Siddiqui 1990, p. 40. According to von Freyhold 1979a, p. 47, famine aid was actually denied to people living in scattered settlements in 1971.

63 See Ingle 1970; Buntzel 1976, p. 387; Büschel 2014, pp. 492–493; McHenry Jr. 1994, p. 61 for the late 1980s.

64 Nindi 1988, p. 174; Buntzel 1976, p. 387.

1967–1968, required agriculturalists in many areas to grow a minimum of certain cash crops and famine crops, like millet. Rural dwellers had IDs showing whether they had cultivated the required acreage of food crops or cash crops, and those who hadn't were not allowed to travel outside their village.⁶⁵

Estimates of the total number of people who actually had to move in this “largest resettlement in African history” range from eight to ten millions.⁶⁶ For in some densely populated regions growing valuable cash crops like Kilimanjaro, Arusha and West Lake, villages already existed, and few were resettled.⁶⁷ In poorer regions that underwent the process early on like Mtwara, Lindi and Iringa, few people had to move initially because of a faked villagization without reorganization of life, but they did later.⁶⁸ In the process, the size of *ujamaa* villages also grew, from an average population of 104 in 1967 to 511 in 1974 and 1,703 in 1976.⁶⁹ Some ‘villages’ existed only on paper and remained dispersed settlements, perhaps to the end.⁷⁰

Neither the authorities nor foreign agencies could possibly make sufficient provisions for such a large project implemented in so short a time. Moreover, it was grossly underfunded. Only 5 percent of the government budget in 1973/1974 was for the new villages.⁷¹ Inevitably, this led to victims whom nobody has counted. “Villagization has been achieved at considerable cost”, was said in an Oxfam report (which did not refer to money). Another spoke of “distress” and “considerable food shortage” in the beginning.⁷² Before they could build houses, for which they rarely received official help, resettled villagers were without proper shelter for extended periods. Respondents to one survey called this their biggest problem.⁷³ At higher altitudes in particular, nights were “cold and damp. Lack of housing necessitated sleeping outdoors or in temporary grass huts, which often resulted in illness due to exposure”.⁷⁴ In all likelihood, the problem was gravest with respiratory diseases for young children. Some reports also said that people died as a result of poor hygienic conditions⁷⁵ or children went without food.⁷⁶ In 1977, deaths rates among children

65 Bryceson 1982, pp. 564, 566; Williams 1976, p. 141; Buntzel 1976, p. 387; McHenry Jr. 1979, p. 83.

66 Schneider 2014 (8–9 million, according to Ian Thomas); Oxfam, Field Committee for Africa, 25 May 1977, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1977-Jan 1979 (10 million). Quote: Swindell 1985, p. 172.

67 Scott 1998, p. 236; Siddiqui 1990, p. 32.

68 Schneider 2014, pp. 88, 189 note 38.

69 Ghai and Green 1979, p. 238; see also Belshaw 1979, p. 60. According to the 1975 Villages Act, a village was to have at least 250 households: Bryceson 1993, p. 63.

70 Musti de Gennaro 1981, pp. 138–139.

71 Musti de Gennaro 1981, p. 145.

72 Adrian Moyes and Jeremy Swainson, “A Short Review of Our Plans in Tanzania”, 7 July 1976 and Adrian Moyes, “two revolutions per year”, August 1975, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 2292, Oxfam Annual Reports and Policy Statements, etc. 1976–1980; see also McHenry Jr. 1979, p. 150 for Kigoma district.

73 Kjekshus 1977, p. 280; Lal 2015, p. 192; De Vries and Fortmann 1979, p. 130; Lohmeier 1982, p. 358. Housing quality and materials did not change much: see ILO 1982, pp. 122–123.

74 De Vries and Fortmann 1979, p. 132.

75 Büschel 2014, p. 503, citing reports by West German observers. Melrose 1982, p. 6 writes that pneumonia and bronchitis were the main causes of children's deaths in the 1970s.

76 Lal 2015, p. 202.

from low birth weight and gastroenteritis among children seem to have spiked.⁷⁷ Typhoid and cholera (and thus polluted water) were big problems.⁷⁸

To be sure, many people did seize new chances provided to them by resettlement.⁷⁹ Others left. It is unknown how many moved back to their old home sites, and if so, when. In 1986, Nyerere as the chairman of the CCM party and Ali Mwinyi, his successor as the president, disagreed about this.⁸⁰ But the 1980s and 1990s were a time when an increasing number of peasants were said to leave the villages to acquire new – or return to their old – land. Many families maintained shelters in the area of the old fields.⁸¹ Some facts suggest that this began earlier; for example, 260 villages existed in Handeni District in 1978, although authorities had planned to have 60–70 villages in 1968–1969.⁸² And the number of villages countrywide had risen from about 8,000 in the late 1970s to 11,000 in 2010.⁸³

Villagization was linked to an official policy of decentralization after 1972 and the dissolution of the cooperatives in 1976. The 1975 Villages Act established villages as legal entities of development and planning, and village councils were to be elected by all adult residents.⁸⁴ In the absence of clear central guidelines, the implementation of decentralization was left to regions and districts.⁸⁵ More generally, a number of scholars have argued that this decentralization – which had also been recommended by McKinsey consultants – was really a bureaucratization and centralization in disguise, which eliminated district autonomy through tighter control by central ministries over development issues.⁸⁶

But though some scholars have claimed that the government's primary interest in villagization was its control over the peasantry,⁸⁷ it was local elites who controlled the villages. Land distribution was unequal.⁸⁸ Peasants who had owned more land before resettlement usually did afterwards too.⁸⁹ There were also conflicts between new villagers and old settlers over the land already under use. The former, the real resettlers, were at a disadvantage.⁹⁰ All of this was the result of the authorities' inability to control land (re)distribution and of technocrats to control

77 Mbilinyi 1982, p. 304.

78 Coulson 2013, pp. 306–307.

79 See Lal 2015, p. 181.

80 “Annual Report, Tanzania 1985–1986”, November 1986, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa, S-Z, Tanzania – Annual.

81 Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 66; Palmer 1997, Tanzania – Land tenure, p. 1; Bukurura 1995, p. 302 Sundet 1996, p. 62; von Oppen 1996b, pp. 85, 91; Havnevik 1993, pp. 222, 224. See also Maghimbi 1995, p. 33.

82 Schneider 2014, p. 118.

83 Hundsbaek Pedersen 2010, p. 6.

84 Oxfam, Field Committee for Africa, 25 May 1977, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1977–Jan 1979.

85 Mwapachu 1979a, p. 117.

86 Mamuya 1993, p. 82; Eckert 2007, p. 245; Mapolu 1990, p. 146; Coulson 2013, p. 300.

87 See Mapolu 1990, pp. 141, 145; Hyden 1980, p. 25; Bjerk 2010, pp. 299–300.

88 Musti de Gennaro 1981, p. 143. According to Ghai and Green 1979, p. 245 land distribution was equal in each village.

89 Buntzel 1976, pp. 364–365.

90 Lal 2015, p. 193; von Oppen 1996, pp. 92, 101.

the resettlement process. By late 1987, only 517 of about 8,000 villages had been officially surveyed in terms of land tenure (an expensive and time-consuming process); by June 1990, the number was 1,123. This is not surprising given that in 1986, Tanzania had just 22 surveyors with 94 assistants.⁹¹ In effect, then, villagers distributed the land themselves, and this process was subject to the strong influence of old elites like village chiefs, merchants and wealthier farmers, who assumed leadership positions of the new villages.⁹² They could do so because the entire villagization program was merely technical in nature and based on the government's denial of social differentiation.⁹³ Those villages that didn't distribute the land themselves often waited years in vain for the authorities to do it.⁹⁴ In reality, resettlement did not provide the clean slate (and hence, allegedly, people's readiness for change) that the 'World Bank' and others had expected.⁹⁵

A look at land rights reinforces this point. After independence, all land in Tanzania became formally property of the president and was leased to peasants for 33–99 years, but usually locals distributed it according to customary law. Under customary law, somebody who made improvements to the land he occupied was entitled to sell it. *Ujamaa* villages too had the right to sell land. But administrative interventions could also reassign land ownership.⁹⁶ Thus, there were competing land rights (which could also be influenced by religious habits), and the situation was unclear. Customary law tended to prevail, to the disadvantage of women and pastoralists.⁹⁷ New legislation in 1983, 1992 and 1999 did not bring much change in most villages and left contradictions between customary law and individual property unresolved, although private land acquisition by foreign companies became possible in the 1990s.⁹⁸ This situation gave the powerful men in the village considerable leverage, although village assemblies could also oppose them.

The main economic result of villagization was the virtual end of shifting cultivation.⁹⁹ There were other effects, many of which limited agricultural output. Villages were usually placed on, or closed to, roads, which tended to run on hillsites. As a result, some were either far away from fertile lands (in valleys) or themselves located on fertile soils that could have been used better for cultivation. This

91 See McHenry Jr. 1994, pp. 102–103, note 113; Schneider 2014, pp. 113, 115; Thiele 1986, p. 256.

92 See "Tanzania Report January 1973", 3 January 1973, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Feb 1970–Nov 1973; Lal 2015, p. 206; Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 53; van Hekken and Thoden van Velzen 1972, pp. 109–113; McHenry Jr. 1994, p. 91; Omari 1989, p. 19.

93 Shivji 1976, p. 108.

94 De Vries and Fortmann 1979, p. 132.

95 Coulson 1977, p. 86. Besides, Hyden's (1980, p. 104) judgment that during "the years of intensified ujamaa campaigns, most of Tanzania's capitalist farming came to an end" is far off the mark.

96 Noronha 1985, pp. 127–130, 197, 331–336; McHenry Jr. 1994, p. 91; Omari 1989, p. 19.

97 Jazairy et al. 1992, p. 282; Palmer 1997, *Tanzania – Land and Pastoralism*, pp. 1–3.

98 Palmer 1997, chapters General – Land Tenure, pp. 10–11, 17, General – Land and Women, Tanzania – Land Reform, pp. 4, 7; Hundsbæk Pedersen 2010, pp. 5–6; Schmale 1993, p. 120; Noronha 1985, p. 129. Cf. McHenry Jr. 1994, p. 92; Englert 2004, p. 55.

99 Garcia and Spitz 1986, p. 137; Lupanga et al. 1995, p. 210. But see Ndaro 1992, p. 179 for Dodoma.

hurt cotton and rice production in particular.¹⁰⁰ In some such cases, villagers were therefore moved again after some time, while in others, they were not.¹⁰¹ And villagization caused disruption (e.g., because of the need for clearing new land for agriculture, which took years) that contributed heavily to the 1974–1976 economic crisis.¹⁰² The fact that in many villages new land was brought under cultivation helped raise production for some years but not in the longer run. The use of inputs did not increase much. Forced resettlement led to land scarcity given low availability per family – particularly because villages were so large – and labor constraints because peasants had longer walks to their fields and (near-)universal primary schooling prevented children from helping in agriculture.¹⁰³ The ecological impact was also negative and hurt agricultural production: fallow periods became shorter, soils were depleted in the proximity of villages after a few years (given little application of fertilizer and manure), poorer soils were taken under the hoe and trees cut down for fuel. Wood was still the main fuel at least until the end of the century.¹⁰⁴ Locals distinguished between (new) homestead gardens; old homestead gardens, located at some distance; and newly cleared fields, which were even further away. The latter two received little manure because most animals were kept inside the village or at distant places and manure was hard to transport.¹⁰⁵ Also, there was less ‘green manure’ available that fallow lands would produce.¹⁰⁶ These developments were obstacles to raising productivity.

Officially, a secondary aim of villagization was the development of small-scale village industries (also recommended by some experts), which various state authorities took steps to support.¹⁰⁷ Because villages were so large, this may have been the program’s most significant economic achievement. “Villagization has also made it profitable to establish a wide range of manufacturing, processing and servicing activities such as flour milling, blacksmithing, furniture-making, brick-making manufacture, and repair of farm implements and handicrafts”.¹⁰⁸ According to the hopeful judgment of Tanzania’s minister of agriculture Mungai, villagization propelled rural monetarization.¹⁰⁹

100 Kjekshus 1977, p. 281; Buntzel 1976, p. 346; Hazlewood and Livingstone 1982, p. 107; De Vries and Fortmann 1979, p. 130; Schneider 2014, p. 86.

101 Lohmeier 1982, p. 361.

102 See Briggs 1979; Lohmeier 1982, p. 358.

103 Shao 1986, p. 96; Dumont and Mottin 1980, pp. 132–134, 171; von Freyhold 1979a, pp. 92–99; Bryceson 1990, p. 196; Musti de Gennaro 1981, p. 143; Nindi 1988, p. 166; Thiele 1986, p. 253.

104 Shao 1986, p. 96; Lele et al. 1989, p. 24; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, p. 37; Ponte 2002, p. 142.

105 Thiele 1986, pp. 249–251.

106 Tröger 1996, p. 120.

107 “Operation Chunya”, *Daily News*, 31 December 1975, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 2315, TAN 64; Scott 1998, p. 230 and Brain 1976, p. 268 on Nyerere; Lofchie 1978, p. 459; McHenry Jr. 1979, p. 129 on governmental support measures introduced in 1977. Von Freyhold 1979a, p. 100 sees more of an emphasis on large industries but recommended small ones (*ibid.*, pp. 27, 29–30).

108 Ghai and Green 1979, p. 248.

109 Buntzel 1976, p. 399.

The famous *ujamaa* policies of collective farming, which took up Tanzanian traditions of collective work and sought to halt social differentiation, had much less economic impact.¹¹⁰ After 1967, the vague concept of *ujamaa* became an important propaganda topic. There were quite different understandings of what *ujamaa* actually meant, ranging from traditional mutual help or cooperation to, more rarely, communal farming and sharing the harvest.¹¹¹ In her defense of *ujamaa*, Priya Lal speaks of its “multivalence and changing character”.¹¹² By late 1972, just a little over 2 percent of *ujamaa* villages had progressed to stage III (viability and self-reliance); 92 percent were at stage I with a low level of cooperation. This picture did not change later.¹¹³ In 1977, Nyerere concluded that not a single true *ujamaa* village existed.¹¹⁴ Enthusiasm, where it had existed, ebbed away over the years.

At first, the core of *ujamaa* was collectivizing agriculture, but that was essentially given up in late 1973, when the primary objective became moving the entire rural population into villages of individual farming families.¹¹⁵ In 1974, *ujamaa* villages were officially renamed “development villages”.¹¹⁶ Even without using ‘modern’ farming methods, collectivization, had it materialized, could have had some advantages.¹¹⁷ In practice, villages devoted a minor part of their land to collective cultivation (often of corn or cassava), in which not much effort was invested, and production was negligible. According to one study, communal work required 20 percent of villagers’ working hours, covered 8 percent of the land and accounted for 2 percent of production.¹¹⁸ This was similar even in the village where President Nyerere sometimes lived in order to share the experience of *ujamaa*.¹¹⁹ Therefore, some scholars have portrayed communal agricultural work as a drain on village economies and a particular burden on the poor, who were less able to evade it by paying fines or otherwise. However, others have found the wealthier, older, more educated villagers and those with higher aspirations participating more than others.¹²⁰ Villagers may have overstated their working hours, which would mean

110 Michalski 1974, pp. 24–26; Büttner 1985, pp. 199–200; Nyerere 1968, pp. 112–115, 174; Hyden 1980, p. 100.

111 See “Tanzania Report January 1973”, 3 January 1973, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Feb 1970–Nov 1973; McHenry Jr. 1979, p. 154; Abrahams 1987b, p. 10; Siddiqui 1990, pp. 33, 41.

112 Lal 2015, p. 37.

113 See “Tanzania Report January 1973”, 3 January 1973, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Feb 1970–Nov 1973; Young 1982, p. 113; Honnold 1976, p. 11; Okoko 1987, pp. 98–99.

114 “Oxfam in Tanzania: April 1977 to December 1978”, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1977–Jan 1979. See also Lal 2015, p. 73; Collier et al. 1990a, p. 5.

115 See Havnevik 1993, pp. 204–205. Lofchie 1978, p. 458, misdated the decision to the fall of 1974. Scott 1998, pp. 238–240 is in contradiction to specialists in arguing that the government saw communal production as second step after villagization.

116 Von Freyhold 1979a, p. 185; see also Jennings 2008, pp. 55–56.

117 See von Freyhold 1979a, pp. 23–28.

118 Young 1982, p. 117; Bryceson 1982, p. 184; Buntzel 1976, pp. 367–368, 372; Ghai and Green 1979, pp. 249–250; Mohele 1979, p. 218; Boesen et al. 1977, pp. 103, 140–141; Lofchie 1978, p. 471; Hyden 1980, p. 111; Geier 1992, p. 63; Schmied 1989, p. 100; von Freyhold 1979a, pp. 52, 91; for the last point, see McHenry Jr. 1994, p. 95.

119 McHenry Jr. 1979, p. 155.

120 See Collier et al. 1990a, pp. 44, 49, 93, 116–117, 120, 131; cf. McHenry Jr. 1979, pp. 179–181, 186.

that productivity was not so low.¹²¹ But two problems, on top of disorganization, prevented economic success: labor was short in the seasons when private fields took all of the villagers' time, and profits were small because communities, unlike individual farmers, could not sell their produce on the black (private) market.¹²²

Moreover, one wonders what would have motivated the collective spirit in large settlements where many people who did not know each and were forced to live together.¹²³ Village elites and foreign agencies worked against collectivization efforts and pushed the interpretation of *ujamaa* as traditional cooperation, not collectivization.¹²⁴ The Ministry of Planning did not provide any guidance about the aims of *ujamaa* or collective production.¹²⁵ However, collective efforts seem to have been much more effective when villagers built thousands of schools, clinics and village stores.¹²⁶ On the other hand, villagization was cited as one cause of the decline of traditional mutual labor exchanges and larger kin relationships.¹²⁷

For some time, the so-called ten-cell system was to substitute collectivization. Ten farm families teamed up for common agricultural work like sowing and weeding, sharing draught animals, and socialized after work.¹²⁸ According to Michaela von Freyhold, government directives advised local authorities to retreat to block farming if collectivization ran into difficulties as early as 1972.¹²⁹ However, joined tillage could give the bigger land owners in the group a clear advantage.¹³⁰

Eventually, many foreign experts judged *ujamaa* a failure, pointing to low agricultural growth, the lack of industrialization and insufficient participation.¹³¹ But some technocrats still recommended to Tanzania to resort to more resettlement.¹³²

Policies for staple food production must be understood in the context of villagization, on the one hand, and concerns about the costs of imports and foreign dependency, on the other hand. Colonial Tanganyika had become a net importer of grain in the famine-ridden 1940s, and this remained the case in most years after independence. Grain imports rose in the 1970s and reached their peak in US dollar

121 Putterman 1986, esp. p. 35.

122 Putterman 1986, pp. 237–238, 254.

123 For distrust between villagers obvious from spatial segregation of settlers coming in different waves and over individual contributions to communal labor, see Lal 2015, pp. 194, 198–200; see also von Freyhold 1979a, p. 86.

124 Von Freyhold 1979a, p. 78; Büttner 1985, p. 200.

125 Musti de Gennaro 1981, p. 149.

126 Putterman 1986, pp. 235, 269; McHenry Jr. 1979, pp. 155, 192–194; see Collier et al. 1990a, p. 118, whose survey in 1980 found that 20 percent of collective work was pertaining to such projects.

127 Thiele 1986, pp. 254–255; von Freyhold 1979a, p. 67; Ponte 2002, p. 127.

128 Moyes to Pray, 9 July 1976; Community Development Trust Fund of Tanzania, “Chunya Report”, 15 September 1975; and “Chunya-10-cell Oxen”, 2 June 1976, all in Oxfam, Project files, Box 2315, Chunya 64c Chunya Oxen; Moyes, “two revolutions per year”, August 1975, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1974–Oct 1976; Thoden van Velzen 1975b, p. 348; Bryceson 1981, p. 184.

129 Von Freyhold 1979a, p. 186.

130 Thoden van Velzen 1975b, p. 354.

131 Barraclough 1991, p. 127; see Lofchie 1978, p. 451.

132 Hazlewood and Livingstone 1982, pp. 102, 105.

terms per capita in the 1980s, when the volume was often 200,000–300,000 tons.¹³³ But in a number of years during the 1970s and 1980s, especially after 1977, Tanzania was a net exporter of corn and sometimes also of cassava, sorghum and millet.¹³⁴ Considered self-sufficient in these types of grains, it continued to import sizable quantities of wheat and decreasing amounts of rice in the 1980s and 1990s.¹³⁵

Less than one-third of Tanzania's food imports in 1974–1975 was food aid; it bought the rest commercially, paying US\$148.5 million in 1974 and \$122.5 million in 1975 – on par with the costs of fuel imports and using up the country's foreign currency reserves.¹³⁶ In the following years, Tanzania regularly received between 50,000 and 100,000 tons of food aid, peaking in 1980–1981, but often (and on average 1970–1992), it commercially purchased more. Food aid accounted for all of the wheat and half of the rice imports and accustomed, arguably intentionally, the urban population to wheat, milk powder and soy products.¹³⁷ Food imports accounted for about 10 percent of all costs of imports in 1972–1979 (more in 1974–1976), which was still far below the country's earnings from agricultural exports, and about 20 percent of import expenses in the mid-1980s.¹³⁸ As a side effect, the greater grain borer was introduced with North American grain imports.¹³⁹ Within the country, a pattern of grain flows from provinces with surpluses to those with deficits emerged.¹⁴⁰

Many scholars have considered producer pricing policies the government's principal instrument for raising grain production. First of all, giving price incentives to private growers was not a very 'socialist' form of policy. Second, the government used this instrument consciously before the 'World Bank' and IMF imposed it on them in a different way and before the international breakthrough of neoliberalism. The state's policy in 1973–1979 was that private producers received relatively high official prices for grains and cassava, and especially for drought-resistant crops,

133 Bryceson 1981, pp. 168, 195; McHenry Jr. 1994, p. 172; Cheru 1990, pp. 50, 54; Garcia and Spitz 1986, p. 130 for the late 1960s; see also Lofchie 1978, pp. 453–455; Bothomani 1984/85, p. 151.

134 Bryceson et al. 1999, p. 21; Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 62; N. Kalish, "Tanzania", in: *Agriculture Abroad* 34 (4), 1979, pp. 35–36.

135 Shaw and Clay 1993, p. 10; Ponte 2002, pp. 38, 74.

136 "Uncovered Import Requirements of Most Seriously Affected (MSA) Countries in 1974/75", 21 February 1975, FAO, RG 12, Comm. Div., FA 4/21, vol. II; UN Special Fund, Board of Governors, Third session 29 March–6 April 1976, "Current and Prospective Situation [. . .]", annex no. 5, FAO, RG 12, Comm. Div., FA 4/25. For 1980, see Yeager 1989, p. 55.

137 Raikes 1988, pp. 189, 193; Bryceson 1990, p. 208; Geier 1992, p. 173; Sijm 1997, p. 468; some lower figures in Lele 1986, p. 170. This was topped up by Canadian "aid" providing an expensive high-tech bread factory for centralized wheat milling: Coulson 1979c; Clark 1978, pp. 142–143 calls it "more capital intensive than the oil refinery". This worked in connection with an equally hyper-expensive wheat farm project run by Canadian 'aid': Freeman 1982, pp. 490–500.

138 Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 199; Bothomani 1984/85, p. 151; Briggs 1979, p. 696; Rau 1991, p. 75; Lofchie 1988, p. 144. See also Musti de Gennaro 1981, p. 119; McHenry Jr. 1994, p. 172.

139 "Annual Report, Oxfam-Tanzania, May 1981-April 1982", Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa S-Z, Tanzania-Annual.

140 Ponte 2002, p. 74.

but not for export crops.¹⁴¹ When the government gave in to foreign pressure to eliminate its fertilizer subsidies, agricultural producer prices were raised again in 1984 to even this out.¹⁴² In addition, the principle of pan-territorial pricing applied from 1973 to 1982. Paying producers everywhere in the country the same prices amounted to a substantial subsidy for peasants in remote areas because the state covered the high transportation costs.¹⁴³ This policy tended to reduce fluctuation and integrate markets. The regional grain price spread in Tanzania was relatively small in 1975–1980, as was the seasonal price spread, but despite some improvement in earnings in real terms, farmers still received a relatively little proportion of the price that (urban) consumers paid.¹⁴⁴

However, through these policies, the National Milling Corporation (NMC), which was in charge of official grain marketing (and 1976–1982 for providing inputs as well), ran large deficits (five times the purchasing level in 1980), incurring a large part of the national debt.¹⁴⁵ Although still under government instructions to pay producers certain prices and to keep retail prices low, the NMC was made financially accountable and yet put in the factual position of a welfare agency, and it required 8 percent of the recurrent government budget in 1980–1981.¹⁴⁶ Stripped of funding, the NMC was increasingly unable to pay farmers in cash and to supply small towns with corn meal (a market which illegal traders took over). It was reduced to handling grain imports and the national grain reserve in 1987, and in 1989, it had to reduce purchases by half and withdraw from some regions.¹⁴⁷ In any case, the impact of public pricing policy was limited by the fact that private merchants offered peasants much higher prices and, thus, illegally marketed most of the country's grain.

141 Oxfam, Tanzania Office, "Profile of Tanzania", August 1977, Oxfam, project files, Box 2292, Oxfam Annual Reports and Policy Statements, etc. 1976–1980; Dinham and Hines 1983, pp. 127–129; Erdmann 1996, p. 645; Ellis 1982, pp. 269, 271. According to Bryceson 1993, p. 227 peasant income from corn was constant in 1972–1987. Lofchie 1988, p. 158 sees producer prices decreasing in real terms in the second half of the 1970s, Geier 1992, p. 65 as well, but constant in the early 1980s, whereas Gibbon et al. 1993, pp. 62–63, 65 see them on the rise in the early 1980s. Ellis 1982, pp. 273–274, 277 argues that food producers' income terms of trade were declining in the 1970s, which necessitated authorities to issue coercive by-laws and regulations for the production of certain crops. For falling export crop prices, see Lofchie 1988, p. 157. Government et al. 2000, p. 37 says that cassava trade was never covered by a parastatal.

142 Malima 1986, p. 135

143 Ellis 1982, p. 265; Streeten 1987, p. 108 note 1; Raikes 1988, p. 58; Bryceson 1992, p. 86.

144 Ahmed and Rustagi 1987, pp. 110–111 and Abbott 1992, p. 133 (but it is unclear in how far black market prices were taken into account); see also Bryceson 1992, p. 94.

145 Annual Report, Oxfam-Tanzania, May 1980–April 1981, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa S-Z, Tanzania Annual; Bryceson 1993, pp. 202–205; Bryceson et al. 1999, pp. 25–26; Shao 1986, p. 98; Raikes 1988, p. 43; Chachage 1993, pp. 221–222. See also Ghai and Green 1979, p. 247. Cf. ILO 1982, p. 24 for other parastatals.

146 Knudsen and Nash 1993, pp. 243–244; Bryceson 1985, pp. 65–68. Often portrayed to the contrary (Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, p. 16; Lofchie 2019a, pp. 35–36), the NMC was arguably quite efficient, see Rasmussen 1986, pp. 201, 203.

147 Bryceson et al. 1999, pp. 26–28; Bryceson 1987, p. 189; Bryceson 1992, p. 88; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, pp. 16, 73, 75, 81; Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 59 date this to 1990–1991.

The National Maize Programme (NMP) of 1975–1982 was the country’s first big project for intensified staple food farming. It was questionable because excessive cultivation of corn – instead of better adapted crops like millet, sorghum and cassava – had made people vulnerable to drought. The NMP grew out of the National Maize Production Programme of 1973–1974 and smaller schemes linked to villagization the year before. Supported by the IDA, IBRD and USAID from 1975, the NMP provided villages high-yielding seeds, fertilizer, pesticides (including DDT and endosulphan) and agricultural extension services, at first for free and then for highly subsidized prices. No enlargement of acreage was planned.¹⁴⁸ But the program was not a success. The inputs came in a uniform “package”, the fertilizer doses were too low for humid areas and too high for dry ones, the inputs were often delivered delayed, and the extension services were bad, all of which led to some crop failures.¹⁴⁹ And many peasants found that using the package was unprofitable.¹⁵⁰

The ‘World Bank’ wanted to restrict the reach of the program to 950 of Tanzania’s 8,000 villages to pursue its main purpose, non-food export crop production. Corn cultivation was to focus on ten regions, which would create strong competition for other areas, undermining the government’s efforts for self-sufficiency in grain, and would lead peasants to concentrate on cotton, tea and tobacco.¹⁵¹ Contrary to the ‘World Bank’s’ recommendations, the project finally included selected places in two-thirds of all regions. For example, in 1977, the NMP operated in only 43 of Tabora region’s 368 villages.¹⁵² According to the ‘World Bank’s’ plans for Tanzania in 1975–1980, only 6 percent of its funding would be for staple foods compared to 27 percent for export crops and 21 percent for each of cattle and sugar.¹⁵³ The investment for the NMP in all of 1975–1980 was merely US\$38.1 million, of which IDA provided 57 percent and the government 29 percent.¹⁵⁴ The NMP’s success in terms of raising production was very limited, and the explanation for the fact that official corn procurement increased was not the intensification of farming through more inputs but the higher prices the government paid

148 But the earlier National Agricultural Development Programme with its 20-year perspective seems to have planned to expand the cultivated area: Aribisala to Huyser, 1 June 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. VI.

149 Bryceson 1993, pp. 64–65; Garcia and Spitz 1986, pp. 133, 137–138; Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 118; Hyden 1980, p. 142 (quote); Kleemeier 1988, p. 64. Such packages were possibly also mandatory in national programs, see Due 1978, p. 4.

150 Rasmussen 1986, pp. 194, 196.

151 Von Freyhold 1979b, p. 208; Payer 1983, p. 797; Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 126; Anthony 1988, pp. 134–135; Lohmeier 1982, p. 381.

152 Hyden 1980, p. 142; Oxfam, Tanzania Office, “Profile of Tanzania – Tabora”, August 1977, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 2291, Tabora General. For ‘World Bank’ recommendations, see Lele and Jain 1991a, p. 123, but see Coulson 2013, p. 304 for ‘the Bank’ including semi-arid Dodoma region in their plans.

153 Von Freyhold 1979a, p. 108 von Freyhold 1979b, p. 204.

154 Bryceson 1993, pp. 65–66. According to Anthony 1988, p. 134 the ‘World Bank’ credit was \$180 million.

peasants for their corn.¹⁵⁵ Out of disappointment, many villages withdrew from the project.¹⁵⁶ And official corn producer prices did not stay so high. In the 1980s, they were down to two-thirds of their late 1970s level at real terms.¹⁵⁷

In 1979, the NMP, then mostly financed by the USAID and renamed National Food Credit Project (NFCP), organized in cooperation with the Tanzanian Rural Development Bank, was transformed into a regional program for the southern highlands, where there was good rainfall and little opportunity for smuggle abroad.¹⁵⁸ In part because of this program, together with pan-territorial crop pricing, the regions of Ruvuma, Rukwa, Iringa and Mbeya became the country's main corn surplus area in two steps, the first in 1974–1975 and the second in 1981–1985 – at the beginning and after the end of the NFCP.¹⁵⁹ These four regions received 59 percent of the nation's fertilizer in 1978–1980.¹⁶⁰ The state ended its pan-territorial pricing policy under 'World Bank' pressure in 1982, but the area benefitted from the new regional pricing regulations for areas with a so-called comparative advantage for certain crops. Some of the southern highlands were seriously affected by the elimination of the fertilizer subsidy in the 1990s, until it was reintroduced in 2004.¹⁶¹ The U.S. government seems to have searched in vain for a U.S. corporation that would invest in large-scale rice and corn production in the area.¹⁶² But if there was a success of policies for intensifying staple food production, it was in the southern highlands.

Regional IRD projects, another incarnation of the new policy to raise agricultural output, were run by various foreign agencies but not successful. Usually they favored intensified farming over increasing acreage.¹⁶³ By the end of 1977, the implementation of IRD plans had started in four regions.¹⁶⁴ The 'World Bank's' Kigoma IRD project is sometimes viewed as a trailblazer. A project to intensify the cultivation of rainfed crops with high-yielding seeds and fertilizer that ran in 55 villages with planned outlays of US\$225 per family, it greatly raised the quantities of corn, beans and pigeon peas that peasants sold to government agents, but was later regarded within the 'World Bank' as overly ambitious so that it turned

155 U.S. Agricultural Attache Nairobi to USDA, 8 September 1976 and 18 March 1977, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 70, TZ Tanzania 1977 DR; Raikes 1988, p. 58; Bryceson 1993, p. 66; Bryceson 1982, p. 184; Hyden 1980b, p. 240; Lele et al. 1989, p. 25. For the high producer prices 1975–1980, see *ibid.*, p. 57. Ponte 2002, p. 49 judges the NMP more positively.

156 Mlay 1985, p. 90.

157 Kashuliza and Mbiha 1995, p. 71.

158 Raikes 1988, p. 58; Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 118; Rasmussen 1986, p. 194; Mushi 1982, p. 25.

159 See Erdmann 1996, pp. 646, 838; Bryceson 1993, p. 67; Bryceson 1992, p. 86; Rasmussen 1986, pp. 194, 196; Schmied 1989, pp. 106–107.

160 Bryceson 1993, p. 67 note 22.

161 Bryceson 1992, p. 86; Bryceson et al. 1999, pp. 32–33; Coulson 2013, p. 17.

162 Williams 1976, p. 141.

163 See Lohmeier 1982, pp. 419, 424.

164 These regions were Kigoma and Tabora ('World Bank'), Tanga (West Germany) and Iringa (EEC). UNDP, "Project Proposal of the Government of Tanzania, Technical Assistance for the Strengthening of Rural Development Planning at the District and Regional Level", February 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 2, Tanzania. Later at least seven regions were involved: Kennes 1991a, p. 351.

its attention (even) more toward road construction and water supply in its later projects in Tabora, Mwanza and Shinyanga.¹⁶⁵ The Kigoma project was based on a misconception, ignoring labor constraints due to outmigration and diagnosing a marketing problem instead, and the increases of the output of several crops were unrelated to the focus of the project, which was on cotton and corn. Moreover, the agricultural technology that it promoted had not been properly tested.¹⁶⁶ On paper, the ‘World Bank’s’ investment in Kigoma region focused on infrastructure (less than a third was for agricultural inputs), which participating peasants were supposed to pay back from their additional income through cotton sales, generated through a 25 percent increase in labor input for which they would earn less than the minimum wage per hour – highly exploitative terms, would locals have done so.¹⁶⁷

The ‘World Bank’ project in Tabora combined farming intensification with extension services, water supply, road construction, and improvements in health and education, but this too ‘targeted’ only a small minority of the region’s farmers, probably the “rather better-off”. They were supposed to produce primarily cotton (and rice, sorghum and peanuts), with a questionable outcome.¹⁶⁸

Although the West German-run Tanga IRD project is sometimes considered “the most successful” in Tanzania and was among those with the highest funding, it did not raise agricultural production, according to the organizers’ own evaluations.¹⁶⁹ NGOs made similar efforts. In Tanga region, the West German Kübel foundation had already run a smaller IRD project at Lushoto since 1969 to improve nutrition, education and health; foster vegetable growing; and stimulate small businesses.¹⁷⁰ Oxfam, too, had some projects with an IRD design, namely in Chunya, where the approach met with slow success.¹⁷¹

Critics have argued that foreign ‘donors’ were often ignorant of Tanzanian planning, that foreign agencies’ plans for IRD projects bypassed collectivization and that they meant to outsource development designs to abroad, creating regional foreign spheres of interest.¹⁷² However, the practical importance of these plans need not be exaggerated. For one, unlike in Kigoma, a region’s plan was often drafted

165 Ayres 1983, pp. 131, 143; Lohmeier 1982, p. 443; Payer 1983, p. 797; Holenstein and Power 1976, p. 144; see also Lohmeier 1982, pp. 364–367.

166 Raikes 1988, pp. 222–223; Donaldson 1991, p. 178.

167 Lohmeier 1982, pp. 371–375 is insightful. According to Kleemeier 1988, only 10 percent of the project costs were for crop production.

168 Oxfam, Tanzania Office, “Profile of Tanzania – Tabora”, August 1977, Oxfam, Project files, Box 2291, Tabora General; Jane Guyer, CDTF/Oxfam America Evaluation, “Kigoma Region projects, August 27–September 5, 1980”, Oxfam, Project files, Box 2307, TAN6e; for the minority, see Moore Lappé and Beccar-Varela 1980, pp. 112–113 (quote); Galli 1981a, note on p. 122.

169 Belshaw 1979, p. 55; Armstrong 1987, p. 265 (quote); Heimpel and Schulz 1991, esp. pp. 507–508.

170 See Nöldner 1975, pp. 9–11.

171 Oxfam, “Minutes of the Africa Field Committee meeting held on 31 May, 1973”, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Feb 1970–Nov 1973; ditto of 23 May 1974, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1974–Oct 1976. See also Jennings 2001a.

172 Von Freyhold 1979a, p. 111; Lohmeier 1982, pp. 418, 443; Buntzel 1976, p. 321 (for the period around 1970); Lal 2015, p. 170. Tanzanian instructions for setting up regional IRD plans did not include a socialist orientation: Lohmeier 1982, pp. 354–355.

by one authority and implemented by another (if the implementation found financiers at all).¹⁷³ The regional IRD plans for the southern highlands were made by a number of different agencies and authorities with a variety of ideological orientations.¹⁷⁴ Also, many plans were rejected or changed by the Tanzanian authorities, who found that they brought little new. For example, the Shinyanga Regional Integrated Development Plan (Shinyanga was a poor and neglected province), designed by a Dutch company on behalf of the Dutch government, proposed to allocate just 5 percent of the budget to agricultural cultivation and 2 percent to the livestock sector, which the Prime Minister's Office changed to 10 percent and 5 percent, respectively (still very low figures).¹⁷⁵ Several regions experienced what happened in the area of Chunya (Mbeya region), where the 'World Bank' pursued an IRD project (favoring tobacco production and co-funding resettlement) in cooperation with Oxfam: the project disintegrated into many partial programs – most of which did not involve staple crops – with little impact.¹⁷⁶ The FAO-designed and EEC-run Iringa IRD project (1977–1986), undecided between intensification and acreage expansion, originally 'targeted' 70,000 families or one-third of the population, but the EEC reduced the number of participants 30 times to 1 percent of the population, the project had unclear effects on corn production, but employed 1,000 locals as staff. Its main outcome was to leave roads and warehouses.¹⁷⁷ In summary, IRD projects usually failed and benefitted few Tanzanians, who were not always peasants.¹⁷⁸

Above all, they were good for foreign 'experts', because their planning alone cost an estimated US\$100 million.¹⁷⁹ Probably, one has to add the \$27 million for foreign experts who designed regional water plans.¹⁸⁰ "The best that can be said about many technical assistance projects", Rodger Yeager wrote about foreign activities in Tanzania, "is that that they have not worsened the unhappy lot of subsistence populations".¹⁸¹ In the late 1970s, Tanzania apparently spent US\$100 million per year on the salaries of foreign experts – who often recommended the purchase of goods from their home countries.¹⁸² Throughout the 1980s,

173 See Belshaw 1979, p. 55; Mushi 1982, pp. 31, 40.

174 The plan for Mtwara Region originated from the UK, the one for Ruvuma from Yugoslavia, the one for Mbeya from Norway and the one for Rukwa from the University of Dar es Salaam and BRALUP, a local institution. In Mbeya and Rukwa, the 'World Bank' took over for implementation. See Belshaw 1979, p. 55, and Lohmeier 1982, p. 417.

175 Armstrong 1987, p. 265; Stremplat and Stremplat-Platte 1981, pp. 15, 21.

176 Jennings 2001a, pp. 114–118; Jennings 2008, pp. 124, 132, 232 note 18, 137, 164–165; see also 175–196; and see *ibid.*, p. 101 for similar tendencies at the Catholic Relief Service. For Mtwara, Lindi, Tanga and Arusha IRD projects, see Howell 1991, p. 465; Heimpel and Schulz 1991, pp. 502–503; Kleemeier 1988, p. 70; Mushi 1982, p. 31.

177 Raikes 1988, pp. 217–221; Kleemeier 1988, pp. 65–67; see also Kennes 1991a, pp. 351–353.

178 See also Lohmeier 1982, pp. 311, 416; Sundet 1996, p. 61.

179 Lohmeier 1982, p. 418. See also Mushi 1982, p. 40. Some of this was covered by foreign grants.

180 Armstrong 1987, p. 263.

181 Yeager 1989, p. 142.

182 Armstrong 1987, pp. 261–262.

8,000–10,000 foreign specialists were present in Tanzania, influencing road construction, river basin development and agricultural projects.¹⁸³ In around 1980, one international ‘expert’ could cost US\$150,000 per year plus counterpart funds in housing and transportation.¹⁸⁴ “Occupying influential positions, enjoying conspicuous luxury lifestyles and congregating in exclusive ‘expert ghettos’ of the capital”, foreign specialists embodied an “almost neocolonial relationship”, angering Tanzanian civil servants.¹⁸⁵

The ‘World Bank’ had already influenced Tanzania’s first development plan from 1961–1962 to 1963–1964.¹⁸⁶ Before co-authoring the National Maize Programme, it had invested substantially in Tanzania’s infrastructure, industries, export crops and cattle raising rather than staple food production.¹⁸⁷ From 1965 to 1988, only 22.8 percent of the Bank’s loans for Tanzania were for agriculture and rural development; the rate was markedly higher only in 1970–1974, always with an emphasis on cash crops.¹⁸⁸ Much of the loans went to parastatals.¹⁸⁹ U.S. ‘aid’ concentrated much more on agriculture and rural development.¹⁹⁰

The relatively well-documented National Food Strategy of 1984 (commissioned in 1980), designed by Tanzania’s government together with the FAO, illustrates planning in later years. It aimed at a higher marketed food production with an emphasis on the southern highlands and stocks placed at strategic locations and also advocated an increase in cash crop production.¹⁹¹ A preparatory document bemoaned the low productivity and “predominant subsistence orientation of the farmer”, specified peasants as “most of the undernourished”, and identified raising their food production, especially through the use of manure but also mineral fertilizer, as the key to a solution. But once again, planners could not decide between farming intensification and acreage expansion (through oxen rather than tractors). They envisioned that, within 20 years, cash crop production, also by smallholders, would increase more than food production, and daily average calorie consumption would rise by 160 calories but protein intake more markedly. Agricultural inputs needed to be imported, producer prices needed to be raised but pan-territorial pricing should be abolished as too expensive. This also meant concentrating input use and corn production in certain regions; the others would cultivate sorghum and millet.¹⁹² An interim September 1983 food strategy report, put together with support by FAO, the Danish International Development Agency and the European

183 Armstrong 1987, pp. 262, 264.

184 Armstrong 1987, p. 267, citing ‘World Bank’ data.

185 Armstrong 1987, p. 269.

186 Harding et al. 1981, p. 108.

187 See von Freyhold 1979b, pp. 202–204; Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 125; Frey et al. 2014, p. 8.

188 Lele and Jain 1991a, pp. 113, 125; for 1970–1976, see Lohmeier 1982, pp. 437–438; see also Coulson 2013, pp. 351–352; for all ‘donors’ in 1991, see Rugumamu 1997, p. 176.

189 Von Freyhold 1979a, p. 112–113.

190 Johnston et al. 1991, p. 278.

191 Geier 1992, p. 67.

192 Cortas 1988, pp. 30–35 is a summary of the document (quotes on pp. 30, 31).

Community, spelled out a catalogue of the usual measures how to meet these diverse objectives. They included, in the short term, providing inputs to peasants; devising a better agricultural pricing system; and improving marketing and transportation; in the medium term, attracting private foreign capital; building a better distribution system; expanding research and improving agricultural extension services; and in the long-term, expanded irrigation, developing domestic agro-industries and enhancing the efficiency of livestock production.¹⁹³ If it had any focus, the plan concentrated on boosting corn production through imported inputs and covering the high domestic costs of transporting corn to urban consumers.¹⁹⁴ The ILO's recommendations for Tanzania in 1982 were for agricultural intensification, especially in what was perceived as high-potential areas. Higher crop prices were to raise both production and peasant incomes.¹⁹⁵

In the 1990s, the Ministry of Agriculture incorporated the FAO's recommendations in its Comprehensive National Food Security Programme, which combined a supply-oriented approach (stable and adequate food supplies) with creating employment or other income opportunities for all.¹⁹⁶ The latest big intensification scheme seems to be the Tanzania Agricultural Food Security Implementation Plan which was launched in the context of three regional programs, namely the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme, the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition launched at a G-8 summit in 2012, and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, co-funded by the USAID. The intention behind these pompous names was to spread 'improved' varieties of beans, cassava, potatoes, corn, sorghum, pigeon peas and soybeans, which of course need chemical inputs.¹⁹⁷ Andrew Coulson has commented on Tanzania's recent development plans (usually concerning agriculture) that they "have in common that they support the emerging Tanzanian middle class and business class" and benefit transnational companies, but do not aim at poverty reduction.¹⁹⁸

The fact that 'development' projects were ill-conceived and rarely met their goals also had to do with the personnel in Tanzania's civil service and their practices. Local officers imposed on the population whatever projects they deemed useful. As a result, new wells, for example, were badly maintained.¹⁹⁹ Seventy percent of the recurrent budget of the regions was spent on salaries of functionaries, many in charge of development, who, divided from most villagers by education, language and income, primarily cooperated with the "richer and abler" villagers.²⁰⁰ Many

193 [World Food Council,] "Food Strategies in Africa – Illustrative Case Studies", 26 January 1984, FAO, RG 12, UN 44/1, WFC Follow up, vol. III, pp. 24–26 of the document.

194 Bryceson 1990, p. 206.

195 ILO 1982, pp. xxi-xxii, xxxv-xxxvi.

196 Geier 1992, p. 75.

197 African Centre for Biodiversity 2016, p. 6. For other recent plans, see Coulson 2019a, pp. 20–26.

198 Coulson 2019a, p. 26.

199 Oxfam, Office of the Field Director for Central & Southern Africa, "C.D.T.D. – An Assessment", 19 September 1975, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1974-Oct 1976; Oxfam, Field Committee for Africa, "Applications for Consideration, Item 6", 20 October 1976, *ibid*.

200 "Oxfam in Tanzania", April 1977, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1977-Jan 1979.

ruralites complained about the arrogance of Tanzanian (and foreign) ‘experts’.²⁰¹ Most development projects of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania also failed to meet their stated goal of helping the poorest.²⁰² The many hurdles that one women’s group faced in its attempt to acquire a corn milling machine, including embezzlement but also the sheer number of institutions whose support was necessary and at times withdrawn, show through which mechanisms many such small initiatives must have come to nought.²⁰³

To bridge the gap between rural people and regional or district administrations and their development councils, Tanzania’s government decided in 1977 to deploy one “village manager” to each of the country’s approximately 8,000 villages. The task of these field workers was to activate people for ‘development’, but their qualification was often low.²⁰⁴ And 3,000 assistant field workers worked for the National Maize Programme, but since close to half of them were concerned with cash crops, each field worker was responsible for 1,200 farms.²⁰⁵ Similar earlier efforts had been insufficient. In the early 1970s, there were few agricultural officers, on average one for about 6,000 people.²⁰⁶ Since the 1960s, villages elected development committees and the government employed Rural Development Officers and Women Rural Development Officers.²⁰⁷ Nonetheless, experts and politicians like Nyerere considered agricultural extension services one of the major bottlenecks of ‘development’ in Tanzania from the 1970s to the 1990s.²⁰⁸ However, it seems that agricultural extension services had some effect, at least indirectly and together with public schools, even on women, who, according to many studies, such services did not reach.²⁰⁹ Rural men and women stated in the 1970s that having learned to read, write and do math in school enabled them to improve their farming methods and their nutrition.²¹⁰

As in so many other countries, food security measures in a narrow sense attracted less national and international attention and funding than production-related measures. After 1973–1974, Tanzania created a strategic grain reserve of up to 100,000 tons with the help of deliveries from the USA, Canada, Britain and the World Food Programme, but it was used up in 1981 after bad harvests. The TANU had already made plans for that reserve before FAO recommended it.²¹¹ It was based upon

201 See Büschel 2014, pp. 185–369, esp. pp. 290–291; Armstrong 1987, p. 267.

202 See Schmale 1993, pp. 62, 65, 73, 142.

203 For the project, see Ogola 1989.

204 Moore Lappé and Beccar-Varela 1980, pp. 72–76.

205 Garcia and Spitz 1986, p. 138.

206 McHenry Jr. 1979, p. 81.

207 Marion Lady Chesham (Executive Director, Community Development Trust Fund), undated paper (1971), Oxfam, Project files, Box 2307, TAN6c; Lal 2015, pp. 102–114; Büschel 2014, p. 218.

208 Buntzel 1976, p. 409; Coulson 1981, p. 60; Lupanga et al. 1995, p. 198. Seventy-five percent of all villages had an extension officer in 2012: Fritz et al. 2015, p. 176.

209 Lupanga et al. 1995; Ashby 1981, p. 160.

210 See statements by Yusufu Selemani, Hderingo Jakob, Rukia Okashi, Salum Nassoro and Paulina Paulo in Kassam 1979, pp. 23, 28, 30, 33 39, 43; for nutrition, see statements by Rukia Okashi and Mwansiti Hamisi in *ibid.*, pp. 32, 35.

211 Geier 1992, p. 151 note 76; see U.S. Embassy Dar es Salaam to State Dept., 27 May 1972, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic, 1970–73, Box 474, AGR T. See also FAO, “Food Security

decentralized stocking, inspired by traditional storage techniques, whereas the government rejected a dysfunctional, expensive Swedish plan for big silos.²¹² The draft of the National Food Strategy of 1980, authored by the government together with FAO, called for the gradual buildup of a grain reserve of 250,000 tons by 2000.²¹³ This target was probably missed. In 1988–1989, there were stocks of 113,000 tons, and in 1992, 90,000 tons.²¹⁴

An Early Warning and Crop Monitoring Programme was set up in 1978 and refined in 1982–1984. Funded in part by the Dutch government and organized through the FAO, it included a small unit of experts in the Ministry of Agriculture. Four hundred stations around the country reported weekly and monthly to it on rainfall, crops and prices. The experts made forecasts on a computerized basis and revised the NMC's crop estimates. Some found the system at first successful, though it relied on foreign technology and funding,²¹⁵ but others criticized later that crop estimates were inflated because they were based on information gathered by local extension officers and other functionaries who overstated their achievements.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, the system may have contributed to the fact that Tanzania suffered no further famine, although it should be added that the government's famine relief had already been effective in the early 1970s.

The Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre, established in 1973, was involved in formulating policies, advising the government and educating especially women. It made nutrition surveys and developed a low-cost food for weaning children – in Tanzania, the period of weaning involved great risks.²¹⁷ The Centre has been criticized as too focused on markets and the urban poor.²¹⁸ In the 1970s, the Prime Minister's Office set national plan targets for consumption in 1980 that required a much higher per capita production of meat and fish, corn and other cereals, though less for bananas, other fruits and vegetables. All of the targets were probably missed.²¹⁹ "The amount of [government, C.G.] effort devoted to nutrition has been rather limited" was the judgment in an ILO study.²²⁰ Nutrition projects often had little impact.²²¹ Food security measures were included in some framework programs, like

Assistance", 28 April 1978, FAO, RG 12, ES, FA 13/2, vol. I, and "National Cereal Stock Policies", n.d. (1977), FAO RG 12, ES, FA 13/1, vol. I; Government et al. 2000, p. 7.

212 Moore Lappé et al. 1980, pp. 140–142. According to Mushi 1982, pp. 25–26, big silos were initially built.

213 Cortas 1988, p. 32.

214 Shaw and Clay 1993, p. 139; Sijm 1997, pp. 418–419. Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 59 mention a National Grain Reserve of 150,000 tons, kept by the National Milling Corporation.

215 See Kashasha 1989; Bryceson 1990, p. 207. See also an FAO report to Tanzania's government about the planned system, May 1977, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. 1 (yellow folder).

216 Ponte 2002, esp. pp. 66–67; Government et al. 2000, pp. 145–146.

217 Garcia and Spitz 1986, p. 141; Swantz 1985, p. 103; Kreysler n.y. [1974], pp. 81–82.

218 Geier 1992, p. 68.

219 See Stremplat and Stremplat-Platte 1981, p. 41.

220 ILO 1982, p. 91

221 For a West German project, see Matango 1979, p. 161; a different inside view is in Kreysler n.y. [1974], p. 83.

in the National Poverty Eradication Strategy in the 1990s, which had to be modified by a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper essentially imposed on the government by IMF and the 'World Bank'.²²² But several programs adopted between 1998 and 2015, verbally to alleviate poverty and ensure food security, were clearly production-oriented, often through the intensification of farming, with little regard for the poor and for nutrition, and had little success.²²³

Foreign impact

In spite of all empty talk about self-reliance, Tanzania, like the other case-study countries, left it up to foreign states and international organizations to finance a lot of the public investment. In the 1970s, foreign sources covered 50–60 percent of the development budget. In 1980–1981, this proportion rose to 75 percent (about US\$530 million); in 1991, to 95 percent (plus 45 percent of the recurrent budget).²²⁴ The annual amounts were around \$500 million in the late 1970s, between \$500 and \$700 million in 1980–1986, around \$900 million in 1987–1989 and \$3 billion in the mid-2010s. The total was \$8.1 billion in 1970–1987.²²⁵ More than 60 percent of commitments after 1972 were grants, and 80 percent in the 1980s. Over half of disbursed 'aid' after 1976 was in grants.²²⁶

Domestic investment as a percentage of GNP was rising throughout the 1960s and 1970s, according to official figures, as did ODA calculated as a percentage of the value of imports and investment.²²⁷ Foreign 'aid' as a percentage of GDP was steeply on the rise, from 1 percent in 1969 to 8 percent in 1980, and in the deep crisis of 1988, foreign ODA of US\$978 million amounted to 31.2 percent of GDP (a rather doubtful parameter) and 205 percent of government revenue.²²⁸ ODA was

222 Easterly 2006, p. 145.

223 Fritz et al. 2015, pp. 179–182, 186–187.

224 "Oxfam in Tanzania, November 1978–October 1979", December 1979, Oxfam, Project files, Box 2292, Tanzania General 1975–80; "Tanzania Report January 1973", 3 January 1973, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Feb 1970–Nov 1973; "Oxfam in Tanzania: April 1977 to December 1978", Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1977–Jan 1979; Neersø 1975, p. 188; "Annual Report, Oxfam-Tanzania, May 1980–April 1981", Oxfam Annual Reports Africa S-Z, Tanzania-Annual; Chachage 1993, p. 228. Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 129 have grants at 70 percent and US\$580.4 million in 1980. Kiondo 1993, p. 166 writes that in 1977–1979, 90 percent was grants. See also ILO 1982, p. 40.

225 van der Geest and Köttering 1994, p. 82; Lele 1986, p. 169; Lele 1991b, p. 18; Signer 2015; Svendsen 1986, p. 70 with lower figures. According to Watanabe 1987, it was US\$3.235 billion in 1970–1982, excluding technical aid. See also Payer 1983, p. 802. Rugumamu 1997, p. 155 gives a figure of \$16 billion for 1967–1992.

226 Rugumamu 1997, p. 154; for disbursements, see Mushi 1982, p. 20.

227 Sender and Smith 1986, pp. 81, 91; Musti de Gennaro 1981, p. 124; Svendsen 1986, p. 70; Watanabe 1987, p. 527. Investment was 20–22 percent of GDP 1967–1981, but down to 16–17 percent 1982–1998: Lele 1991b, pp. 28–31. By contrast, World Bank 1981 (the so-called Berg report), p. 146 maintained that the investment rate was much lower and decreasing.

228 Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 129; Bierschenk et al. 1993, p. 12; Havnevik 1993, p. 52 with higher figures. But Mushi 1982, pp. 28–29 points to a decrease of per capita ODA in real terms in 1973–1979 and low disbursement rates of some 'donors' (EEC, Britain).

between US\$2.4 and \$3 billion in the early 2010s, which was still over 70 percent of government expenditure, but only around 10 percent of gross national investment.²²⁹ Tanzania received more ODA than almost any other African country in absolute terms, per capita (US\$44 in 1982), and in relation to GNP and imports.²³⁰ But statements like that Tanzania “then [in 1985] lived above all from the World Bank and development aid [resources]”²³¹ are silly, as the aforementioned figures also show.

The government anticipated foreign funding for over 75 percent of its first five-year development plan (1964–1969; in reality, it was 32 percent, not counting foreign borrowing). It expected 43 percent of the second plan (1969–1974), when foreigners actually covered 50 percent, and close to 50 or 60 percent of the 1977–1981 plan.²³² The budgets for agriculture, water, electricity and education were especially dependent on foreign funds.²³³ But foreign commitments to crop cultivation were low.²³⁴ In particular, this was so for staple food crops, rising from 2 percent to 6 percent of the ‘World Bank’s’ spending in the late 1970s and from 8 percent to 18 percent of the EC’s European Development Fund (EDF) between 1976–1980 and 1981–1985. The EDF concentrated on road construction and coffee production.²³⁵

After 1988, the ‘aid’ flow first hovered at around US\$900 million and then fell to an average of \$617 million in 1995–1998, or from 28 of GNP to 13 percent and from \$46 per capita to \$31. ‘Donor’ agencies cited corruption and a lack of tax revenue in Tanzania to justify the reduction.²³⁶ The level remained at 13–14 percent of GNP in 1995–2004 but rose again to US\$48 per capita in 2004.²³⁷ From 1990 to 2010, the country received US\$26.85 billion in ODA.²³⁸

Foreign grants and loans helped cover Tanzania’s imports against the background of a chronic trade deficit after 1970, which worsened in the early 1980s together with the terms of trade. Its exports were relatively diversified (coffee, cotton, sisal, cashew nuts, other agricultural products and minerals), but they were not sufficient to pay for its imports. Twice in the 1970s (1972–1974 and 1977–1979),

229 See Tribe 2019a, pp. 215, 218.

230 Founou-Tchuigoua 1990b, p. 203; Lele 1991b, pp. 17–18; Dietz and Houtkamp 1998, p. 90 for 1980–1990; Sijm 1997, p. 227.

231 Signer 2020. Green 2014, p. 3 speaks of “Tanzania, [. . .] whose existence as an independent [!] state in the half century since independence has been largely made possible through the transfer of resources, political templates and expertise which make up development assistance”.

232 Neersø 1975, p. 188; Clark 1978, pp. 195, 217; Sendaro 1988, p. 14; for 1977–81, see “Oxfam in Tanzania: April 1977 to December 1978”, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1977–Jan 1979, but see “Summary of the Country Review Paper from Tanzania”, 12 May 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 9, Arusha. Harding et al. 1981, p. 144 give the figure of 83 percent for the first five-year development plan.

233 Musti de Gennaro 1981, p. 124.

234 Rugumamu 1997, p. 177.

235 Kennes 1991a, pp. 332, 383; Raikes 1988, pp. 212–213; for the ‘World Bank’, see note 9/153.

236 UNCTAD 2002, p. 26; Selbervik 2008, pp. 191–194; Harrison et al. 2009a, p. 275.

237 Harrison et al. 2009a, p. 272 (but with much higher absolute figures than the UNCTAD report).

238 Fritz et al. 2015, p. 181.

the country had notable foreign currency reserves.²³⁹ Financing imports from foreign sources, however, meant that Tanzania lost some control over import products, which could for example result in a lack of spare parts and raw materials and thus disrupted industrial production and transportation.²⁴⁰ Oil imports claimed a large and increasing share of export earnings, but more generally, capital goods' share of imports was on the rise.²⁴¹

'Aid' loans contributed heavily to Tanzania's growing debt, which ballooned from US\$264 million in 1970 to \$1.659 billion in 1982, \$2.654 billion in 1984, \$5.267 (or \$5.8) billion in 1990 and \$6.46 billion in 1991. That was around 50 percent of GNP in 1976–1985 and 251 percent in 1991, and servicing the debt, which claimed 5.3 percent of export earnings in 1970, rose to 20–25 percent in 1982–1991.²⁴² 'Structural adjustment' only drove the debts higher. In the late 1970s, Tanzania owed more than one-third of its external debt to the 'World Bank'.²⁴³

Many financiers were interested in Tanzania. In the early 2000s, about 50 foreign agencies were active in the country. Among the largest were the 'World Bank' (with some interruptions) and Scandinavian countries; others included the USAID as well as Chinese, Dutch, British, West German and Japanese agencies.²⁴⁴ There were also numerous NGOs – about 50 in 1978, but usually with so little staff that they had no presence beyond the capital.²⁴⁵

The widespread sympathies that Tanzania enjoyed internationally were already noted in the 1970s.²⁴⁶ Some observers called them "Tanzaphilia" and later "Tanzanian syndrome" of (supposedly) uncritical support.²⁴⁷ The pleasant and often vague rhetorics by Nyerere and others were perfect for projecting own ideas onto them. Oxfam staffs in particular found "Tanzania's understanding of development [. . .] very similar" to their own. As Adrian Moyes and Jeremy Swainson wrote about Tanzania in 1977 (after enforced villagization): "If Oxfam were running a country, it would have almost identical aims and for the most part identical policies. If Oxfam were running the world, it would try to get all countries to set broadly similar aims". Tanzania was "pioneering an experiment in setting up the sort of

239 See Briggs 1979, p. 697; McHenry Jr. 1994, p. 171; see also Yeager 1989, p. 104. Agricultural exports made up 79 percent of total exports in 1989: Gebre Selassie 1995, p. 1.

240 Mandel 1983a, p. 80.

241 Van Arkadie 1983a, pp. 129–130; Lofchie 1988, p. 151; McHenry Jr. 1994, pp. 172–173; Clark 1986, p. 69; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, p. 154.

242 McHenry 1994, p. 171; some different figures in van der Geest and Köttering 1994, p. 82; Lewis 1988, p. 79; Sender and Smith 1986, p. 89. See also Datta 1994, p. 165; Thomas et al. 1994, p. 76; McHenry 1994, p. 171. Clark 1986, p. 69 offers higher figures.

243 Von Freyhold 1979b, p. 202.

244 Lele 1991b, pp. 23–24; Clark 1978, p. 193; Harrison et al. 2009a, p. 273; Gitelson 1975, p. 17.

245 "Oxfam in Tanzania: April 1977 to December 1978", Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1977–Jan 1979. In 1990, about 100 foreign 'aid' organizations were operating in Tanzania, supporting over 1,200 projects: Rugumamu 1997, p. 147.

246 "Oxfam in Tanzania, November 1978–October 1979", December 1979, Oxfam, Project files, Box 2292, Tanzania General 1975–80; see Harrison et al. 2009a, p. 278.

247 Young 1982, p. 103 and McHenry Jr. 1994, p. 2 (first quote); Simensen 2008, p. 170 (second quote).

society that Oxfam would like to see everywhere”.²⁴⁸ Earlier, Moyes had written: “This is one of the few places in the world where it looks possible to build a better society”.²⁴⁹ Already in 1970, Oxfam’s regional Field Director fantasized that Tanzania was a “Cinderella”²⁵⁰ (possibly waiting for a European prince).

Oxfam was not alone. William Green, the USAID’s mission director in Tanzania, said of *ujamaa* in a radio interview in 1972 that “it is about the only way in which you can work in Tanzania”. Various Christian organizations also voiced their approval, including of coercion.²⁵¹ The ‘World Bank’ made several loans to Tanzania in support of local or regional resettlement projects. It supported villagization, though not communal work.²⁵² Its study for Kigoma region recommended creating large villages of 1,750 people (notably, later this was almost exactly villages’ real average size countrywide) because this would help finance schooling, and even suggested specific village sites – in part on the basis of aerial surveys.²⁵³ In the 1970s, ‘World Bank’ president McNamara visited Tanzania personally “at least half a dozen times”.²⁵⁴ The FAO also tried to get involved in local resettlement planning for 10,000 families.²⁵⁵ FAO invited Nyerere as one of four foreign heads of state to the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in 1979 to honor his efforts (see Chapter 5). Many foreign delegations toured *ujamaa* villages, including one from Bangladesh.²⁵⁶ I have found no evidence that any major foreign development agency, international organization or NGO opposed villagization in Tanzania. However, leaders of the Frelimo party from Mozambique criticized it for the neglect of class struggles from below.²⁵⁷

The coordination between foreign financiers was in substance limited. The regional integrated development projects are a prime example: broadly they followed the same spirit, which Tanzania’s government also shared, but they also followed specific national interests and tastes and took different approaches. In the 1970s, foreigners set up a coordinatory body chaired by the ‘World Bank’, the

248 “Oxfam in Tanzania”, April 1977, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1977-Jan 1979. Michael Jennings has criticized Oxfam’s naïve and blind support for Tanzanian policies; see Jennings 2001a, esp. pp. 110, 124, 126; Jennings 2008, pp. 127–134, 174.

249 Adrian Moyes, “two revolutions per year: a report on a visit to chunya district, Tanzania, August 5–13, 1975”, Oxfam, Project files, Box 2292, Oxfam Annual Reports and Policy Statements, etc. 1976–1980.

250 Oxfam, Nairobi Office, “Annual Review September 1968–November 1969”, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Feb 1970–Nov 1973.

251 “Overseas mission” radio program by USAID and American University, 6 October 1972, Ford Library, Stanley Scott Papers, Box 2, AID-Media, 1972; Jennings 2008, pp. 86–87, 101–109.

252 Cook to Mathis, 11 January 1971, NARA, Nixon papers, WHCF, SF, CO Box 68, [EX] CO 147 Tanzania, United Republic of 1/1/71 (tobacco growing project for 15,000 farmers); Coulson 2013, pp. 360–361.

253 Lohmeier 1982, pp. 361, 369.

254 Hayter and Watson 1985, p. 203.

255 “Settlement Planning and Rural Development: Mishamo, Mpanda District (Rukwa Region)”, April 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 23, RU 7/46.25 Annex.

256 McHenry, Jr. 1979, p. 1.

257 Bowen 2000, pp. 43, 52.

“Consultative Group of Donors”, which met annually.²⁵⁸ In 1986, this “Paris Club” agreed to reschedule US\$600 million, about one quarter of Tanzania’s debt.²⁵⁹ In addition, there was a Joint Consultative Group on Policy for Tanzania formed by some UN organizations, including IFAD, UNDP, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and later joined by FAO and ILO.²⁶⁰ Organized by a joint secretariat from staff of Tanzania’s Planning Commission and UNDP, this group met quarterly.²⁶¹ But given Tanzania’s opposition, “[a]id-coordination meetings” by foreign agencies within the country were stopped in 1977 “because the government did not want donors to gang up and press for policy reforms”.²⁶² However, ‘donors’ did sometimes team up for common action that usually involved extortion. When Tanzania did not raise taxes enough to meet a foreign-imposed revenue target and was caught up in a corruption scandal, a “Consultative Group” meeting cut new ‘aid’ commitments in 1994–1995 from US\$1.3 to \$1.0 billion.²⁶³ Also, Tanzania had to give up drafting five-year development plans under foreign pressure in the 1990s, although it reintroduced them in 2011.²⁶⁴

Tanzania’s government tried to play its foreign financiers off against each other, but it is questionable if it succeeded in maintaining control of development policies.²⁶⁵ This became especially clear when we consider the Economic Recovery Programme designed by the IMF and the ‘World Bank’, which choked the economy. Like many other African countries in the 1980s, Tanzania sought out foreign loans. Its financial position had become difficult through losses of over US\$1 billion in 1980–1981 because of the war against Uganda, flood and drought damage and worsening terms of trade (the price of coffee dropped while oil prices increased).²⁶⁶ Internal reasons included high costs for administration and subsidies. Scarcity of consumer goods, which indicated the government’s financial difficulties, started already in the late 1970s and was a big political issue in cities, but worse in the countryside.²⁶⁷ There is no need here to rehash the extensive literature on the ‘adjustment’ policies and their impact in detail. The IMF, the ‘World Bank’ and other creditors imposed measures on Tanzania’s government that included currency devaluations, raising interest rates and cuts in public spending, reductions of the size of the civil service and its salaries, removing subsidies, domestic trade liberalization and a much smaller role for parastatals, but they paid little

258 Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 173; Shaw and Clay 1993, p. 133; Coulson 2013, p. 307.

259 van der Geest and Köttering 1994, p. 73; Yeager 1989, p. 96. Bryceson 1993, p. 28 suggests that the Paris Club only included OECD countries.

260 Shaw and Clay 1993, pp. 135–136 (about 1987).

261 Rugumamu 1997, p. 153.

262 Lele and Jain 1991a, p. 127.

263 Selbervik 2008, pp. 191–194.

264 Green 2014, p. 163.

265 See Harrison et al. 2009a; Gibbon et al. 1993, pp. 52–53; see also Lele and Jain 1991a, p. 127. For NGOs, see the argument by Jennings 2008, pp. 64, 93–94.

266 “Annual Report, Oxfam –Tanzania, May 1980–April 1981”, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa S-Z, Tanzania – Annual; Van Arkadie 1983a, p. 129.

267 See van der Geest and Köttering 1994, p. 71. Kiwara 1999, p. 188 and Ponte 2002, p. 47 see the onset of the crisis also in the late 1970s.

attention to the provision of agricultural inputs and transportation.²⁶⁸ At first, Tanzania's government rejected these terms. During the time of disagreement with the Washington institutions, it had already implemented an own National Economic Survival Programme (1981) and Structural Adjustment Policy (1982–1983) which included similar, less drastic steps, following in part recommendations by domestic experts, and two Presidential Commissions inquired into the issue of parastatals sometime before 1985.²⁶⁹ Some Tanzanian politicians and experts actually supported the IMF's initial plans.²⁷⁰

In the agricultural sector, 'structural adjustment' called primarily for raising producer prices through privatizations and abolishing guaranteed floor prices for farmers, which was consonant with the small peasant approach (although by this time the 'World Bank' turned against unfocused IRD projects that it had once organized itself²⁷¹). The aims were raising food and export crop production as well as agricultural productivity. But as far as staple food production and peasants were concerned, they were largely missed.²⁷² Meanwhile, consumer prices for food were rising, especially for *sembe* (corn meal) that was no longer subsidized since 1984 – and there was no rationing system.²⁷³ What the state curtailed in 1980–1985 was primarily investment, not recurrent spending.²⁷⁴ But this did not bring the budget deficit or inflation down much, and the national debt was rising because of the IMF's and 'World Bank's' policies. The higher prices for crops in private markets that farmers received lost their value through general inflation.²⁷⁵ Thus, their impositions impoverished Tanzanians, particularly in cities and towns (where plummeting real wages prevented more urban immigration and spurred informal activities) and coincided with a countrywide decline of food consumption and a long stagnation in life expectancy (see Tables 9.1 and 9.3).²⁷⁶ They also dried up public funding for education with the result that many teachers were laid off, schools reintroduced fees, primary school enrollment fell and remained low for two decades and literacy declined markedly.²⁷⁷

268 See van der Geest and Köttering 1994; Biermann and Wagao 1986a; Malima 1986; Van Arkadie 1983a, pp. 130–136; Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 53; Streeten 1987, pp. 23, 31; Government et al. 2000, p. 155; van Donge 2013, p. 343; Lele and Jain 1991a, p. 127 but see Erdmann 1996, p. 642.

269 Loxley 1986, pp. 101–103; Mamuya 1993, p. 25; Bryceson 1993, pp. 23, 190; Svendsen 1986, p. 72; Chachage 1993, pp. 224–225; O'Neill 1990, p. 17; Government et al. 2000, p. 6.

270 Coulson 2019a, p. 16.

271 See Payer 1983, pp. 803 and 806 note 45. For a similar turn, see also Lele and Jain 1991a, p. 124.

272 For these objectives, see Oxfam, "Annual Report Tanzania 1985–1986", November 1986, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa S-Z, Tanzania Annual; Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 8.

273 Bryceson 1987, pp. 186–187; Bryceson 1992, p. 100; Bryceson 1993b, p. 100; Geier 1992, p. 69.

274 Biermann and Wagao 1986a, p. 145; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, p. 142.

275 Oxfam, "Annual Report Tanzania 1985–1986", November 1986, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa S-Z, Tanzania Annual; see also van der Geest and Köttering 1994.

276 Francis 2000, p. 5; Van Cranenburgh and Sasse 1995, pp. 17–18. Official GDP per capita was US\$280 in 1981, \$100 in 1991: Datta 1994, p. 167.

277 See Kiwara 1999, p. 120 (gross primary school enrollment was 93 percent in 1980, 58 percent in 1995); McHenry Jr. 1994, p. 85; Brock-Utne 1991, pp. 169–172; Lugalla 1993, pp. 190–196, 204. For primary school enrollment resurging 2000–2005, see Harrison et al. 2009a, p. 272.

Like national ones, foreign ‘development’ projects also made impositions on villagers instead of cooperating with them.²⁷⁸ The Tanzanian press criticized that many ‘donors’ tended to reject proposals for small projects and preferred capital-intensive, foreign-designed, turn-key high-tech schemes.²⁷⁹ Most foreign agencies maintained no presence in villages where their projects ran²⁸⁰; they relied on local officials for implementation. But in important stages like budget preparation, including cuts, they did not consult high officials on the Tanzanian side.²⁸¹ Many projects were so expensive that they had to be limited to small ‘blessed’ areas, like a project in Rukwa Region that FAO proposed with planned outlays of \$2,500 per family. This led to regional inequality.²⁸² In the 1980s and 1990s, the WHO, UNICEF and the ‘World Bank’ funded child nutrition projects in Iringa and elsewhere that they considered successful – but child malnutrition in the country was not significantly reduced (as I show later), nor was it arguably in the area of the Iringa project. In the mid-1990s, 40 percent of the expenses of this meanwhile enlarged scheme were for staff and 26 percent of transportation and vehicles, whereas annual spending per child dropped to between US\$3 and \$5, that is, the project primarily nourished those who carried it out, plus drivers and car manufacturers.²⁸³

This was a general tendency – from 1970 to 1982, a large part of the foreign ‘aid’ for Tanzania paid the salaries of foreign ‘experts’.²⁸⁴ At least 6 percent of foreign ‘aid’, but probably much more, was spent on expatriate ‘experts’ in the 1980s. Richard Jolly stated that 1,000 foreign experts in the country cost US\$200 million in 1988 in salaries, housing, travel, etc. – double of what Tanzania’s entire civil service earned.²⁸⁵ The problem was not confined to Tanzania. Severine Rugumamu estimates that expat ‘experts’ sent for ‘aid’ to Africa cost US\$10–12 billion during the 1980s.²⁸⁶ Twenty percent of the US\$4.4 million budget of a ‘World Bank’ project for “village self-help” in Tanzania was spent on the salaries, offices and vehicles of four economists and some credit officers.²⁸⁷ Over-planning was a big part of the problem. For the Stiegler’s Gorge dam project (currently still under construction), there were at least 31 preparatory studies in 1961–1993, including 22 foreign/international ones, involving firms or organizations from nine countries, two transnational companies and two UN agencies.²⁸⁸ A West German preventive

278 See the files in Oxfam, Project files, Box 2322, TAN 80, vols. I and II.

279 Mushi 1982, pp. 21–23.

280 “Oxfam in Tanzania”, April 1977, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1977–Jan 1979.

281 Birgegård 1975, esp. p. 264.

282 “Settlement Planning and Rural Development: Mishamo, Mpanda District (Rukwa Region)”, April 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 23, RU 7/46.25 Annex. This was a resettlement project, but only 20 percent of the planned expenditure was for housing, water and electricity. Other examples are in Timberlake 1985, pp. 63–64.

283 Easterly 2006, p. 176; Krishna with Jonsson and Lorri 1997, esp. p. 224; Sijm 1997, pp. 491–494. See also Wignaraja 1990, pp. 151–156 with a positive judgment.

284 Watanabe 1987, p. 527.

285 See Rugumamu 1997, pp. 150, 165–166.

286 Rugumamu 1997, p. 163.

287 Moore Lappé and Beccar-Varela 1980, p. 113.

288 See Havnevik 1993, pp. 266–268, 278–279, 283, 337–338.

medicine and hygiene project in Lushoto led to successes only in feeding children, and only as long as transportation by car to the feeding center was provided by organizers. The project employed a large staff and operated 19 vehicles.²⁸⁹ Susan Gitelson noted in a 1975 study that multilateral projects “have often fallen short of expectations”.²⁹⁰

Many foreign projects helped the wealthy and not the poor, for example rural water schemes financed by Swedish ‘aid’, whose “main beneficiaries” were “the relatively better-off farmers, traders, and civil servants”.²⁹¹ Dutch aid worker Job de Graaf, formerly working in Arusha, commented: “Although our thoughts are with the masses, we move with the higher classes”.²⁹² Tellingly, a small irrigation project for vegetable growing in Mininga by the shore of Lake Nyanza was presented in 1985 as a remarkable success to an international audience although “most of the cultivated plots went to the village elite, men with jobs, officials of the village government – affluent, self-reliant people” and armed robbers stole the solar panels on which the project depended (Oxfam had bought them from a British firm), which were not replaced for many months.²⁹³ According to Oxfam’s records, the organization invested £13,972 to irrigate, at least initially, less than 1 hectare of land.²⁹⁴

Despite the nationalizations of 1967, Tanzania never banned private foreign investment. Sizable foreign capital – mostly British – was still there after 1967, but exposed to more competition by state-owned firms.²⁹⁵ Some sisal and tea plantations remained in foreign hands, and big business operated in food processing, especially beverages.²⁹⁶ There were also many management agreements between the state and foreign companies, but their services were often terrible.²⁹⁷ The government tried to attract foreign capital with the National Investment Promotion Policy in 1982, which promised favorable conditions,²⁹⁸ but inflows were low until the early 1990s. FDI took off in the second half of the 1990s, rising to US\$1 billion, more than in most African countries. Firms from a great variety of countries invested, including Britain, Kenya, India, the PRC and others, mainly in mining, telecommunications, banking and tourism, sometimes also in food processing. There was not much new investment in agriculture by the turn of the millennium.²⁹⁹ Despite increasing private investment, inflows from foreign ‘aid’ (in loans and grants), though in decline, still exceeded by five times private foreign investment,³⁰⁰ which had little effect

289 Kreysler n.y. (1974), p. 83; Matango 1979, esp. pp. 160–161, 166.

290 Gitelson 1975, p. 151.

291 Radetzki 1991, p. 252, also about Finnish and Dutch projects.

292 Quoted in Brinkman 2010, p. 148.

293 Park and Cross 1985.

294 See “Monigo Village Irrigation Scheme, Oxfam, Staff Tours – Africa and the Middle East, 1978–1987, file Tanzania Staff Tour, March 1987 (here also called Minigo).

295 See UNCTNC 1983b, pp. 305, 330; Hveem 1975, pp. 83–86; Neersø 1975; Eze 1977, p. 449.

296 Mbilinyi 1990, pp. 112–114; Dinham and Hines 1983, pp. 44–45, 158, 169.

297 UNCTNC 1983b, pp. 265–266; Dinham and Hines 1983, pp. 67–68, 79, 173.

298 Gebre Selassie 1995, pp. 25–28. For more restrictive regulations of 1962, see Eze 1977, p. 458.

299 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2002, esp. pp. 1, 3, 6, 8, 30, 60.

300 *Ibid.*, p. 26. In 2012, ODA was almost 50 percent bigger than FDI: Tribe 2019a, p. 220.

on staple food production. Later, this changed to some degree, and land grabbing became an issue. Contract farming is on the rise, but still relatively limited.³⁰¹

Economic developments

In light of what is known about Tanzania's statistics, what follows are only approximate estimates of agricultural production. Cereal output dropped slightly in 1970–1974, doubled in 1974–1978, after which it stalled in the following four years. This was one of the greatest increases in absolute and per capita figures in southern Africa in 1970–1984.³⁰² Corn had – especially for urban dwellers, poor and medium income groups – become the main staple in the mid-20th century, being propagated by the colonial government, although it is vulnerable to drought. It partially replaced millet, sorghum and cassava. But corn was more dominant in terms of cultivated area than consumption.³⁰³ Its production rose significantly from the early 1960s (0.56 million tons) to the mid-1970s, more steeply in the years after 1974 and further from 1.76 million tons in 1979–1981 to 2.63 million tons in 1989–1991, an annual increase of 4.1 percent per year (0.7 percent per capita) in the latter period. The average in the 1990s was 2.3 million tons but there were strong fluctuations.³⁰⁴ Yields were low, increased slowly in 1980–1997 but differed widely from region to region.³⁰⁵ The acreage expanded by 3.6–3.7 percent annually (more than population growth) in 1951–1965 and in 1978–1987, with little change in between, and it decreased in 1988–1999.³⁰⁶ After 2001, production rose steeply to 6 million tons.³⁰⁷

The production of other cereals doubled from the first half of the 1960s to 1974–1976, but was lower in 1981–1983. Millet and sorghum – grown primarily in some central provinces – went out of fashion, particularly with urbanites, but until 1997 (1984–1987 in particular), there was another strong increase. From 1972 to 1986 and also later, their yields increased notably.³⁰⁸ Cassava yields in Tanzania were low by African standards in 1991 and had not increased much in the previous two decades. The crop was especially grown in the northwest. Consumption declined from a high level between 1961 and 1998 (by 23 percent), although it rose

301 Coulson 2013, p. 10, but without substantial evidence for extensive land grabbing; for contract farming, see Kuzilwa et al. 2019a.

302 Lipton 1988, pp. 197, 204; Krebs 1988, pp. 21, 43. In terms of agricultural production per capita, Tanzania's performance was below average in Sub-Saharan Africa 1969/1971–1982: Christensen and Witucki 1986, p. 21.

303 Miracle 1966, pp. 113–114, 143–144; Bryceson et al. 1999, p. 19.

304 McCann 2005, p. 224; Bryceson et al. 1999, pp. 20–21.

305 McCann 2005, p. 220; Bryceson et al. 1999, p. 32; Miracle 1966, p. 111. Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 61 note increasing yields; so does Manyikwa 1991, p. 101 (1.87 percent annually 1972–1986).

306 McCann 2005, p. 220; Bryceson et al. 1999, p. 32.

307 Van Arkadie 2019a, p. 74.

308 Sender and Smith 1986, p. 105; Founou-Tchuigoua 1990b, p. 200; De Vries and Toenniessen 2001, p. 167; Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 61; cf. Kashuliza and Mbiha 1995, p. 59. For yields (which decreased for rice), see Banyikwa 1991, p. 101; Government et al. 2000, pp. 56, 78; Van Arkadie 2019a, pp. 76–77.

in 1971–1987. In 1997, it was at 45 kilograms per capita annually.³⁰⁹ Rice production, formerly on low levels, took only off after 2002.³¹⁰

Cash crops were on the decline – far from tying down ever more labor and displacing food crops, which is a standard narrative of critics. The drop in output in the 1970s, especially among smallholders, can be explained in part by deteriorating terms of trade and the low prices the state offered to farmers. This downturn accelerated in the early 1980s,³¹¹ despite by-laws in some areas requiring peasants to grow certain minimum amounts of cash crops.³¹² In the 1980s, the estate production (of sisal and tea) was in crisis, as was that of cotton and cashew among smallholders' crops, but they grew more coffee, tobacco and tea.³¹³ Under the British, sisal was the colony's largest export product, but its importance fell with the rise of plastics in the 1960s. At the same time, coffee, cotton and cashew production increased.³¹⁴ Coffee was the biggest export earner in 1980, followed by cotton (as in 1995), sisal and tea.³¹⁵ In 1982, Reginald Green, a U.S.-born former high official in the Tanzanian administration, characterized the country's situation by calling its export products "1 greyhound, 1 limping hound, 1 cancerous beagle, 4 one legged curs, 1 senile mastiff, i.e. cashew, coffee, tobacco, cotton, pyrethrum, sisal, tea, diamonds".³¹⁶ Contrary to expectations, cash crops did not rebound under liberalization in the 1990s, but cotton, tea and tobacco production increased in the 2000s and/or 2010s.³¹⁷

According to official data, exports constituted 26 percent of GDP in 1970 and 42 percent in 1980, indicating a high export dependency and international economic integration.³¹⁸ But these data are questionable (especially for 1980), inflated and misleading because they were based on inaccurate government statistics that badly underestimated agricultural production for on-farm consumption.³¹⁹

Foreign observers in the 1970s and 1980s found that most Tanzanian peasants had little interest in the use of 'modern' agricultural inputs such as mineral

309 Sender and Smith 1986, p. 105; Nweke et al. 2002, pp. 61–62, 154–155; Banyikwa 1991, p. 101; De Vries and Toenniessen 2001, p. 169; Cock 1985, pp. 5, 11; Government et al. 2000, p. 56; Van Arkadie 2019a, p. 81. For the fast growth of production in the 1970s and 1980s, see Omari 1989, p. 8; Sarris and van den Brink 1993, p. 142; Ponte 2002, pp. 43, 61.

310 Van Arkadie 2019a, pp. 75–76.

311 Ghai 1983, pp. 66, 69; Shao 1986, p. 87; Lofchie 1988, p. 146, especially for sisal, cashew and cotton after the mid-1970s; Coulson 2013, pp. 184, 232. Raikes 1986, p. 120, sees stagnation after 1970 for coffee and tea, tobacco with a slight and cashew with a temporary increase. According to Sender and Smith 1990, p. 94, all cash crops peaked between 1974 and 1979, followed by decline. See also Ponte 2002, pp. 42, 62; Francis 2000, p. 24. Biermann 1990, p. 131 with export earnings' figures for 1965–1981.

312 Bryceson 1982, p. 564.

313 Mbilinyi 1990, pp. 112, 115; similar already Hyden 1980, p. 146 for an earlier period.

314 Clark 1978, p. 31.

315 Lele 1986, p. 163; Ponte 2002, p. 39.

316 Green 1982, p. 6.

317 Van Arkadie 2019a, pp. 58, 63–70.

318 Biermann 1990, p. 131. McHenry Jr. 1979 states that exports were 25.5 percent of GDP in 1964 but only 15.7 percent in 1975.

319 According to Ponte 2002, p. 38 export crops made up just 8 percent of agricultural GDP.

fertilizer. People used traditional seeds and manure. If they reinvested profits, it was for oxen, plows or tractor services, that is, to expand cultivation, not to adopt intensive methods.³²⁰

Given conditions in Tanzania, where many regions are prone to drought, irrigation would have been important for intensive farming. FAO recommended this in 1980 for rice cultivation, and in 1961, the ‘World Bank’ specified seven areas with about 22,000 hectares for irrigation schemes, presumably for cash crops.³²¹ These plans were comparatively modest, and the irrigated area was always very limited. In 1978, 126,000 hectares were under irrigation, 3 percent of the 4 million hectares FAO considered irrigable in total and less than 1 percent of the arable land. Slightly more than 3 percent of farms used irrigation. It was largely confined to traditional and small-scale facilities on the slopes of the Kilimanjaro area, in some river valleys, on lakesides and a few large-scale schemes in the southwest.³²² Other sources put the figure for irrigated areas even lower. By the mid-2010s, the total had almost trebled to 345,000 hectares, still a small area.³²³ Irrigation is expensive. In the 1980s, Oxfam invested over £13,000 in a small project in Minigo, Mara region, to irrigate 0.9 hectares, divided into tiny plots for 35 poor families.³²⁴ Experts estimated in 1982 that irrigation facilities for 1 hectare would cost between US\$5,000 and \$10,000, and 4 million hectares would cost \$4.675 billion over 20 years.³²⁵ But on the whole, the ODA for irrigation in Tanzania in 1977–1981 was a minimal US\$1 million annually.³²⁶ Most of the water supplied from shallow wells in rural areas financed by Dutch, Finnish and Swedish ‘aid’ went to “the relatively better-off farmers, traders and civil servants”.³²⁷ The largest plan, never fully realized, was for dams in the Rufiji valley, whose inhabitants had been resettled in 1968–1969, to bring 200,000 hectares under irrigation for rice and cotton cultivation and to produce electricity.³²⁸

Few peasants used mineral fertilizer – only 7.4 percent in 1971 (with the highest rates in Arusha, Singida, Tabora and Ruvuma regions) and less than 10 percent in 1975–1976.³²⁹ Data on annual fertilizer use vary; it was at 8,500 tons in 1967,

320 Buntzel 1979, p. 329; Oxfam, Tanzania Office, “Profile of Tanzania – Tabora”, August 1977, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 2291, Tabora General; Odhiambo Anacleto, “Tanzania Annual Report 1985–1986”, November 1986, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa S-Z, Tanzania Annual.

321 Cortas 1988, p. 33; IBRD 1961, p. 177.

322 Dr. Walid Sharif, FAO, “Crop Production in Tanzania”, n.d. (ca. 1978), pp. 2, 5, 7 of the document, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 23, RU 7/46.25 Annex. For the regional distribution, see also Bryceson 1990, p. 36; ILO 1982, p. 140. See also Mdee 2019, p. 142.

323 Sender and Smith 1986a, p. 93 (66,000 hectares in 1981); Ahmed and Rustagi 1987, p. 106 (64,000); Sijm 1997, p. 287; see Moris and Thom 1990, p. 15. For recent times, see Rajabu 2017, p. 100, and Mdee 2019, p. 141.

324 “Monigo Village Irrigation Scheme”, Oxfam, Staff Tours – Africa and the Middle East, 1978–1987, file Tan. Staff Tour, March 1987.

325 ILO 1982, p. 189. For a later, higher ‘World Bank’ per hectare estimate, see Sijm 1997, p. 288.

326 In the same five years, a total of US\$39 million for irrigation were given to Mali, \$236 million to Bangladesh and \$1,247 million to Indonesia. See Carruthers 1983, p. 33.

327 Radetzki 1991, p. 252. For a failed irrigation project in the 1960s, see Gitelson 1975, pp. 137–139.

328 Graf 1973, p. 245–246; Schneider 2014, pp. 74–78.

329 Bryceson 1990, p. 36; Moore Lappé and Beccar-Varela 1980, pp. 60–61.

between 30,000 tons and 70,000 tons in the 1970s, approximately 100,000 tons in 1981–1984 and 190,000 tons in 1986 and 1987. Some report dips in the early and in the late 1980s.³³⁰ Like in other Sub-Saharan countries, application – also to corn – greatly declined after 1992–1993 because it became unprofitable when subsidies ended, to a reported 7,900 tons in 2001.³³¹ By comparison, in 1980, the FAO’s plans called for 650,000 tons in 2000.³³² In much of the 1970s, consumption grew, but between 1970 and 1981, only from 3.0 to 5.6 kilograms per hectare (and to 8.5 kilograms in 1986).³³³ Then, usage fell. In 1994–1995, when fertilizer subsidies had just been eliminated, 15 percent of smallholders used chemical fertilizer, especially in the southern highlands and Kilimanjaro region; three years before, the overall figure had been 27 percent.³³⁴ Better-off farmers used more often (subsidized) fertilizer than poorer ones.³³⁵ In 2007, fertilizer application averaged no more than 9 kilograms per hectare.³³⁶ Manure was much in use in some regions, but rejected in others, and its use became less common after villagization because land scarcity reduced herds and the workload to transport manure to the more distant fields became too high. In some regions, pigs were kept instead of cows due to lack of grazing areas.³³⁷

Fertilizer was not only for cash crops. Corn alone accounted for 25,000 tons in 1974 and 47 percent of all fertilizer consumption in 1985.³³⁸ Application in the 1980s was particularly high in the southern highlands, where corn was booming.³³⁹ However, many peasants rejected fertilizers because they were first supplied with them without telling them that it was not for free and without advising them how to use it.³⁴⁰ And in dry years, like the late 1960s, the early 1970s and 1984, fertilizers reportedly burned crops.³⁴¹ Studies criticized that their use on corn had increased yields only modestly in most areas, was uneconomical in some because of their high

330 Michalski 1974, p. 123; Ernst 1973, p. 253; Lohmeier 1982, p. 166; Programme and Policy Advisory Board, “National Seminar on Fertiliser Use Development, Morogoro, Tanzania, 22–27 October 1973”, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IL 3/235; Bryceson 1987, p. 156 (for 1980; 20 kilogram per hectare); Founou-Tchuigoua 1990b, p. 203 (for 1981–1983); Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 56 (1981–1987); Havnevik 1993, p. 302. See Lele 1991b, p. 88. Dowsell et al. 1996, p. 165 state that 40 kilograms of fertilizer per hectare were used on corn in 1989–1991.

331 See Ponte 2002, pp. 88–91; Kherallah et al. 2002, pp. 28, 52, 56, 69; Government et al. 2000, pp. xvi, 42, 46. Earth Trends n.y. and AID 2003, pp. 2–3 offer very low figures.

332 Cortas 1988, p. 33.

333 Sender and Smith 1986, p. 101; Stewart 1994, p. 102; Bryceson 1990, p. 197; Lele et al. 1989, p. 11. Cf. Krebs 1988 (4 kilograms in 1984).

334 Ponte 2002, p. 40; Earth Trends, n.y.; Government et al. 2000, p. 39; see also Kherallah et al. 2002, pp. 30, 32 and Sijm 1997, p. 274.

335 Havnevik 1993, p. 307; Narayan 1997, p. 42.

336 Fritz et al. 2015, p. 197 note 21.

337 See Schneider 2014, p. 90; for rejection, see Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 139, but see *ibid.*, p. 89; Lassalle and Mattee 1995, p. 176.

338 Anthony 1988, p. 134; Lele et al. 1989, p. 18.

339 Gibbon et al. 1993, pp. 56–57; Schmied 1989, p. 162.

340 Payer 1983, p. 805; Hyden 1980, p. 150; von Freyhold 1979a, p. 96; Kleemeier 1988, p. 64.

341 Nindi 1988, p. 169.

prices, and extension officers recommended the same level of use everywhere.³⁴² Fertilization was profitable primarily, and sometimes only, for high-yielding corn varieties, which most peasants did not plant.³⁴³

The government subsidized fertilizer prices by 70 percent in the mid-1970s, reduced the subsidy to 50 percent in 1976–1977 and then raised it again to 60 percent.³⁴⁴ The state paid dearly for this policy, which accounted for from 3.6 to 5.4 percent of the national budget in 1978–1982.³⁴⁵ The pan-territorial pricing of fertilizer implied additional financial support for remote places.³⁴⁶ The fertilizer subsidy was officially eliminated in 1984, but continued through implicit government measures and was in reality phased out from 1990–1991 to 1994–1995.³⁴⁷ When they were in effect, their primary benefactors were better-off producers, who had higher application rates than small peasants.³⁴⁸ There were frequent reports of farmers ceasing their use of fertilizers or switching from crops that needed them because of price hikes due to subsidy reductions, currency devaluations and unreliable supply. It was unreliable since private merchants did not sell fertilizer in remote areas because of the high transportation cost and official supplies before the privatization of trade were also insecure.³⁴⁹

Tanzania began to produce fertilizers early on. Planned since 1966, the urea factory in the coastal city of Tanga started operations in 1972. But it imported its raw materials instead of using existing national deposits; construction costs were high; production was sometimes more expensive than imports would have been; and the plant generated losses, whereas the government's partner in the joint venture, the West German firm Kloeckner Industries, received guaranteed profits. Plagued by design and production problems and operating below utilization of its capacity of 100,000 tons, the factory's output soon trailed behind demand.³⁵⁰ Production was unstable and fell by 63 percent from 1980 to 1987. The plant closed four years later and never reopened, for foreign financiers rejected an overhaul, allegedly because they expected returns would be too low.³⁵¹ In 1980, the government made a contract with Agrico Chemicals Co., a subsidiary of Williams Co., to build another urea factory at Kilwa Masuko for US\$450 million that would use offshore natural gas.

342 Coulson 1981, p. 62; Boesen et al. 1977, p. 95; Hyden 1980, p. 111.

343 Lele et al. 1989, pp. 42–43.

344 Bates 1981, p. 50; Lele et al. 1989, p. 19; Kherallah et al. 2002, pp. 37–43; Government et al. 2000, p. 7.

345 Lele et al. 1989, p. 20.

346 See Kashuliza and Mbiha 1995, p. 73 note 8; Ponte 2002, pp. 75, 99–100.

347 Ponte 2002, pp. 62, 75; Lele et al. 1989, p. 42; Hyden 1980, pp. 171–172; Bryceson et al. 1999, p. 27.

348 Gibbon et al. 1993, pp. 56–57.

349 “Annual Report Tanzania 1987–1988”, April 1989, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa S-Z. Tanzania – Annual; Geier 1992, p. 84; Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 16; Lele et al. 1989, pp. 24, 74 note 112 (but see p. 34); Ponte 2002, pp. 17, 29, 75–77, 83–84, 91.

350 Coulson 1979b, pp. 184–190; Hyden 1980, p. 174; Lohmeier 1982, p. 250; Skarstein 1986, p. 91; Geier 1992, p. 155 note 26; Coulson 2013, p. 233.

351 Cheru 1993, p. 48 (1979–1984); Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, p. 88 (1980–87); Ponte 2002, p. 76; Sijm 1997, p. 276.

Planned to produce 700,000 tons annually after completion in 1984 in a joint venture, in which Agrico would hold 26 percent, the factory never materialized.³⁵² But guano-based fertilizer has been produced in Arusha, and there are several new projects to build big fertilizer factories in the country with foreign private investors.

Hoechst, the West German company, became an important advisor of Tanzania's government about pesticides in the 1970s. As pesticides were mainly applied on cash crops, the firm distributed orange T-shirts with the slogan "Thiodan for your cotton" through village cooperatives in Western Tanzania to "everybody involved in the programme and to particularly 'progressive' farmers".³⁵³ But Tanzania's government rejected Hoechst's plan for a new factory because the formulating³⁵⁴ of pesticides could be continued at an ICI plant in Dar-es Salaam. Nevertheless, Hoechst gained influence on Tanzania's insecticides' spraying, including the power to have certain extension officers fired.³⁵⁵ In 1974, with the markets saturated in Europe, one official said about multinational corporations, "they've just realized that places like Tanzania are the only areas of expansion open to them".³⁵⁶ Pesticides were also applied on corn. But with estimated sales of US\$30 million in 1982, Tanzania was a minor market. Annual imports climbed from \$1.5 million in 1969–1971 to over 22 million in 1979–1981.³⁵⁷ Annual usage, most of which was insecticides, was about 2,000 tons per year in 1965–1972 and 5,000 tons in 1973–1978. In 1994–1995, after a 40 percent drop of imports, 18 or 28 percent of smallholders (according to differing data) reported using pesticides; in 2006, it was apparently most of all farmers.³⁵⁸

High-yielding seeds were another issue of intensification but unpopular. Their use became somewhat more common in 1974–1980, but declined in 1982.³⁵⁹ In the 1980s, sales of HYV seeds hovered around 5,000 tons. In 1988–1989, they grew on only 17 percent of the corn acreage; in 1994–1995, 28 percent of smallholders planted some sort of high-yielding crop.³⁶⁰ It has to be added that cassava, millet and sorghum yields had substantially increased in the 1950s and 1960s, probably also because of better seeds.³⁶¹

For a long time, Tanzania relied mainly on domestic seed development, for example for corn, rice and wheat.³⁶² Several improved corn varieties were released

352 United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations 1982, pp. 34, 38; Schmieid 1989, p. 108; Ponte 2002, p. 76.

353 Weir and Schapiro 1981, p. 53; Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 40; Government et al. 2000, p. 40; quote: Mueller 1974, p. 181. Thiodan was another name for endosulfan.

354 To formulate means to mix pesticides from pre-produced basic substances (feedstocks).

355 Muller 1974; Weir and Schapiro 1981, p. 53. For ICI in Tanzania, see also Clarke 1982, p. 96.

356 Mueller 1974, p. 182.

357 Knirsch 1987, p. 53; Sender and Smith 1986a, p. 102.

358 Ponte 2002, p. 40; Rajabu et al. 2017, pp. 102, 104; Government et al. 2000, pp. 38, 40.

359 Bryceson 1990, p. 197.

360 Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 62; Havnevik 1993, p. 302; Howell 1991, pp. 416–463; Cromwell 1996, p. 11; for 1989–91, see Dowswell et al. 1996, p. 165 (18 percent); for 1994–95, Ponte 2002, p. 40; see also Narayan 1997, p. 42.

361 See Graf 1973, pp. 322–323.

362 Dowswell et al. 1996, pp. 65, 68; Dr. Walid Sharif, FAO, "Crop Production in Tanzania", n.d. (ca. 1978), p. 10 of the document, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 23, RU 7/46.25 Annex. For rice, see also Virmani et al. 1978, pp. 110–111.

in the 1980s. A composite corn variety developed in Tanzania in the 1970s raised yields by a quarter.³⁶³ But farmers rejected high-yielding corn varieties in that decade because they were vulnerable to the local climate.³⁶⁴ Despite domestic seed development, the country's spending on research was particularly low.³⁶⁵ The Tanzania Seed Company (TANSEED) sustained large losses and supplied only 14 per cent of the estimated seed requirements in 1982–1983. The quality of its seeds was criticized.³⁶⁶ Once established in 1972 as a condition for USAID financial support for seed development and also receiving British 'aid', TANSEED lost its monopoly in 1989–1990 in response to foreign pressure and was privatized in 2002.³⁶⁷

Foreign seed development also influenced Tanzania. In 1978, the government started a sorghum seed project at Ilonga with help of ICRISAT, and a new rice variety developed in cooperation with IRRI was released in 1983.³⁶⁸ But even recently, Tanzania's authorities deterred seed imports with cumbersome procedures.³⁶⁹ This was after the seed sector was 'restructured' beginning in the 1990s. Since then, Cargill, Ciba-Geigy/Syngenta, Pioneer, DeKalb, Monsanto and DuPont have all been active in seed production in Tanzania; Zimbabwe's Seed Co. Ltd. led the market in 2011.³⁷⁰ These firms focused on corn and neglected the other crops.³⁷¹ Between 2003 and 2012, draconian laws protecting big business' property 'rights' were introduced that punish the sale of uncertified and untested seeds with up to 12 years imprisonment or fines of TShs. 500 million. Smallholders have limited rights for getting own seeds certified. However, the state cannot control the situation; 90–96 per cent of improved seeds actually come from the informal sector, and officials check less than 10 per cent of seeds produced.³⁷² Commenting on Tanzania and Kenya, Constance Anthony wrote in 1988 that high-yielding variety seeds were "not very powerful instruments of class politics or massive social change".³⁷³

Where peasants widely adopted intensive farming methods or focused on certain cash crops, traditional ecologically and economically sound intercropping (also with corn) with use of mulch and green manure gave way to monocropping, which often depleted the soil and made peasants eventually turn to calorie-intensive crops like sweet potato and cassava, like in the Kilimanjaro area. The corn monoculture in the southern highlands left many children malnourished.³⁷⁴ Corn

363 De Vries and Toenniessen 2001, p. 56; Anthony 1988, pp. 117, 132.

364 Feierman 1993, p. 134.

365 Vallaeys et al. 1988, p. 153.

366 See Dr. Walid Sharif, FAO, "Crop Production in Tanzania", n.d. (ca. 1978), p. 10 of the document, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 23, RU 7/46.25 Annex; Howell 1991, pp. 461–463; Cromwell 1996, p. 12; Sijm 1997, pp. 267–268.

367 Howell 1991, pp. 461–463; Johnston et al. 1991, p. 307; Ponte 2002, p. 77; African Centre for Biodiversity 2016, p. 8.

368 Doggett 1988, p. 218; Dalrymple 1986, pp. 71, 78.

369 Juma 2011, p. 148.

370 For Cargill, see McCann 2005, p. 173, and Kneen 1995, p. 82; for the restructuring, see Cromwell 1996, p. 3; for this and the companies, see African Centre for Biodiversity 2016, pp. 6, 8.

371 Van Arkadie 2019a, p. 93.

372 African Centre for Biodiversity 2016, pp. 6–7, 10.

373 Anthony 1988, p. 153.

374 See Egger 1975; Egger 1987, pp. 77, 89; Rasmussen 1986, p. 199; Dowswell 1996, p. 47.

monocropping could also be at the expense of cassava planting.³⁷⁵ However, intercropping remained widespread in some regions.³⁷⁶

Instead of the intensification that many foreign agencies called for, for example in their regional plans,³⁷⁷ many Tanzanian planners, politicians and peasants found the expansion of acreage the most important or promising point. Tractors were seen as a solution and for long heavily promoted by the government (which spent 30 percent of its agricultural investment on tractors in 1969–1974), but because of their low number, their impact was marginal.³⁷⁸ In 2011, 10 percent of all farms used them.³⁷⁹ Tractors, also appealing to national politicians' modernist tastes, were usually not for the poor. A sizable number were owned by cooperatives, but these were operating far below their capacity, primarily for wealthy farmers with cash crop production.³⁸⁰ At least half of the tractors were owned by private farms anyway.³⁸¹ In the 1970s, 500–600 units were sold annually, primarily by Internal Harvester Corporation, Ford and Massey Ferguson. Sales peaked at 1,143 in 1984, and there were 30–50 per year in the late 1990s.³⁸²

Many tractors were in bad shape. In 1976, an ICP mission confirmed that many were not operational due to insufficiently trained drivers, the lack of repair workshops and inappropriate use of vehicles, especially for clearing land.³⁸³ But this and the lack of spare parts was well known.³⁸⁴ Companies selling tractors in Tanzania such as John Deere were “not keen to get involved in a unilateral training scheme” and marketed their vehicles through local dealers; apparently, they ignored complaints about missing spare parts, which remained a problem at least until 1980.³⁸⁵ Nor did the ICP address this or supported local production; they offered little more than help with training mechanics.³⁸⁶

Tanzania imported most of its tractors. But small “Tinkabi”-type tractors from Swaziland were first assembled in Tanzania in 1978 and Finnish models soon

375 Lupanga et al. 1995, p. 211.

376 Lupanga et al. 1995, pp. 207–208.

377 See Lohmeier 1982, p. 419.

378 Michalski 1974, p. 123 (3,100 in 1967); Sender and Smith 1986 (18,800 in 1982); Anthony 1988, p. 138 (10,000 in 1985); Makungu et al. n.d. (4,000–8,000). Gibbon et al. 1993, pp. 67–68 saw a decrease in tractor use between 1978 and 1984. Today there are about 20,000 units. For investment, see Anthony 1988, p. 74; for government promotion in the 1980s, see Moris 1989, p. 228. von Freyhold 1979a, p. 110 supported an emphasis on mechanization.

379 Fritz et al. 2015, p. 184.

380 See Michalski 1974, pp. 275–279, and also Migot-Adholla 1972, p. 92.

381 Kjærby 1986, pp. 178–179.

382 UNCTNC 1983a, p. 61; Anthony 1988, p. 74; Makungu et al. n.d., p. 3.

383 “Joint FAO/ICP Agromechanization Mission to Tanzania”, 13 September 1976, FAO, RG 9, ICP, Collection of Mission Reports II. See also Friedrich and Gale 2004, pp. 60, 80; Anthony 1988, p. 51.

384 Simons (ICP) to Fulcher (Fiat), 22 December 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 11, Fiat I. See also Kjærby 1983, p. 71 for FAO and p. 75.

385 Simons to Friedrich, 2 April 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8, Box 12, Deere & Company (see the entire file); Kjærby 1983, p. 76.

386 Anthony 1988, pp. 76–79, 82; Solomon 1977, p. 81.

afterwards. However, plans since the late 1990s for a small tractor factory, lately by the Polish company Ursus, came to nought.³⁸⁷

Ox plowing could have been an alternative, but it was hampered by ambivalent government policies (similar to late colonial and FAO policies),³⁸⁸ farmers' preferences,³⁸⁹ negative cultural perceptions, social inequality and low productivity. Tanzania had, after Ethiopia, the second largest population of livestock in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 1981, it had 13 million cattle (up from 7.4 million in 1958, when Africans owned almost all livestock in the colony), 6 million goats (4.1 million in 1958), 3.8 million sheep (2.8 million in 1958) and 25 million head of poultry. About 40 percent of the country was free of trypanosomiasis and could be used to raise cattle.³⁹⁰ In the 1970s, livestock served as asset for investment and was of high social and cultural value, but, unlike land, it seems to have lost some of its attractiveness as an asset later.³⁹¹ Only a minority of rural households owned cattle.³⁹² Productivity was low, pasturage was meager, and government paid little attention to the sector. Meat exports were small and declining.³⁹³ Meat output increased by about two-thirds from the early 1960s to the early 1980s.³⁹⁴ Offtake in the 1970s was low in places like in Tabora but in 1978 above sustainable levels nationally and high among small pastoralists.³⁹⁵

Government policy generally tended to turn against shifting cultivation and nomadism and therefore against the neglected pastoralists, who were to be transformed into agro-pastoralists. This aim became apparent in the 1983 Livestock Development Policy and again in the 1990s land laws.³⁹⁶ This hampered cattle production, but the main negative factor for the latter was probably villagization, which concentrated herds, limited accessible grazing lands and saw pastoralists dispossessed by village elites rising from among cultivators. Wildlife conservation

387 Makungu et al. n.d.; Kjærby 1983, p. 76; "Tanzania" 2017; Kamil Pawłowski, "Ursus wierzby powróć do Tanzanii", 11 February 2022, www.farmer.pl/technika-rolnicza/maszyny-rolnicze/ursus-wierzby-w-powrot-do-tanzanii,115919.html (accessed 22 July 2022). Ursus went bankrupt in 2022.

388 See Kjærby 1983, pp. 70–73, 77–78; Kjærby 1986, pp. 173, 177; Cortas 1988, p. 33; Anthony 1988, pp. 28–29, 48–50, 64, 80; Nyerere 1968, p. 97; Buntzel 1976, p. 395.

389 Buntzel 1976, pp. 401–402; von Freyhold 1979a, p. 51.

390 Banyikwa 1991, p. 102; for 1958, see IBRD 1961, p. 141; see also ILO 1982, p. 199; UNCTAD 2002, p. 60; Dumont and Mottin 1980, p. 173; Oxfam, Tanzania Office, "Profile of Tanzania", August 1977, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 2292, Oxfam Annual Reports and Policy Statements etc. 1976–1980.

391 Oxfam, Tanzania Office, "Tanzania – Tabora", August 1977, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 2291, Tabora General; Ernst 1973, p. 164; Narayan 1997, pp. 68, 71; Kamuzara 1999, p. 107.

392 Van Arkadie 2019a, p. 82 (21.3 million head of cattle, data from 2007–2008); Government et al. 2000, p. 61.

393 Clark 1978, p. 248.

394 See Sender and Smith 1986, p. 107.

395 Oxfam, Tanzania Office, "Tanzania – Tabora", August 1977, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 2291, Tabora General; see Swantz 1995, pp. 244–245; Mustafa 1990, p. 116; Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 131, for Dodoma.

396 See Mustafa 1990, pp. 102–103, 112; Palmer 1997, General – Land and Pastoralism, p. 2 and Tanzania – Land Reform, p. 7.

efforts also hurt livestock production.³⁹⁷ Meanwhile, programs to raise cattle on state ranches failed, although they received most of the state's quite substantial funding for the livestock sector and some from the USAID and the 'World Bank'.³⁹⁸

The Maasai, a seminomadic pastoralist people in the north who owned two million heads of cattle in 1978, were officially stigmatized as backward, superfluous troublemakers and as savage, uncivilized, dirty spoilers of development.³⁹⁹ From 1967 to the early 1970s, they were denied access to official buildings when in traditional dresses and sometimes physically assaulted. This discrimination enjoyed some support by FAO.⁴⁰⁰ The historical background of this racism was that peasants perceived the Maasai as enemies in the early 20th century because they held others in serfdom. (More recently, they hired wage laborers for crop cultivation.)⁴⁰¹ The authorities and fellow citizens occupied much of their grazing lands in the 1970s and 1980s. These circumstances after independence forced most Maasai (and other pastoralist groups) to diversify their economic activities, mostly to cultivation and tourism, in addition to pastoralism.⁴⁰² At the same time, livestock possession among the Maasai (and other herders) became increasingly differentiated, with a minority holding big herds and increasing groups only small numbers of animals, insufficient to subsist on.⁴⁰³ The official disdain toward livestock also expressed itself in environmental concerns. In one case, the authorities enforced the removal of 90,000 livestock from an area of 1,250 square kilometers. What was supposed to prevent erosion, increase vegetation and forestall the need for famine relief killed many animals, reduced milk consumption, deprived farmers of draught animals and made some groups more vulnerable to famine.⁴⁰⁴

The fact that few draught animals were used was an important limitation to the production of food crops. Africans used oxen first in the country for growing cotton and other cash crops in the 1940s.⁴⁰⁵ In 1980, oxen worked about 10 percent of the cultivated area and tractors 5 percent; in 1994–1995, oxen worked 20 percent and tractors 0.5 percent. The rest was cultivated with hoes. An estimated, 12 percent of farmers plowed with oxen,⁴⁰⁶ most of which grew grain at higher altitude. Lack of grazing lands, forest cover and the presence of the tsetse fly precluded the use of oxen in central-western Tanzania, coastal areas and some of the south. Most oxen

397 Palmer 1997, Tanzania – Land and Pastoralism, pp. 1–3; Arhem 1986, pp. 242, 250.

398 Kjærby 1986, p. 180; Goldschmidt 1981, p. 113; Mustafa 1990, pp. 112–115; von Freyhold 1979a, pp. 108–109.

399 See Büschel 2014, p. 99; for 1978, see ILO 1982, p. 203.

400 Lal 2015, p. 122; Büschel 2014, p. 506. See also ole Parkipuny 1979.

401 Dumont and Mazoyer 1969, p. 153; von Oppen 1996b, p. 94.

402 Mustafa 1990, esp. p. 109; Talle 1999, p. 108; Arhem 1986, pp. 240, 249; Bryceson 1990, p. 50; Mung'ong'o and Loiske 1995, pp. 167–170; Swantz 1995, pp. 228, 242; von Oppen 1996b, pp. 93–94, 101–102; Ndagala 1996, pp. 130–133; von Mintzlauff 1996, pp. 142–143.

403 Arhem 1986, p. 249; Mustafa 1990, p. 11; Swantz 1995, pp. 244–245. For other groups of pastoralists, see Buntzel 1976, p. 349.

404 Mortimer 1998, pp. 136, 138; for another example, see Buntzel 1976, p. 347.

405 Kjærby 1983, pp. 46, 51–52; see also Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 112.

406 Bryceson 1987, p. 156; Kjærby 1983, p. 84; Anthony 1988, p. 80; Ponte 2002, p. 40. Lower numbers in Sarris and van den Brink 1993, p. 143; Sijm 1997, pp. 284, 288.

trained in plowing were held in Shinyanga, Singida and Tabora regions (which had low to medium agricultural potential), but most of the plows were in Iringa, Arusha and Mbeya regions.⁴⁰⁷

The limited number of plows was another obstacle. Their number rose primarily in the 1950s and in 1975–1985 after villagization.⁴⁰⁸ Production was low: over 8,000 in 1967, 15,000 in 1974, about 4,000 in the late 1970s, 13,600 in 1983, and 25,000 in 1986. The producers – the Tanzanian Agricultural Marketing Testing Unit, the Ubungo Farm Implement Manufacturing Company (UFI, whose factory, built by China in 1970, employed 200–400 workers and sold most of its plows in western Tanzania) and two smaller private firms – could not meet the demand. It was the same with ox carts.⁴⁰⁹ And only one-third to two-thirds of the hoes were produced domestically. Local blacksmiths made 20 percent of the hoes and sickles.⁴¹⁰

The main point, however, is that tilling larger fields with either tractors or oxen raised the workload afterwards, primarily for women, who even did some of the plowing and who often could not or would not take on the overload of work; many also refused to spray pesticides.⁴¹¹ Many peasants found plowing with oxen itself too hard work.⁴¹² In addition, farming with oxen, which usually did not result in higher yields, did not also necessarily save labor and increase a family farm's income, especially when prices and rental fees for animals and plows increased in the 1980s.⁴¹³ Ox-cultivation generated profits only for some larger families and men with several wives, and possession of cattle more than land became a signifier of wealth and greater income.⁴¹⁴ The importance of cattle was also the reason for the many rumors that villagization would lead to the collectivization of livestock and for wealthier farmers' firm insistence that it should not.⁴¹⁵ For all these reasons, the expansion of the average cropping area was as limited as the intensification of food crop farming was.

A dearth of credit was also part of this picture. For example, only 1.3 percent of villagers received a formalized credit in 1973 (or 4 percent according to other sources), and 5 percent in 1994/1995. Most of the available credit went to finance

407 Kjærby 1986, p. 174; Kjærby 1983, pp. 18, 82–83; ILO 1982, p. 183.

408 Kjærby 1986, pp. 181–185; Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 68.

409 Garcia and Spitz 1986, p. 137; Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 122; Kjærby 1983, pp. 69, 85–86; Anthony 1988, p. 67; Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 55; Lohmeier 1982, p. 146, 393; Havnevik 1993, p. 306. UFI, which worked clearly below capacity in much of the 1970s, was nonetheless presented as the rare example of a well-functioning manufacturing site: Mapolu 1979, pp. 274–275; Watanabe 1987, p. 533.

410 Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 55; Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 122; Havnevik 1993, p. 306.

411 See Lewis 1988, p. 190; Kjærby 1983, p. 62; Hyden 1980, p. 109; Fortmann 1979, p. 283; Mascarénhas and Mbilinyi 1983, p. 115; Whitehead 1990b, p. 454.

412 Raikes 1975a, pp. 469–473.

413 Kjærby 1983, pp. 34–60; Mohele 1979, p. 219; Kashuliza and Mbiha 1995, pp. 66–67.

414 Collier et al. 1990a, pp. 54–55, 76, 92, 96, 102. For highly unequal ownership of cattle, see also Rasmussen 1986, p. 200; Temu 1979, p. 199; Donner-Reichle 1988, pp. 165, 168, 171, 215. But see the cautionary remarks by Boesen et al. 1977, p. 55. For accumulation through polygamy, see Francis 2000, p. 25.

415 For example, see Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 125; De Vries and Fortmann 1979, p. 129; McHenry Jr. 1979, p. 149.

the operations of parastatals; less than 10 percent was for agricultural production.⁴¹⁶ In late 1970, most of credit outstanding was concentrated in a few relatively wealthy parts of the country.⁴¹⁷ Though the Tanzanian Rural Development Bank was established in 1971 “as chief means of transforming the rural economy” (which was hard to do with just one office per region), only a fraction of its loans went to smallholders for food production. Repayment rates in the 1970s and 1980s were low and declining because peasants made losses, and the costs for the state and society were accordingly high.⁴¹⁸ To get formal loans was easier for villages than individuals. They were all from state banks; from 1967 until 1993, no private banks existed in the country.⁴¹⁹ Even recently, only 5–6 percent of the population were bank customers, most of whom were probably urban dwellers; according to the ‘World Bank’, there were 159 accounts per 1,000 adults, high bureaucratic hurdles and fees for opening an account.⁴²⁰

There were few alternatives to formal credit. Cooperatives could have been one. Tanzania had Africa’s strongest cooperative movement in the 1960s, but these were marketing cooperatives not involved in production and primarily devoted to cash crops. They were semi-state controlled and abolished in 1976–1982, in part to eliminate peasant autonomy but also because wealthier farmers used them for their profit at the expense of poorer members.⁴²¹ Many peasants first criticized the cooperatives as corrupt but were nostalgic about them after their dissolution.⁴²² But it is questionable whether the abolition brought down local economic elites and introduced other, bureaucratic ones. As von Freyhold suggests, the former and the latter were often identical on the village level.⁴²³

After reintroduction, cooperatives’ members, and especially leaders, again tended to be better-off people. Nonetheless, villagers preferred selling to them rather than to private traders.⁴²⁴ Cooperatives also had a limited role in the distribution of inputs. After 1991, multi-purpose cooperatives were introduced, which also served for savings and credit. However, the impact was limited as the number of

416 Musti de Gennaro 1981, pp. 151–152; Abbott 1976, p. 241–242; van der Geest and Köttering 1994, p. 71; Kashuliza and Mbiha 1995, p. 54. 5 percent according to Government et al. 2000, pp. xvi, 41.

417 Loxley 1975a, p. 281.

418 Timberlake 1985, p. 75; Bryceson 1987, pp. 184–185; von Freyhold 1979a, p. 93; Due 1980, esp. pp. 33–36, 44; Due 1978, esp. p. 2; Mohele 1979, p. 216 (quote) and 220; Hyden 1980, pp. 149–150; Kherallah et al. 2002, p. 45; U.S. General Accounting Office 1975, p. 79. On few ‘World Bank’-related input loans (channeled through the TRDB – see Lohmeier 1982, p. 368) for corn production, see Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 125.

419 Hill 1975, p. 231; Noronha 1985, p. 197; UNCTAD 2002, p. 10.

420 Moyo 2011, p. 185; *Banking the Poor* 2009, pp. 24, 30, 101.

421 Michalski 1974, pp. 154–155, 194–202; Migot-Adholla 1972, pp. 170–178; Iliffe 1979, p. 464; Lohmeier 1982, pp. 164–165; Eckert 2007, pp. 209, 246–249; Hyden 1980, p. 133; Hyden 1988, pp. 157–158; Bryceson 1987, pp. 176, 178, 182–183; Erdmann 1996, pp. 199, 277–278; Mporogomyi 1988, p. 90; Collignon 1990, p. 171; Coulson 2013, pp. 188–190.

422 See Erdmann 1996, pp. 193–194, 651–666; Bryceson 1985, p. 57; Mporogomyi 1988, p. 82.

423 Von Freyhold 1979a, pp. 54, 68, 188; see also Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, p. 66; cf. McHenry 1994, p. 109.

424 Hillbom 2013, p. 193; Bryceson 1985, pp. 68–71; Erdmann 1996, pp. 700–702; Chachage 1993, p. 243.

savings and credit cooperatives by the late 1990s was still below 1,000 and their credit record poor.⁴²⁵ But among the few available sources of loans, cooperatives were the number one.⁴²⁶

The formal provision of microcredits became possible in the early 1990s. By 2005, 120,000 Tanzanians had taken out microloans.⁴²⁷ The Bangladeshi NGO and microlender BRAC began to operate in Tanzania in 2006 and supported the raising of irrigated corn, poultry and cows. But after a while, there were reports about defaults and suicides of borrowers.⁴²⁸

There is little scholarship on borrowing from neighbors and relatives; according to one study, it was rare and “frowned upon”.⁴²⁹ It was primarily the very poor who relied for credit on family and friends, traders and other well-off people.⁴³⁰ Thus, it seems that peasants financed investments largely with own savings or migrants’ remittances. And in fact, the savings rate seems to have been very high in the 1970s though much lower in the 1980s.⁴³¹

This made cash income through sales all the more important. Because of the lamentable state of Tanzanian government statistics and the large black market, there are no reliable official data. In 1992, less than one-third of the low per capita cash income came from selling food crops (mostly cassava and corn); other crops contributed close to half.⁴³² There were various estimates about marketization. Allegedly, 12 percent of the corn production was sold around 1950, 30 percent in 1974 and half in the late 1980s.⁴³³ But only about 20 percent of rural households sold corn in the 1990s.⁴³⁴ One author estimated that 26 percent of all cereals in the 1970s was marketed.⁴³⁵ Another estimated (overtly conservative) that 10 percent of pulses and 1 percent of cassava were sold.⁴³⁶ According to one overall assessment, 41 percent of all agricultural production in British-Tanganyika was marketed in 1956–1959, which was virtually the same rate as in 1980.⁴³⁷ One study of the Lake region in 1966–1968 reported that men had stopped leaving agricultural work to

425 Van Ginneken 1999b, p. 22; Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 88; Ponte 2002, p. 87; Erdmann 1996, pp. 651–666, 799–800; Sijm 1997, p. 421.

426 Narayan 1997, pp. 41, 44, 66–74.

427 Ponte 2002, p. 74; Landingin and Lapper 2007.

428 Hillbom 2013, pp. 196–197; Smillie 2009, pp. 238–240.

429 Von Freyhold 1979a, p. 65.

430 Narayan 1997, p. 44.

431 Oxfam, Tanzania Office, “Profile of Tanzania”, August 1977, Oxfam, project files, Box 2292, Oxfam Annual Reports and Policy Statements, etc. 1976–1980; Diejomaoh 1988, p. 52; Collignon 1990, p. 179; for the 1980s (and with lower figures for 1974–1978), see Lele 1991a, pp. 28–31.

432 Nweke et al. 2002, p. 41.

433 Miracle 1966, p. 85; Jones 1980, p. 313; Raikes 1988, p. 26. Fritz et al. 2015 mention a 2000s study finding a marketing rate of 38 percent.

434 Government et al. 2000, p. 53.

435 Huang 1979, p. 156.

436 U.S. Agricultural Attache Nairobi to USDA, 18 March 1977, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 70, TZ Tanzania 1977 DR. Nweke et al. 2002, p. 160 imply a much higher marketization rate for cassava.

437 Abercrombie 1967, p. 5; Collier et al. 1990a, p. 119. Similarly high figures for the 1960s are given in Buntzel 1976, pp. 150–153.

women because of the prospect of earning cash from it, and this area's ruralites were "deeply involved in the monetary sector" in 1973.⁴³⁸

There seems to have been no straight way from 'subsistence' to market for some later figures and estimates about marketization rates were lower.⁴³⁹ Some prominent authors concluded too easily that peasants withdrew into subsistence in the 1970s and that agricultural production was depressed.⁴⁴⁰ Many peasants rather continued to grow surpluses and turned to the black market because private traders offered considerably higher prices. Estimates for the 1970s and 1980s are that 10–40 per cent of *marketed* corn was sold through official channels,⁴⁴¹ with the percentage on the higher end in years with good harvests. The Marketing Development Board estimated, optimistically, that there was not much of a private market for corn in 1979, but it drew 75 per cent of all corn in 1983–1985, and perhaps exceeded 90 per cent in some years. Half of all paddy and rice was sold to private merchants, that is, on the black market.⁴⁴² Allowing the private transportation and marketing of grain in the following years was essentially legalizing a common practice that the state could not suppress.⁴⁴³

Before liberalization, private traders played a big role in buying grain especially in areas near to cities and towns, whereas remote places were served by the NMC only. What was a segmented market⁴⁴⁴ merged into one after liberalization, but peasants in faraway places had difficulties to sell their grain.⁴⁴⁵ Until the mid-1980s, private merchants paid between two and five times more than the official price for food crops.⁴⁴⁶ They also sold products at much higher than official prices, though much of their trade margin was eaten up by transportation costs.⁴⁴⁷ Repeatedly, the government waged campaigns against private traders as saboteurs, hoarders, exploiters and smugglers. As late as 1984, over 1,000 were arrested.⁴⁴⁸ It is not accidental that among the two plays by William Shakespeare translated by President Nyerere himself into Swahili, one was "The Merchant of Venice".⁴⁴⁹ Urban consumers also resented private merchants.⁴⁵⁰ (On the other hand, many

438 Uchendu and Anthony 1974, p. 21; quote: Boesen et al. 1977, p. 52.

439 "Tanzania Report, January 1973", 3 January 1973, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Feb 1970–Nov 1973 (one-third).

440 Bunker 1991, pp. 227, 256 with reference to Göran Hydén. For the second argument, see Streeten 1987, p. 31.

441 Raikes 1988, p. 26; Jones 1980, p. 313 (one-third in 1974); Bryceson 1990, pp. 213–214; Bryceson 1993b, p. 101.

442 See Bryceson 1993, pp. 95–96; Bryceson 1990, p. 165; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, pp. 72, 76–77, 149, 151.

443 Bryceson 1992, p. 101; Bryceson 1993, p. 272.

444 Knudsen and Nash 1993, p. 244; Bryceson 1993, pp. 67–68, 76, 96–99.

445 Bryceson 1999, p. 29; Bryceson 1993, p. 85; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, p. 75.

446 Bryceson 1987, p. 188; Rasmussen 1986, p. 201; Knudsen and Nash 1993, p. 244; Kerner and Cook 1991, pp. 265–266.

447 Rasmussen 1986, pp. 201, 203.

448 Bryceson 1987, p. 189; Bryceson 1993, pp. 14, 24–25, 27, 99–101; for 1983, see Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, pp. ix–xix; Havnevik 1993, p. 58.

449 Coulson 2013, p. 248.

450 Bryceson 1993, pp. 162–175, 204; see also Ndagala 1981, p. 190.

families had a member who was a petty trader.)⁴⁵¹ Police roadblocks on rural roads, where vehicles were searched for illegal merchandise, were a common sight.⁴⁵² The private trade in staple foods was gradually legalized between 1984 and 1989, and official and private prices paid to farmers for corn and rice converged in the late 1980s. In 1985–1986 and in the early 1990s, private traders paid farmers less than official channels.⁴⁵³ In effect, the prices that producers received for their grain declined in the 1990s, whereas prices for many other things in the countryside were on the rise.⁴⁵⁴

However, there is a danger of overestimating the changes. Already in around 1960, many Africans in Tanganyika were active in trade, mostly small merchants.⁴⁵⁵ In the early 1990s, private traders, who it is estimated handled over half of the domestic agricultural transactions, still had difficulties getting loans and obtaining vehicles.⁴⁵⁶ The large-scale trade and transport business continued to be dominated by families of ‘Arab’ or ‘Asian’ descent.⁴⁵⁷ But the villagization campaign in combination with Operation Manduka eliminated them from owning village stores by the mid-1970s.⁴⁵⁸

Social change

The TANU intended its *ujamaa* policy to halt or reverse the process of class formation and social differentiation in the countryside that had taken place in the 1950s and 1960s,⁴⁵⁹ when land ownership became quite unequal, in part through (illegal) land acquisitions.⁴⁶⁰ In the 1960s (and still, or again, in the early 1990s), many villagers were utterly poor and had few possessions – for example, few owned beds and cattle and almost nobody bikes and radios – and low aspirations.⁴⁶¹

Figures about farm sizes vary. An agricultural census in 1971–1972 found that 31.5 percent of farms were less than 0.5 hectares, another 26.7 percent were between 0.5 and 1 hectare (neither of which was enough to feed a family), and 24.7 percent were between 1 and 2 hectares. The average holding was 1.3

451 Bryceson 1992, pp. 101–102.

452 For example, see Erdmann 1996, p. 695.

453 Bryceson et al. 1999, p. 27; Bryceson 1993, p. 272; Bryceson 1992, pp. 100–101; Geier 1992, pp. 175–177; van der Geest and Köttering 1994, p. 82; Chachage 1993, pp. 233–235; Government et al. 2000, p. 7. The picture sketched by the ‘World Bank’ in 1994 (Bryceson et al. 1999, p. 31) was probably too idyllic.

454 Government et al. 2000, pp. xiv, 17, 26; Narayan 1997, pp. 19–29.

455 Collignon 1990, p. 131 note 526; see also Bryceson 1993, p. 54.

456 Abbott 1993b, p. 86; Gibbon et al. 1993, pp. 57–58, Bryceson 1993, pp. 95–96; Sijm 1997, pp. 422–424. For a substantial black market in cash crops, see Mporogomyi 1988, p. 87.

457 Bryceson et al. 1999, p. 31.

458 Thiele 1987a, p. 105; Sarris and van den Brink 1993, p. 119.

459 For this process, see for example Iliffe 1979, pp. 458, 466. For the policy, see Nyerere’s McDougall Memorial Lecture at FAO, 18 November 1963, BA, B116/20181.

460 Awiti 1975a, pp. 61, 68; Cliffe et al. 1975b, pp. 166–168.

461 Routh 1976, pp. 24–25; see also Booth et al. 1993, pp. 71–73.

hectares.⁴⁶² According to FAO data from 1975, it was close to 2 hectares, with the smallest farms in the north.⁴⁶³ It is unclear whether farms became smaller or larger in the following years. One study states that the average farm size was 1.1 hectares in 1986–1987,⁴⁶⁴ another speaks of 2.2 hectares in 1988.⁴⁶⁵ Collier et al. found that villagization had shrunk the average farm slightly from 2.1 to 1.9 hectares, divided in 2.5 plots on average. Though the sizes varied widely in their sample, only 1 percent of rural households had no land at all.⁴⁶⁶ Yet according to another survey with a smaller sample, most people owned more land than before villagization.⁴⁶⁷ And remarkably, holdings seem to have grown overall in the course of the 1970s and 1980s.⁴⁶⁸ But so did the average household size.⁴⁶⁹

Although most resettled families received new plots, villagization did not eliminate the inequality of land ownership and may have made it slightly worse: 70 percent of those who had owned over 5 hectares and 58 percent with less than 0.5 hectares before villagization stayed in the same categories afterwards.⁴⁷⁰ Conflicts over land ownership were frequent. “People are much concerned about the ownership of their land, and clan books as well as daily life in the villages are full of disputes and quarrels about land, especially about the exact borders between farms”.⁴⁷¹ And they intensified in the 1980s, especially in villages close to towns. These conflicts also impeded the land titling that the government planned.⁴⁷² The *best* land was also unequally distributed.⁴⁷³ And dependency relations in the countryside were based on the leasing of land.⁴⁷⁴ Those who after villagization had good land close to the village rose to a quasi-landlord position by leasing plots to poorer fellow villagers.⁴⁷⁵ According to one study, however, wealth and poverty were correlating less to difference of land ownership per capita than to livestock possession, the degree of cash crop cultivation, education and wage labor.⁴⁷⁶

462 Ghai and Green 1979, p. 243; Omari 1989, p. 10; Bryceson 1990, p. 41. Chachage 1993, p. 223 sees 83 percent of farms under 3 hectares but little differentiation. Routh 1976 surveyed 156 households cross-regionally in 1967, averaging 2.3 hectares.

463 Sarris and van den Brink 1993, p. 9.

464 Sijm 1997, p. 119.

465 Banyikwa 1991, p. 99. For local studies, see Schmied 1989, p. 161 (3.0 hectares); Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 189.

466 Collier et al. 1990a, pp. 50–53.

467 De Vries and Fortmann 1979, p. 133.

468 But Sarris and van den Brink 1993, p. 138 show stagnation, and shrinking larger farms. Farm sizes seem to have been at a similar level around 2010: Fritz et al. 2015, p. 175.

469 In 1967, there were 4.5 persons per household, compared to 4.9 in 1978 and 5.3 in 1988: Sarris and van den Brink 1993, p. 59.

470 Bryceson 1990, p. 42; Collier et al. 1990a, p. 51.

471 van Hekken and Thoden van Velzen 1972, p. 98; Chachage 1993, p. 238; van Donge 1992, p. 84. Quote: Boesen et al. 1977, p. 93 about West Lake region.

472 Gibbon et al. 1993, pp. 66–67; Sundet 1996, pp. 61–62.

473 van Hekken and Thoden van Velzen 1972, pp. 19–29.

474 van Hekken and Thoden van Velzen 1972, pp. 31–35.

475 Mueller 1980, p. 212.

476 Collier et al. 1990a, esp. pp. 91, 96; slightly different data in Seppälä 1998, p. 176.

A study in the 1980s of the Western Usambara mountains in Tanga region – where arable land was relatively scarce, poverty widespread and many cash crops were grown – found great inequality of holding sizes, but relatively little land was sold and bought, implying that wealth, status and inequality were inherited and somewhat stable.⁴⁷⁷ Also before 1983, there were private land transactions (which officially only village communities could do), in some places substantial ones, and even more, and increasingly, letting and renting.⁴⁷⁸ In the late 1980s, speculation in land by an “upcoming business class”, but also by politicians, was reported, a result of the 1983 National Agricultural Policy, which emphasized individual peasant production.⁴⁷⁹ Land acquisitions became quite common.⁴⁸⁰

Larger farmers could rise, and high profits be made, particularly in areas close to towns and along important roads. Unexpectedly, this happened less through raising export (and staple) crops than through what Stefano Ponte calls “fast crops”: perishable fruits and vegetables for the domestic market, like tomatoes, cabbage, beans and onions to meet a rising urban demand. Selling these produce was also profitable (though often it was not) because it was not controlled by marketing boards, and they could be sold quickly before poor villagers, as was customary, could ask for them as a matter of neighborly support.⁴⁸¹ Their rise began in the 1970s, but they were more used to earn cash than to upgrade the own families’ nutrition.⁴⁸² Instead of retreating into subsistence production, as some scholars hypothesized, peasants turned to these crops.⁴⁸³ This indicated that peasants were integrated into Tanzania’s regional markets rather than the world market. Many experts promoted the cultivation of these crops. Most of the capital for expanding small agricultural businesses came from own savings and reinvested profits,⁴⁸⁴ but it could also be derived from “high-status employment” like the civil service.⁴⁸⁵

In Tanzania, where natural conditions were much less favorable than in Bangladesh, for example, farmers with 1 or 2 hectares could hardly withdraw into subsistence because it would have meant starvation. Most families could not afford to do this, and those who could were not tempted. In the mid-1980s, only 43–64 percent of rural households in three regions could live off their self-produced stocks for longer than half of the year.⁴⁸⁶ They needed other income, which came from a wide range of activities and not only cash crop sales. The process that ensued (or

477 Sender and Smith 1990, pp. 14, 34, 36, 40, 77, 100, cf. p. 33–34; Boesen et al. 1977, pp. 53, 58.

478 Noronha 1985, pp. 136, 138; for land rights, see *ibid.*, pp. 127–130, 331–336. For little tenancy and borrowing in 1969, see Iliffe 1979, p. 461.

479 “Tanzania Annual Report”, ca. April 1988, Oxfam, Annual Reports, Africa, S-Z, Tanzania – Annual; Donner-Reichle 1988, pp. 76–77. For a later period, see Tsikata 2003, p. 169.

480 Narayan 1997, p. 41.

481 See Ponte 2002, pp. 61, 113–132, Chachage 1993, pp. 222–223; Nylandsted and Birch-Thonesen 2015, p. 60; Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 204.

482 For example, see von Freyhold 1979a, p. 92 for the early 1970s; Kreysler n.y. 1974, p. 84; Matango 1979, p. 168; Feierman 1993, p. 134.

483 Raikes 1988, p. 51; see also Havnevik 1993, p. 258.

484 Nylandsted and Birch-Thonesen 2015, pp. 60, 65.

485 Francis 2000, p. 25.

486 Sijm 1997, p. 64 (data from 1984 to 1985).

continued) was specific in that most families kept their agricultural land and that relatively little agricultural wage labor emerged.

From the 1970s onward, there was little employment on plantations. Agricultural laborers in the decade worked more often for cash crop-growing medium farmers.⁴⁸⁷ But almost half of the larger farmers did not hire laborers in the early 1970s, and those who did needed only about one man-month per year on average.⁴⁸⁸ Twenty years later, over half of the poor and middle-income peasants were involved in labor exchanges, with one-sixth *hiring* labor. But contracts were usually for short periods, and as wages declined, wage labor did not provide much income.⁴⁸⁹ At that time, wage labor contributed only 1–2 percent of the labor input to cultivation.⁴⁹⁰ For example, cassava growers still employed few laborers, most of whom were men.⁴⁹¹ In Lushoto district, where social differentiation was relatively intense, it had been primarily unmarried women with little land who sought paid employment, which was scarce, but married women joined them in the 1990s when many husbands no longer objected.⁴⁹² Of course, earning a wage did not guarantee economic security. Agricultural day labor could be a slippery slope to destitution, especially for women, because it could force them to neglect their own fields.⁴⁹³ In the late 1980s, the poorest smallholders saw a decline in both their agricultural and non-agricultural incomes.⁴⁹⁴

Official data on off-farm employment, which capture only a small part of the amount of wage labor, are of little help, but they do indicate a rise of the service sector in the 1960s and 1970s,⁴⁹⁵ much of which was probably urban. Urban incomes lost half or more of their real value in the 1980s, so that a worker's income did not feed a family. But rural incomes possibly rose slightly. Thus, the urban–rural income gap narrowed after 1974–1975.⁴⁹⁶ Falling urban real incomes were without direct effect in the countryside, but indirectly it meant that cities offered fewer opportunities to escape rural poverty.

With no clear path to a better life, rural families clung to their land but tried to diversify their income. Among their many options, in addition to food crop sales, were agricultural and non-farm wage labor, selling vegetables and other crops, relatives' remittances from work in the cities, handicrafts, tailoring, mat and basket

487 See Sender and Smith 1990, esp. p. 157 note 3, who argue that rural wage labor in the 1970s was underreported.

488 Boesen et al. 1977, p. 55. For similar data for Geita district in 1966–1968, see Uchendu and Anthony 1974, p. 57, and for a countrywide sample in 1980, see Collier et al. 1990a, p. 132; see also Thiele 1986, p. 252.

489 Seppälä 1998, pp. 67, 72; Ponte 2002, pp. 124–125, 127; Mhando 2011, p. 467; Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 228.

490 Havnevik 1993, p. 122.

491 Nweke et al. 2002, pp. 94, 145.

492 Francis 2000, pp. 25–26; see also Sender and Smith 1990, p. 66.

493 Feerman 1990, p. 106.

494 Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 123.

495 Bryceson 1990, pp. 132–135.

496 Elson 1991, p. 49; McHenry Jr. 1994, pp. 76–80; Tripp 1992, p. 164; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, p. 82; Francis 2000, p. 5.

making, charcoal burning, woodcutting, carpentry and construction, services, selling animal products, fishing, mining, salt making, but the most common were petty trade and barter trade, and beer brewing.⁴⁹⁷ However, most of those who pursued these options were self-employed in barely profitable micro-businesses.⁴⁹⁸ In a 1988 cross-regional survey, 80 percent of villagers reported being constantly worried about a lack of food because of income insecurity.⁴⁹⁹

The sources of additional income changed over time. In the 1970s and 1980s, rural families became more dependent on monetary exchanges, but instead of more wage labor and animal husbandry (whose contributions were declining), they earned more money through own businesses by 1982–1983, through farm product sales by 1988–1989 and a bit through higher remittances by domestic labor migrants.⁵⁰⁰ Compared to neighboring Kenya, rural Tanzanians depended more on food cultivation for their own consumption and on own businesses, but less on wage labor and remittances.⁵⁰¹ In the 1990s and 2000s, the sale of food crops remained rural Tanzanians' main source of income, with sales of cash crops declining and wages/salaries and business slightly rising in importance.⁵⁰² Income from livestock was more important in better-off families, wage labor in poorer ones.⁵⁰³ How much income came from off-farm activities also varied greatly among regions.⁵⁰⁴

Rural dwellers in the early 1970s said that they would spend a higher income on consumption, that is, for housing, clothing and food, rather than productive investment.⁵⁰⁵ This accords with rural women's statements in the 1980s about shopping in rural stores; far from withdrawing into subsistence, they desired a better supply with consumer goods although complaining about the income pressure this created.⁵⁰⁶ Forty percent of the villages had a store in 1977.⁵⁰⁷ Off-farm income and raising livestock could improve a family's life, but only a minority were able to accumulate assets. The latter depended on higher education, better jobs, the existing infrastructure and market access.⁵⁰⁸

497 Ndaro 1992, pp. 174–175, 179, 183–186 (for Dodoma); Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 206 (Dodoma); van Donge 1992, pp. 81–82 (Uluguru mountains); Nindi 198, p. 170 (Iringa); Collier et al. 1990a, pp. 41, 66; Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 69; Havnevik 1993, pp. 165–167, 171, Seppälä 1998, pp. 75–89, 174, 176, 178; Ponte 2002, p. 136; Bevan et al. 1989, pp. 54, 59. Sarris and van den Brink 1993, p. 9 offer data about off-farm income for each region.

498 Seppälä 1998, p. 178; van Donge 1992, p. 82; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, pp. 43, 124–125, 148, 169.

499 Chachage 1993, p. 238.

500 Mhando 2011, p. 467; Ponte 2002, p. 139; Sarris and van den Brink 1993, pp. 65–68, 151; Bevan et al. 1989, pp. 60–62.

501 See Bevan et al. 1989, p. 141 (crop sales were an equally important source of income in both countries, contrary to popular perceptions that Kenya was a market-happy country and Tanzania was not).

502 Van Arkadie 2019a, p. 72.

503 Dercon and Krishnan 1996, pp. 856–859, on rural Shinyanga.

504 Fleuret 1990, p. 273.

505 Egger and Glaeser 1975, p. 163.

506 Donner-Reichle 1988, pp. 235, 271; Ponte 2002, p. 121.

507 Becker 2019, p. 195.

508 See Collier et al. 1990a, esp. pp. 76, 81, 106; Ponte 2002, p. 9; Francis 2000, p. 26.

Income diversification, which we encountered in the other case studies as well, has been called “characteristic of many peasant economies”.⁵⁰⁹ The question is what it indicates. According to an optimist like Pekka Seppälä, it was leading to the accumulation of capital and land in particular, which he celebrated.⁵¹⁰ But was it a good sign that England became a ‘nation of shopkeepers’ in the 19th century, or rather an indicator of poverty? According to other authors, income diversification contributed to economic security like a cushion; still others argued that it accentuated inequality.⁵¹¹

Another question is whether income diversification was actually on the rise in the 1980s and 1990s – as the mainstream claims – or had already been widespread for long and only became more visible at times of ‘structural adjustment’ and enforced liberalization.⁵¹² After all, Julius Nyerere had warned in the 1960s of the beginning of the undesirable process in which the increased cultivation of cash crops created more wage labor and, so, initiated the emergence of a rural proletariat.⁵¹³ In 1976–1977, one quarter of smallholders’ incomes was from non-agricultural activities,⁵¹⁴ which were already diverse in 1969.⁵¹⁵

Whether the process started in the 1950s or the 1980s, undeniably there was social change and social differentiation, but neither did it lead to widespread “proletarianization” nor much land concentration and the emergence of a bourgeoisie.⁵¹⁶ Some wealthier families, and villages, invested in transportation, especially trucks, which indicated their engagement in trade.⁵¹⁷ But even Seppälä spoke of a “[d]iffuse class structure” without a clear “capitalist-labourer distinction”.⁵¹⁸

The rise of the belief in witchcraft indicated mounting social conflicts. Some analysts argue that witchcraft practices were weapons of the weak to limit elite power, but they could also be the expression of intra-elite struggles.⁵¹⁹ However, *accusations* of witchcraft were rather weapons against the weak, including many killings of suspects which were by majority female. “These murders, often of older single or divorced women, carried out at the behest of their own family or kin, appeared to be related [. . .] to intensified conflicts over inheritance of land and other wealth”, while chiefs did less mediation than in earlier times.⁵²⁰ In anti-witchcraft measures like the public shaving of the heads of women, witchcraft was presented as anti-development.⁵²¹ Equally on the rise, and indicating social

509 Collier et al. 1990a, p. 40.

510 See Seppälä 1998, esp. pp. 38–55.

511 Ponte 2002, pp. 7–8, 134, 153–154.

512 Carswell 2002 argues the second point; see Ponte 2002, p. 7. Booth et al. 1993, p. iv are in between.

513 Nyerere 1968, pp. 112–115.

514 Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 65.

515 Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi 1983, pp. 99, 104, 110.

516 Van Donge 1992, pp. 81–82 (quote p. 82).

517 Nindi 1988, p. 171; Ndaró 1992, pp. 180, 189.

518 Seppälä 1998, pp. 197 (first quote), 212 (second quote).

519 Thompson 1987a, esp. pp. 146–147.

520 Booth et al. 1993, p. 23.

521 Green 2014, pp. 137–156, esp. p. 154.

conflict, were robberies and assault and local vigilante groups allegedly to combat such crimes.⁵²²

If families remained anchored on the farm, women were the anchor. Their farming upheld the claim to land as a security where men had left for work in the cities.⁵²³ Formally, most women had no land rights, and those who did had acquired it through inheritance or having cleared it rather than through distribution by village communities.⁵²⁴ Resettlement schemes in the 1960s as well as land improvement measures reduced women's claim to free subsistence land, and land registration resulted in some women selling their land, but enabled other women to buy some.⁵²⁵ The 1971 Marriage Act left many women without means of production after divorce.⁵²⁶ Regulations in statutory law, customary law and Islamic law differed concerning female's right to inheritance. In practice, brothers often disputed sisters' right to land but fathers supported their daughters' ownership because they hoped that their daughters would take care of them in old age.⁵²⁷

Although many were deprived of ownership, women worked more hours in agriculture than men even if these lived on the farm, as was also acknowledged in the Arusha Declaration.⁵²⁸ They did most of the food processing and transporting of produce and over half of the hoeing, weeding, harvesting and marketing.⁵²⁹ Root crops in particular were grown by women because they did not require as much of a collective effort as grain production, especially at harvest.⁵³⁰

Numerous studies have described male–female relationships in Tanzania as particularly exploitative.⁵³¹ Official misogyny manifested itself in the facts that the authorities persecuted women all too easily as prostitutes, and at least two women were officially executed for witchcraft in the 1960s. In the 1970s and 1980s, the state did little to punish or prevent killings of close to 3,000 women (and many men) by crowds as witches.⁵³² But women fought back against male oppression and exploitation. For example, weeding became a contentious issue and some men acquiesced to women's demands to do some of it, and if less millet was grown than before, this was in part because women rejected the crop because it required much weeding. Women had little interest in demanding the use of oxen because, though they reduced their workload in terms of hoeing, they increased it for weeding.⁵³³

522 Booth et al. 1993, pp. 23–24.

523 Van Donge 1992, p. 84.

524 See Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi 1983; Brain 1976, pp. 266, 278; Boserup 1970, p. 59; Swantz 1985, pp. 60–61, 68, 81; Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 193.

525 Brain 1976, pp. 265, 275; Feierman 1990, p. 183; Englert 2004, p. 54.

526 Coulson 2013, p. 248; Narayan 1997, p. 36.

527 Tsikata 2003, pp. 156, 160.

528 Snyder and Tadesse 1995, p. 31 (late 1960s); Ghai and Green 1979, p. 235; Swindell 1985, p. 16; Barre 2022, p. 123.

529 Omari 1989, pp. 13–15.

530 Falk Moore 1993, p. 24.

531 See Swantz 1985; Dumont and Mazoyer 1969, p. 141; Mbilinyi 1990, pp. 118–121; Swindell 1985, p. 16.

532 Swantz 1985, p. 44; Masaki 1995, esp. pp. 282, 286.

533 See Geier 1992, pp. 86, 90, 91; Kjærby 1983, p. 62.

Development projects could also lead to more work for women and fail because of their resistance.⁵³⁴ Villagization made women's task to collect firewood harder, but they evaded collective *ujamaa* work less than men.⁵³⁵

In the countryside, not much specialization emerged, but there was a division of labor according to sex (and age).⁵³⁶ Wives increasingly claimed economic independence from their husbands, but (contrary to what some male officials claimed) this was not the only thing to undermine marriages.⁵³⁷ The discussions about the purchase of hullers for corn, sorghum or millet – which relieved some females of a burden but deprived others of their incomes – show that women were not a homogenous group but permeated by social differences.⁵³⁸

Women carried a growing share of the agricultural workload and were denied access to money, technology and transportation by family, cooperatives, village leaders, bureaucracy and project organizers, but they became also more active in other, often low-earning pursuits. Already in the 1970s, many earned an income from petty trade, beer brewing, wage labor, handicrafts, tailoring or charcoal burning.⁵³⁹ Brewing was largely a female business; running bars, restaurants or trading businesses also, but to a lesser degree.⁵⁴⁰ Drinking beer, at earlier times often practiced in kin or neighborly after-work parties, became commercialized around 1980.⁵⁴¹ Alcoholism became a big problem in the countryside.⁵⁴² Many urban women started a microbusiness as well or found informal employment.⁵⁴³

On one reading of social developments, private ('Asian') merchants, cooperatives and parastatals all extracted economic rent from farmers, who were thus exploited by competing and alternating elites who arguably constituted an emerging bourgeoisie.⁵⁴⁴ (To the extent that it happened, the extraction operated through pricing systems rather than taxes.⁵⁴⁵) Other authors like Marjorie Mbilinyi criticized rural elites for *not* becoming a bourgeoisie, because, instead of factories or large commercial enterprises, they only invested in "trade or shops or buses".⁵⁴⁶

534 Fortmann 1979, p. 283; Feierman 1990, pp. 157–158.

535 Donner-Reichle 1988, pp. 283–284. But see note 9/120.

536 Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 35.

537 Jones 1981, pp. 217–218; Ponte 2002, p. 8.

538 Omari 1989, pp. 15–16; Ogola 1989; Mbonile 1995, p. 151; Ndaro 1992, p. 192.

539 Ogola 1989; see also *ibid.*, p. 117; Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi 1983, pp. 99, 104, 110; Booth et al. 1993, pp. 30–33, 74–76. For the neglect of women, see also Dumont and Mottin 1980, pp. 147–152.

540 Kerner and Cook 1991, p. 263; Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, p. 124.

541 Thiele 1987a, p. 122.

542 Narayan 1997, pp. 31–32.

543 Koda and Omari 1991, pp. 120, 124–125, 128.

544 This echoes views by Mandani 1976, pp. 261, 264, concerning neighboring Uganda.

545 Tanzania had a higher proportion of direct taxes than, say, Bangladesh, but after farm taxes were abolished in 1969, the burden was largely on urbanites, while less than 10 percent of rural dwellers paid income taxes. Income taxes were highly progressive, but capital was not taxed much, at least around 1990. The majority of revenue was from indirect taxes. See Huang 1979, pp. 156–157; Moore Lappé and Beccar-Varela 1980, p. 61; Hyden 1980, p. 236; McHenry Jr. 1994, pp. 80–81; Mushi 1982, p. 34; Sarris and van den Brink 1993, p. 25.

546 Shivji 1976, p. 113; see also von Freyhold 1979a, p. 64.

Social differentiation in the countryside was connected to the one in cities. According to Issa Shivji, class formation in Tanzania was slowing down in the 1970s, but he noted that high-ranking ministry officials acquired many posts in parastatals on the side.⁵⁴⁷ The people who Michaela von Freyhold called the “bureaucratic bourgeoisie” maintained close ties to their families in the countryside, visiting regularly and bringing, or sending, remittances (as did urban workers).⁵⁴⁸

Development policies created new civil servants positions – for example, 500 in the Kigoma Rural Development Project that the ‘World Bank’ organized and co-financed, affecting a population of 236,000.⁵⁴⁹ (Far more expensive was the expat planning team; planning costs for the Kigoma project alone were US\$10 million.⁵⁵⁰) The rise in the number of state employees from about 66,000 in 1967 to at least 101,000 in 1972, 126,000 in 1976, 276,000 in 1984, around 302,000 in 1989 and more than 350,000 in the early 1990s owed much to foreign ‘aid’. Especially the staff in parastatals expanded, as did the number of these entities.⁵⁵¹ From 1966 to 1976, the civil service grew by 13.3 percent annually, GDP by about 3.9 percent.⁵⁵² Part of the increase was teachers and health workers, at least in the late 1970s.⁵⁵³ At that point, foreign creditors, led by the IMF and the ‘World Bank’, demanded cuts in the number of state employees whose hiring their own funding had once made possible.⁵⁵⁴ Though Tanzania’s so-called retrenchment exercises in 1975–1976 and 1985 had a limited effect, the latter one strongly affected agricultural parastatals.⁵⁵⁵ But in 1993–1995, 50,000 civil servants were sacked.⁵⁵⁶ In summary, this confirms James Ferguson’s thesis that foreign resource inflows (‘aid’) strengthened the state apparatus.⁵⁵⁷

However, inflation caused the standard of living for civil servants – especially in the higher ranks – to fall steeply in the 1970s and 1980s because their salaries were far from keeping up with inflation; so, one cannot argue that they enriched themselves and rose to the rank of a national bourgeoisie (although they tended to

547 Shivji 1976, pp. 90, 178.

548 Quoted in Hyden 1980, p. 161.

549 Lohmeier 1982, pp. 369, 379–380.

550 Coulson 2013, p. 295.

551 The figures are from Mamuya 1993, pp. 76, 91; Hyden 1983, p. 93; and Sijm 1997, p. 220. Others offer higher ones: Martin 1988, pp. 193–194 estimated 300,000 employees in parastatals alone in 1980, or about half of all public servants. Mukandala 1983, pp. 253–254 says there were about 101,000 in 1972, 191,000 in 1976 and 295,000 in 1980. See also McHenry Jr. 1979, p. 57; Sarris and van den Brink 1993, p. 26; Sijm 1997, p. 132 note 45. For the growing number of parastatals, see Havnevik 1993, p. 50; Sarris and van den Brink 1993, p. 23.

552 Mukandala 1983, p. 254. See also World Bank 1981, p. 41.

553 Legum 1988, p. 7; Bryceson 1993, p. 227.

554 A similar demand came from Coulson 1975, p. 58.

555 Mamuya 1993, pp. 82–91, 91–106, see also p. 75; Mukandala 1983, pp. 254, 258; Legum 1988, p. 7; Hyden 1983, p. 93; Yeager 1989, p. 119.

556 Sijm 1997, p. 220.

557 See Ferguson 2014 (1990); Bierschenk et al. 1993, p. 14 (“Verstaatlichung und Bürokratisierung von Entwicklung”).

behave in authoritarian ways).⁵⁵⁸ In the face of inflation, the government raised low but not high salaries in the 1970s. Still, in the 1980s, a family could not live on the salary of most civil servants. The same was true for some NGO's employees.⁵⁵⁹ Widespread corruption among bureaucrats, visible in reimbursement for expenses without receipt, the misuse of vehicles, outstanding personal advances and charges extorted for documents from citizens, was mostly just to get by.⁵⁶⁰ Embezzlement, theft and robbery did occur in the National Milling Corporation, the biggest parastatal, as well as in the villages because the NMC often paid cash for produce.⁵⁶¹ Embezzlement was easy in agricultural parastatals because the only 45 accountants struggled to keep track of transactions equivalent of US\$600 million annually.⁵⁶²

Corruption in the countryside cemented social differences. Scholars noted that civil servants, many of whom came from the wealthiest local families, gave large farmers favorable treatment and privileged access to official resources.⁵⁶³ Wealthier farmers subverted policies of collectivization and tried to control local developments by taking over leadership positions in cooperative and village councils, which enabled them to control land distribution during villagization and to appropriate resource inflows individually in order to maintain their leading economic position. Some managed to alienate land from agro-pastoralists (but usually poor soils) and poor villagers, empowered by new land rights and with the support of courts.⁵⁶⁴ But they usually did not rise further.

A look at Tanzania's richest men today (or recently deceased) is illustrative of processes of capital accumulation in recent decades. Most made their fortune in mining, trade (especially import business), real estate or media; a few in manufacturing or construction, but none in agriculture. Only a few are known members of CCM, the ruling party, and only one started out with a party career. None seems to have been civil servant or military officer. Only one grew up in a village, and among all those urbanites, many are of South Asian or West Asian descent, that is, from traditional commercial elites.⁵⁶⁵

Massive rural social mobility, the struggle for a livelihood, but without strong differentiation and land alienation, was also reflected in vital statistics and data on undernourishment in Tanzania.

558 This is the argument by Schneider 2014, esp. pp. 12, 147–166. See also Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, p. 40.

559 See Seppälä 1998, p. 170; Schmale 1993, pp. 130–131 on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1991.

560 Mukandala 1983, pp. 259–261; Lofchie 1978, p. 457; Bryceson 1993, pp. 20–21; Bryceson 1990, pp. 189–191, 193.

561 Bryceson 1985, p. 64; see also Bryceson 1990, pp. 189–193.

562 Schluter 1988, p. 204 (data for 1980).

563 van Hekken and Thoden van Velzen 1972, pp. 109–113; Thoden van Velzen 1975a, pp. 181–182, 185.

564 Mung'ong'o and Loiske 1995, pp. 172–179.

565 Included were Mohammed Dewji, Rostam Aziz, Bakhresa, Reginald Mengi, Ally Awadh, Shekhar Kanabar, Subash Patel, Ghalib Said Mohammed, Fida Hassan Rashid, Salim Turkey, Yogesh Manek, Aziz Abood, Yusuf Manji, Haroon Zakaria, Ali Mufuruki and Nasir Mustafa Karamagi. See "Top 10 Richest Men in Tanzania", <https://richestjet.com/richest-men-in-tanzania>, and "12 richest people in Tanzania in 2020", www.tuko.co.ke/334777-12-richest-people-tanzania-2020.html (both accessed 2 November 2020). See also Chachage 1993, p. 241. Coulson 2019a, p. 28 argues that many super-rich worked earlier in the state apparatus or parastatals.

Table 9.1 Data on life and death in Tanzania in 1956–2013⁵⁶⁶

	1956	1960	1962	1963	1965	1967	1970	1973	1974	1978	1980	1981	1982	1983
Crude death rate		24.5			22	22	22			17			13	
Life expectancy		42	35	37	43	41	45	48.5	45	44	52	47	41	51
			37	42		46				51	53	51	51	
Infant mortality per 1,000	190	147	225		138	161	125.3	152		113	102.9	137	100	
		151.5					132			137	122		103	
							155			150				
										152				
Under 5 mortality per 1,000		175	225			260	187		360	135	202		118	
		248								141				

	1984	1985	1987	1989	1990	1991	1995	1996	1997	2000	2002	2005	2010	2013	2013
Crude death rate			14												
Life expectancy	51	50	53	49	50.5	51	48		51	50	43	51	59.2	61.5	61.5
	52				54		51								
							52								
Infant mortality per 1,000	111	110	108	112		104	92	93	85						
	137	117	110			109	112		92						
						115									
Under 5 mortality per 1,000		132	179	ca	102	176	141		143						
				175											

566 See Graf 1973, S. 223; Johnston and Kilby 1975, p. 79; Stremplat and Stremplatt-Platte 1981, p. 41; Mbilinyi 1982, p. 303; Koponen 1986, p. 41; Sender and Smith 1986, p. 64; Wagner 1986, pp. 278–279; Lewis 1988, p. 78; Legum 1988, pp. 3–4; Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 309; Yeager 1989, p. 48; Bryceson 1990, p. 40 (rural infant and child mortality, 1978); Geier 1992, p. 154, note 1 (152/1000 infant mortality rate registered in hospitals), 170; Jazairy et al. 1992, pp. 8, 392; Kiondo 1993, p. 167; Datta 1994, p. 161; Thomas et al. 1994, pp. 58, 74; Sanders et al. 1996, p. 11; Mikell 1997, p. 346; Sijm 1997, pp. 79 (under-five mortality for 1992, listed here at 1991) and 227; van Ginneken 1999b, p. 19; Kiwara 1999, pp. 118, 120, 127, 129 with many but some contradictory data; Government et al. 2000, p. 105; Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, p. 192; Harrison et al. 2009a, p. 272; Faaland and Parkinson 2013, p. 8; UNICEF 2016a.

Though some of these data, which come from different authorities and other sources, are obviously wrong, what they do show is no straight progress. The general tendencies are that life expectancy rose from independence until the early 1980s, after which it stagnated for about 25 years; infant mortality followed a similar course, with little change for at least 15 years after the early 1980s⁵⁶⁷; and mortality for children under five was unchanged for 20 years from the late 1970s.

Another set of data (see Table 9.2) modifies this view, agreeing that infant mortality did not change much from 1980 to the mid-1990s but mortality for children from 1 to 5 years decreased further, despite the fact that the population's food consumption first remained flat and then fell in those decades. Death rates of children finally improved in the 2000s and 2010s. UNICEF data purport that deaths in children under five continually fell from their high level in 1990 to under 150 per 1,000 in 1997, under 100 in 2005, and under 60 in 2015. According to the CIA, infant mortality dropped from about 80 per 1,000 in 2000 to 40 in 2017, with some erratic movements in between.⁵⁶⁸ The 1980s and 1990s were decades of stagnation in bad conditions.

Table 9.2 Young child mortality rates in Tanzania and daily calorie consumption in 1974–1996 (three-year averages are per 1,000)⁵⁶⁹

	1974– 1976	1979– 1981	1982– 1984	1984– 1986	1987– 1989	1989– 1991	1992– 1994	1994– 1996
Infant mortality	140	104	102	110	105	107	108	109
Under five mortality	240	201	190	181	176	173	167	154
Daily calorie consumption per capita	2159	2282	2286	2296	2266	2226	2053	2020

Such macroscopic data conceal regional differences. In 1973, a baby born in the countryside had slightly more than two-thirds of the life expectancy of one born in Dar-es Salaam. The capital, Arusha and Kilimanjaro regions had the lowest infant

567 A steady decline of infant mortality for five-year periods 1950–1955 to 1980–1985 is also reported by Prosterman 1984, p. 14: he lists 172.8; 158.5; 144.5; 131.4; 119.1; 107.4; 98.4 per 1,000 life births.

568 See for UNICEF <https://data.unicef.org/country/tza> and for the CIA Tanzania, Infant mortality rate, www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?c=tz&v=29 (both accessed 8 August 2019).

569 Carlsson et al. 1999, p. 47.

mortality rates.⁵⁷⁰ In the capital, the mortality rates for children under five differed widely among income groups.⁵⁷¹

Some expressed these facts in other words. A UNICEF study published in 1973 by the Tanzanian National Scientific Research Council said that the death of 150,000 children “is quietly happening around us”. At a workshop, “it was reported that 150,000 out of 800,000 children die between the years of 1–5”⁵⁷²; one group of authors wrote in 1981 that 50,000 children under five died each year but Oxfam and Marjorie Mbilinyi put the figure at nearly 200,000.⁵⁷³ Still others argued that 120,000 deaths of children under five were “connected to malnutrition” and 10,000 “directly caused” by it.⁵⁷⁴ Mbilinyi estimated that 547 children under five died each day, met with “silence from the Government”.⁵⁷⁵ She linked half of all infant deaths directly to protein-energy malnutrition.⁵⁷⁶

A variety of data imply that in the 1980s and 1990s, Tanzania did better in terms of health care and sanitation than income or food consumption.⁵⁷⁷ Government spending on health care was comparatively high in the 1970s and again from the late 1980s to the early 1990s with a dip in between, but it was concentrated on urban areas, though decreasingly so. In 1993–1994, the concentration was on prevention. Ruralites had little chance of being treated in urban hospitals.⁵⁷⁸ In the 1970s, thousands of state-run health clinics and posts were built in the countryside. This emphasis on localized basic health care led to high recurrent costs, although rural health clinics and health dispensaries were often ill-equipped, and many doctors seem to have sabotaged the move to preventive medicine.⁵⁷⁹ HIV/AIDS hit the country hard with an estimated 800,000 infections by 1995, but the poor were not hit harder than the others.⁵⁸⁰ By contrast, over one quarter of the population were infected with malaria in 1994, and half of the children in the late 1970s.⁵⁸¹

According to data from a wide range of sources, daily calorie consumption rose from the 1960s to the mid-1980s – possibly with some years of decline in the 1970s – but fell in the 1990s to hover around 2,000 calories until 2010. Protein consumption fell in the early 1970s from a high level.

570 Iliffe 1987, p. 240; Mlay 1985, p. 92; Mbilinyi 1982, p. 320.

571 Mbilinyi 1982, p. 306.

572 First quote in MacPherson 1982, p. 156; second quote in Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi 1983, p. 230.

573 Jonsson et al. 1981, p. 12; “Annual Report, Oxfam-Tanzania, May 1980–April 1981”, Oxfam Annual Reports Africa S-Z, Tanzania-Annual; Mbilinyi 1982, p. 303.

574 Moore Lappé and Beccar-Varela 1980, p. 54.

575 Mbilinyi 1982, p. 315.

576 Mbilinyi 1982, p. 303.

577 See Lewis 1988, p. 78; Francis 2000, p. 3.

578 Melrose 1982, pp. 20–23; Timberlake 1985, pp. 50–51; Collier et al 1990, p. 15; Kiwara 1999, p. 125; Young 1982, p. 109; ILO 1982, p. 18.

579 Kiwara 1999, pp. 124–125; Young 1982, p. 109; Mbilinyi 1982, pp. 314–315; Timberlake 1985, pp. 54–55; Coulson 2013, pp. 251–254.

580 Van Cranenburgh and Sasse 1995, p. 18; De Waal 2006, pp. 95, 115; Coulson 2013, p. 250.

581 Van Ginneken 1999b, p. 19.

Table 9.3 Food consumption in Tanzania in 1961–2010⁵⁸²

	1961–1963	1967–1969	1969–1971	1971		1972	1972–1974	1975– 1977	1978–1980	1979– 1981	1980
Average daily calorie consumption	1,837 1,916	[2042]	1,700 1,949	2,260		2,009	1,955	[2,111]	[2,018]	2,428	2,244 2,412
As percent of requirements		88		98				91	87		
Daily protein consumption in grams	40.7		73	63		52	45.2				
	1982	1983–1985	1985	1991	1990–1992	1994	1995	1995–1997	1997	2000–2002	2010
Average daily calorie consumption	[2,366]	2,315	2,299	2,206	2,110	2,031	2,100	1,930	1,995	1,950	2,020
As percent of daily requirements	102										
Daily protein consumption in grams									49		

582 See UN World Food Conference 1974a, p. 52; Almeida et al. 1975, p. 105; Marei 1976, p. 10; van Ginneken 1976, p. 32; “10th FAO Regional Conference for Africa, Arusha, Tanzania, 18–29 September 1978”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 9, Arusha; Harding et al. 1981, p. 264; Hopkins 1988, p. 132; Cortas 1988, p. 31; Parikh and Tims 1989, pp. 12–13; Kiwara 1999, p. 120; von Braun et al. 1998, p. 111; Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 166–171; ChartsBin, <http://chartsbin.com/view/1150> (accessed 22 March 2018). I have calculated numbers in brackets from information about percentages of requirements met.

The data show that when calorie consumption rose from the 1960s to the mid-1980s so did life expectancy and mortality in young children fell; when calorie consumption decreased from the mid-1980s to mid-1990s, mortality either did not change or improved slowly; and the stagnation of food consumption until 2010 was, after some time, accompanied by a rise in life expectancy.

Tanzania's main staples in the 1970s were diverse, including corn, cassava, other starchy roots, plantains, bananas, millet, sorghum and rice, and varied regionally. Corn was dominant with 40 percent of calorie intake.⁵⁸³ In contrast to other African countries, cassava consumption (503 calories, or 24 percent of daily intake, in 1975–1977) declined from 1961 to 1998, whereas more grain was eaten. In the 1990s, the consumption of fruits and vegetables also fell.⁵⁸⁴ In the 1980s, many people replaced millet with corn,⁵⁸⁵ and annual corn utilization in 1990–1992 was 82 kilograms per capita (and 67 kilograms in 1997).⁵⁸⁶ According to one study, people in the late 1980s ate 217 kilograms of starchy roots and 185 kilograms of cereals per year; other figures (for 1976–1977) cite much lower numbers, but also high shares for root crops and pulses as well.⁵⁸⁷ Diminishing crop diversity, the commercialization of food crops and fewer wild foods to be found led to a less variable diet.⁵⁸⁸ This diet with an emphasis on grains and starchy roots for getting enough calories caused iodine and vitamin A deficiencies, and anemia, goiter and night blindness were widespread.⁵⁸⁹ Dysentery, diarrheal diseases and malaria were also common.⁵⁹⁰

In social terms, differences other than lower prevalence of malnutrition in urban than rural areas⁵⁹¹ are hard to pinpoint. It is not as clear as one might expect that the rural poor were less well nourished than the better-off.⁵⁹² One study from the southern highlands in 1977 found that “the highest nutritional levels were in families that had stayed outside the money economy and still depended on subsistence farming”,⁵⁹³ which may indicate that farmers who invested in ‘modern’ agricultural inputs or spent money on consumer goods were hungrier than the former. But another study from the area of Rufiji concluded that women who depended entirely

583 Bryceson 1993, p. 219; Bryceson 1990, p. 19; D. Casley, “The Nutritional Status of the World’s Population”, 15 February 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/2B Statistics; FAO, Committee on World Food Security, Third Session, 24–28 April 1978, annex, table 2, FAO, RG 12, ES, FA 13/2, vol. I; Government et al. 2000, pp. 53, 78. Van Arkadie 2019a, p. 78 states that corn recently provided 60 percent of calories and 50 percent of proteins. But he also reports of a huge banana production rising to 35 million tons (*ibid.*, p. 80).

584 Cock 1985, p. 11; Nweke et al. 2002, pp. 154–155; Carlsson et al. 1999, p. 47. McCann 2005, p. 9 notes that Tanzania ranked fifth among the world’s nations in terms of per capita corn consumption.

585 Geier 1992, p. 86.

586 Dowswell et al. 1996, p. 6; De Vries and Toenniessen 2001, p. 169.

587 Moris 1989, p. 213; Sarris and van den Brink 1993, pp. 94–95.

588 Tröger 1996, pp. 121–122.

589 Carlsson et al. 1999, p. 52.

590 Narayan 1997, pp. 24–25.

591 Carlsson 1999, pp. 49–50.

592 The exception is Mbilinyi 1982, p. 308, arguing that malnutrition levels were worse in poor rural families. But see, for example, Sarris and van den Brink 1993, pp. 94–97.

593 Melrose 1982, p. 9.

on farming were shorter and weighed less than those from families involved in fishing and trade.⁵⁹⁴ According to O. Yambi's 1990 study, the state of nutrition was not correlated with income, education or whether people were living in grain surplus or deficit areas, but with the workload of women.⁵⁹⁵ This was especially so where elders were no longer involved in feeding infants.⁵⁹⁶ Other research from the 1960s to 2000s found that malnutrition among small children was significantly higher in surplus areas, or areas with high food availability (especially the southern highlands), than elsewhere.⁵⁹⁷ In other words, what development strategists presented as their greatest success actually produced widespread malnutrition, and probably death, locally.

The results of studies about child malnutrition differed. Two in 1973 and 1980 found about half of the children malnourished (but another study found that just 9 percent were in 1972). In 1976–1988, 7–8 percent of all children under five were below 80 percent of “normal weight”, in 1990–1997 27 percent generally underweight.⁵⁹⁸ Probably one can conclude that many children showed some signs of malnutrition but relatively few were severely malnourished. The situation did not change much in the 2000s, although the country was supposedly self-sufficient in cereals since 2005.⁵⁹⁹ In the 1990s, boys were more severely affected than girls.⁶⁰⁰ Families' lack of access to food was not the only problem. During busy times in agriculture (like weeding periods and harvest), overburdened mothers had no time to prepare the first meal of the day before 1:00 p.m., sometimes even 5:00 p.m.⁶⁰¹ Malnutrition among children was worst from April to June, in the lean season before the harvest, and in August, and worse among cultivators than pastoralists.⁶⁰² Though Tanzania's rate of malnutrition for children under five in 1998 was similar to those in Mali and Indonesia, and below the rate in Bangladesh, Tanzania had the highest overall rate of malnourishment of these four; thus, it had probably higher incidences among older children and adults than the other three.⁶⁰³ Impoverishment in the 1980s and early 1990s forced many elderly people to live on corn and beans

594 Bantje 1995, p. 120.

595 See Geier 1992, p. 76 and also Mary Lewis, “Report on a Visit to Kolondoto Hospital”, July 1983, Oxfam, Staff Tours – Africa and the Middle East, 1978–1987, Tanzania Tour Reports 1978–1983.

596 Tröger 1996, pp. 124–126.

597 ILO 1982, pp. xxiv–xxv; Fritz et al. 2015, p. 178. The data in Government et al. 2000, p. 126 point in the same direction.

598 Garcia and Spitz 1986, p. 130; Carlsson et al. 1999, p. 49; Collier et al. 1990a, p. 34; van Ginneken 1999b, p. 19; Government et al. 2000, pp. 95–96. For relatively low rates of severe malnutrition, see also Schmied 1989, p. 110; ILO 1982, p. 90. Cf. Kreysler and Mudeme 1975 for 1972 and “Tony Klonda's Report on the Health Scene in Tanzania”, 1978, Oxfam, Box Africa Field Committee, January 1977–January 1979. For a relatively high incidence of malnutrition in 1967–1969, see ILO 1982, p. 89. Mbilinyi 1982, p. 303 argued that there was little change in 1967–1977.

599 Fritz et al. 2015, pp. 178, 186.

600 Carlsson 1999, pp. 49–50.

601 Geier 1992, p. 101; Mbonile 1995, p. 152.

602 See Goetz 1981, p. 185, and Ndagala 1981, pp. 187, 190.

603 See data in Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 166–171, 178–183. See also Klaver and Nubé 2008, pp. 300–301; slightly higher data in Kiwara 1999, p. 118.

and have less than three meals a day, which caused vitamin deficiency.⁶⁰⁴ According to Tanzania's Food and Nutrition Centre, 60 percent of the population consumed less than the minimum daily requirement of 2,000 calories in 1995.⁶⁰⁵ Despite all efforts, the prevalence of malnutrition did not diminish in the 1990s, and at best, it fell only slightly before 2005, unlike mortality for children under five.⁶⁰⁶

The impact of migration

Tanzania's migration patterns differed from the other countries studied in this book. After independence, the number of Tanzanians working abroad was small. It remained so and was exceeded by immigration, also in recent years.⁶⁰⁷ Tanzania has been a politically stable country which people, generally speaking, have fled to, instead of from. However, people of Arabic and South Asian descent, old elites targeted by racist discourses, fled in several waves, especially in the 1960s.⁶⁰⁸ From the 1960s to the 1990s, refugees arrived in big, repeated waves from Burundi, Kongo/Zaire, Rwanda, Uganda, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Somalia. Many stayed for decades.⁶⁰⁹ The Tanzanian authorities settled many of them in separate, designated rural areas in the west and south, or in separate village neighborhoods. The Burundians, for example, earned a reputation as successful farmers. Foreign agencies, the UNHCR and the World Food Programme helped to provide infrastructure, including schools and health dispensaries, and with agricultural inputs.⁶¹⁰ Beginning in late 1996, the Tanzanian authorities, under pressure from Rwanda, forcibly repatriated hundreds of thousands Rwandans and other nationals.⁶¹¹ Overall, foreign workers transferred more money from Tanzania than Tanzanians abroad did in the other direction. The latter was minimal until 2015, in line with many other Sub-Saharan African countries.⁶¹² Keeping Tanzania's bad statistics in mind, the exact figures can be disputed but not the general picture. Scholars have also discussed international mobility involving Tanzania in respect to smuggling goods and currency outside the country, but it seems that the

604 Tungaraza 1995, pp. 81, 85.

605 Kiwara 1999, p. 118.

606 Carlsson 1999, pp. 49–51; van Donge 2013, p. 348.

607 See "Tanzania – Migrant remittance 2017". Things may have been similar before independence, see Miracle 1966, p. 274. Then most emigrants went to South Rhodesia. For 54,000 Tanzanian-born people living in Uganda in 1969, see Swantz 1985, p. 49.

608 See O'Neill 1990, p. 11; Martin 1988, p. 124; Lal 2015, pp. 122–123; Shivji 1976, p. 80 note 43. On the anti-Asian racist discourse in the 1960s and 1970s, see Barre 2022, pp. 127–137, 234–236. All of this resembles expulsions of people of Chinese extraction from Indonesia and of Hindus and 'Biharis' from Bangladesh.

609 Oxfam, Tanzania Office, "Tanzania – Tabora", August 1977, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 2291, Tabora General; Lal 2015, pp. 65, 125; for the 1990s, see for example Mears and Young 1998, pp. 99–102.

610 Shaw and Clay 1993, pp. 138–139; Malkki 1995, pp. 41–44, 114–124; Gasarasi 1984; Whitaker 1999, pp. 44–56, 65; Lal 2015, p. 126. Chambers 1983, p. 32 argued that Bahutu refugees from Burundi enjoyed the freedom to move out of such places.

611 Whitaker 1999, p. 3; Lal 2015, p. 65 note 137.

612 Gupta et al. 2007, pp. 27, 37; UNICEF 2016b; "Tanzania – Migrant remittance 2017".

quantities and value were also fairly small,⁶¹³ and the discussion has been prone to exaggeration because it carries xenophobic or racist undertones (e.g., against South Asians and Kenyans).

Setting villagization aside, domestic migration declined in the 1960s because of falling urban incomes.⁶¹⁴ Most migrants stayed in the region of their birth.⁶¹⁵ Earlier on, young men on labor migration had increased their families' wealth, but the subsequent rural labor shortages had depressed agricultural output. In some areas, most of the young men migrated, drawn to plantations and cities by a high labor demand in an export-oriented colonial economy in and after World War II.⁶¹⁶ According to some sources, labor outmigration from poor areas in the countryside was still substantial at least into the late 1970s.⁶¹⁷ Many younger men worked on plantations far from home,⁶¹⁸ others went to cities, especially Dar-es Salaam, often for extended periods, or commuted there for petty trade.⁶¹⁹ Officially, this city's population grew from 272,821 in 1967 to 851,522 in 1978.⁶²⁰ The total urban population was 4 percent at independence, 6 percent in 1967, 14 percent in 1978, 18 percent in 1988, 23 percent in 2002 and 32 percent in 2016.⁶²¹ From 1978 to 1988, the growth of the population of Dar-es Salaam and the regional capitals slowed due to declining real wages and shortages of goods.⁶²² Still, there was more rural–urban migration than private rural–rural migration (which was often for marriage) in the late 1970s.⁶²³

In addition to the capital, the populations of Arusha, Rukwa, Mbeya and Ruvuma regions increased through migration between 1967 and 1988 while Mtwara, Coast, Tanga, Lindi and Mwanza regions experienced an exodus.⁶²⁴ Migration patterns were complex. In Iringa region's Makete district, most of the outmigration was first to other rural areas, but after 1984, it was primarily to towns and cities. There was also a lot of return migration, especially in the 1980s, of people who were unsuccessful in their places of destination or wished to retire or farm or start a business in their home region. Many returnees bought land and, thanks to their relatively high

613 See Maliyamkono and Bagachawa 1990, pp. ix–xix, 74, 102–103 and esp. 160; Francis 2000, pp. 67–68; Sarris and van den Brink 1993, p. 134, but see Bryceson 1993, pp. 29–30 for imports.

614 Hyden 1980, p. 162; Mbonile 1995, p. 139; Rasmussen 1986, p. 191.

615 McHenry Jr. 1979, p. 48.

616 See Gulliver 1967 (first published in 1955); Iliffe 1979, pp. 469–470.

617 See Feierman 1990, pp. 10, 185 and Feierman 1993, p. 125 (Usambara Mountains); Oxfam, Tanzania Office, "Tanzania – Tabora", August 1977, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 2291, Tabora General; Sender and Smith 1990, p. 157 note 5 (Tanga region); see Francis 2000, p. 24, 27–28 (various regions) and Donner-Reichle 1988, pp. 162, 165, 170 (Dodoma) for the 1980s.

618 Oxfam, Tanzania Office, "Tanzania – Tabora", August 1977, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 2291, Tabora General.

619 Van Donge 1992, pp. 79 f., 83; Bukurura 1995, p. 303; Lal 2015, p. 171; for agricultural labor and moving to towns, see Feierman 1993, p. 127.

620 Iliffe 1987, p. 240.

621 Mhando 2011, p. 468; Potts 2019b, p. 289. Clark 1978, p. 40 with slightly different figures.

622 Bryceson 1992, p. 96.

623 See Collier et al. 1990a, p. 36.

624 Bagachawa 1997, p. 139.

levels of education, attained positions in the village administration. But in the end, migration had little effect on local economies.⁶²⁵

Traditionally, most labor migrants were men. Later, many women joined. Half of the migrants to Dar-es Salaam in the early 1970s were female.⁶²⁶ Nonetheless, the majority of the capital's population was still male in the early 1980s, but many towns in western Tanzania were dominated by female migrants.⁶²⁷

Migrants who left the countryside either said that they had too little agricultural land or that they could not cultivate their land profitably and lacked cash.⁶²⁸ Around 1980, the remittances of domestic migrants declined; less than half of them sent money home each year, and wage earners higher amounts than the self-employed.⁶²⁹ Wives who stayed on the farm used these remittances for daily consumption.⁶³⁰ Because many of the migrants in urban areas were self-employed and agricultural employment declined over the decades as well, the history of Tanzania's ruralites after independence was not one of proletarianization abroad, as in the other case studies, but rather of de-proletarianization. Despite the social crisis of the 1980s to early 2000s, Tanzanians sought opportunities in their own country rather than outside it.

Conclusion

Tanzania was another country of small peasants where the government and foreign actors tried to solve the hunger problem by increasing food production. Rural development policies shifted somewhat, but less than elsewhere toward staple food production in the 1970s, and they focused more than elsewhere on building infrastructure and cash crop cultivation, especially when foreign agencies were involved. Wavering between the intensification and the expansion of farming, agricultural policies had little effect. Low levels of irrigation and fertilizer use in particular, but also animal traction, illustrate this point. Farm price policy also had a limited impact. The collectivization of agriculture failed, small private farms prevailed.

Though not a land of famine, Tanzania remained one of hunger. The 1980s and 1990s saw no rise, and even regression, in nutrition. Average calorie intake for older children and adults remained at about the same low levels from 1970 to 2010, but may have been less unequal than in the other countries. Although there was some correlations between nutrition and gains in life expectancy and decreases in the mortality of young children, these were at least as much the result of better medical supplies, sanitation and cleaner water as of improved access to food.

625 Mbonile 1995, pp. 139–144; for remittances forming a low percentage of families' budget in the 1980s, see Collier 1990, pp. 65, 76; Sijm 1997, p. 131.

626 Van Donge 1992, p. 83; Sporrek 1985, pp. 23, 125; Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi 1983, p. 122.

627 Swantz 1985, p. 123.

628 For the former case, see Van Donge 1992, p. 80; for the latter case, see Feierman 1993, p. 128; Feierman 1990, p. 185.

629 Collier et al. 1990a, pp. 38, 65, 76.

630 Feierman 1993, p. 130.

The impact of development policies was also low in terms of contributing to social polarization. National and international policies' primary result was the creation of civil service jobs, including rural jobs, though they were badly paid. Indirectly, enforced mass resettlement created opportunities for local microbusiness in the new, big villages. Local elites, which remained in place, combined their economic activities with holding political office, but they did not invest much in land and did not hire much labor. Instead they bought livestock and engaged in diverse activities including trade and transportation. So did other people but with less success. Perhaps more farm products were marketed than before, but few farmers became rich.

Of the four countries subject to my case studies, Tanzania may seem the one to which the concept of dependency on industrial countries best applies. Its foreign debt and international impositions on its economic policies in the 1980s contributed greatly to its long social crisis, which caused many victims. Nonetheless, there was a great deal of agreement between national and international policymakers. Both sought to combat hunger by raising agricultural production but were indecisive whether to intensify or expand farming; both put no clear emphasis on staple food production in their resource allocation; both believed in price incentives; and there was no principal disagreement concerning enforced villagization. Thus, talk about a "policy dialogue"⁶³¹ is more than a cover for imperialism, although it occasionally was.

Political incentives, and impositions, to boost the production of export crops were ineffective. Their success would have implied a tight integration in the international economic system which did not materialize. Nor did many Tanzanians go abroad to find employment. What emerged was regional, and a degree of national, economic integration but not a global integration, as evidenced by corn production, 'fast crops' and domestic migration patterns.

631 Johnston et al. 1991, p. 293.

10 Mali

Changes in the neglected drylands

Nowadays, Mali has the reputation of being one of the poorest countries in the world and of suffering from internal violence and foreign occupation. It is my example of an African country of drylands that was strongly affected by the world food crisis in the early 1970s, is still prone to famine and has a strong livestock sector. (Occasionally, I shall also consider some of its neighboring countries.) Mali is a country with an especially wide gulf between rural development policies and actual change.

It is a large (1.24 million square kilometers), landlocked, West African country that straddles the Sahel, a semi-arid zone stretching along the southern border of the Sahara Desert. Mostly flat or hilly, Mali encompasses several climate zones from arid in the north to semi-arid, savannah, and sub-tropical in the south. Among the staple foods, rice is grown mainly along the Niger River, and millet and sorghum in almost all of its regions. In the mid-1970s, millet and sorghum grew on 61 percent of the cultivated area, rice on 8 percent, peanuts on 8 percent and cotton on 3.5 percent.¹ People usually ate gruel, porridge or couscous together with some ‘sauce’ containing vegetables.² Mali’s main export products were gold, cotton, animals and animal products, and edible oils; its main trading partners were then capitalist industrialized nations and Côte d’Ivoire.³ From 1960 to 1979, Mali experienced notable economic growth per capita of 1.1 percent annually; from 1961 to 1987, it was 1.8 percent.⁴ The population, which is at least three quarters of Muslim and otherwise animist, was 6.5 million in 1975, 10 million in 1990 and 14 million in 2010.⁵ In the 1970s, approximately 10 percent lived in the Saharan north, of which less than half were nomadic pastoralists.⁶ In 1980, about 85 percent resided in the countryside, and in 1985, 83 percent were illiterate.⁷ People died young in Mali. About

1 Schmoch 1983, p. 328; Kébé 1981, p. 28 with deviating data.

2 Mondot-Bernard 1982, p. 28.

3 Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, p. 125–126; Breman and Sissoko 1998b, pp. 18–19; Udom 1984, pp. 368–369; Badiane 1988, p. 99; Somerville 1986, pp. 56–57; Lecaillon and Morrisson 1986, p. 36.

4 See Leys 1996, pp. 117, 119; Sanders et al. 1996, p. 6; see Menzel 2015 (1992), p. 159.

5 UNICEF n.d. (2016a); for religions, see Schmoch 1983, p. 166.

6 Imperato 1976, p. 285.

7 See Giri 1983, pp. 44, 55; Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, p. 125; for general information, see also “International Development Strategy in Agriculture”, in: *Agriculture Abroad* 30 (6), 1975, p. 48. There was a wide definition of urban places in Mali (towns of over 5,000 inhabitants): Schmoch 1983, p. 121.

one quarter of the population now live abroad. There is only one railway line, but the density of the road network has grown since independence in 1960.

Having been the site of great empires of the Soninke, Malinke and Songhay for about a millennium, the area with its great cultural heritage came under French colonial rule in the late 19th century. In 1960, Mali gained its political independence, initially ruled by a nominally socialist regime under Modibo Keita, followed by a coup in 1968 that brought Moussa Traoré to power, a dictator who ruled until 1991.⁸ Both colonialism and independence weakened the influence of the formerly dominant Kel Tamasheq nomads from the north and the Fulani herders in the south, once feared quasi-feudal lords and slave masters, but armed conflicts with both have repeatedly occurred since the 1960s.

Mali is ethnically diverse with caste-like social structures and occasional tensions between groups.⁹ The largest ethnicities are the Bambara, Fulani (or Peulh), Senufo, Soninke, Songhai, Kel Tamasheq (or Tuareg), Dogon and Moors. By the mid-20th century, a system was in place in which the different ethnicities specialized in their own economic activities, for example, Fulani women produced milk, Soninke women raised food crops, Bambara women rice, and Haratin/Moor women worked leather and wove tents.¹⁰ This system allowed for peaceful coexistence. However, prejudices portrayed, for example, nomadic pastoralists as immoral, promiscuous, disease-ridden and Islamist, and Bambara as non-believers, (primitive) agriculturalists, ‘black’, and slaves.¹¹ Most politicians after independence are said to have been Bambara speakers.¹²

After the crisis of 1972–1974, Mali has remained a land of famines.¹³ The next drought came in 1977–1978. Accompanied by high grain prices, it left many in Timbuktu region malnourished and led to another international food aid campaign.¹⁴ The impact of a drought-induced hunger crisis in 1983–1985 resembled that in 1972–1974, but its consequences may have been worse for pastoralists and not as bad for farmers in the south.¹⁵ Herders and farmers were dispossessed by traders who bought up their herds cheaply.¹⁶ This led to the emergence of a dependent “shepherding class”.¹⁷ Many villages in the north were abandoned as about 250,000 people fled southward, some, including some Dogon farmers, for good.

8 For political developments, see Bingen et al. 2000; Jacquement 1981, p. 13.

9 See, for example, Raynaut and Lavigne Delville 1997, p. 272; Franke 1987, pp. 267–268; Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, pp. 120–121; Hill 1985b, p. 14. For the Kel Tamasheq, see Siddle and Swindell 1990, pp. 120–121; Lachenmann 1993, pp. 199–200.

10 See Hill 1985b, p. 3; Kantara 1986, p. 126; Schmoch 1983, p. 137; Mondot-Bernard 1982, p. 40. For the regional distribution of ethnicities, see Mondot-Bernard and Labonne 1982, p. 13.

11 Hill and Randall 1985a, p. 21; Hill 1985a, p. 8; Toulmin 1992, p. 22.

12 Amselle 2020b, p. 68.

13 For earlier famines in the region, see Gado 1993.

14 See the files FAO, RG 12, ES, FA 4/21, vol. II, III and Ic; Franke and Chasin 1980, p. 15; Mondot-Bernard 1982, pp. 43, 45.

15 See Berry and Downing 1993, pp. 39, 41–42; Somerville 1986, pp. 34–44; Hill 1989, p. 185; photographs in Dumont 1986, after p. 94.

16 Somerville 1986, p. 39.

17 Davies 1996, p. 160.

Malnourished children broke anthills open in search for food.¹⁸ In some places, the death rate of refugee children rose.¹⁹ Many among the Dogon sold their livestock (but usually not their seeds) and ate grass, roots and flowers. Young men went abroad, encouraged by elders.²⁰ In 1985, President Traoré encouraged northerners to move to the south.²¹ People sold their possessions in the markets. Even some of the towns in central Mali, like Djenné, were half deserted.²² Once again, the USAID was slow to send aid in 1983 and underestimated Mali's food import needs in 1984, but it sent too much a year later when cereal production had recovered, which depressed local grain prices.²³ Cities in the north received international food aid, while surpluses from the south ended up in the markets of the regions of Bamako and Ségou. Local price differences were substantial.²⁴ Similar hunger crises, and bouts of migration, followed in 1990–1991, 2005–2006 and after 2012.²⁵ They strained family and social cohesion and may have indirectly contributed to violence and political upheaval, particularly the Kel Tamasheq rebellions in the early 1990s, 2007–2009 and 2012.²⁶

There have been extensive discussions about whether Mali's problems can be explained by desertification in the Sahel. For decades, the dominant view was that the Sahara Desert was spreading south, beginning in the late 1960s, caused in part by exhaustion of the soil and overgrazing, and that Mali was doomed.²⁷ Many thought that the climate was changing and precipitation was moving southward in West Africa,²⁸ a view also spread by the UN Conference on Desertification in 1977.²⁹ But the theory is wrong. Aside from doubts in principle about its determinism,³⁰ the claim of desertification in the Sahel has come under fire since the 1990s and has been either qualified considerably or rejected altogether (“something that never occurred”; see also Chapter 12).³¹

18 Critchfield 1994, p. 252; Berry and Downing 1993, p. 42; Timberlake 1985, p. 18; Koenig 1997, pp. 160–161 about the Dogon.

19 Hill 1989, p. 178.

20 Rau 1991, p. 167; Berry and Downing 1993, pp. 41, 51.

21 Gallais 1986, p. 125.

22 Bänziger 1987, p. 49.

23 Berry and Downing 1993, p. 48; Rau 1991, p. 79.

24 Krings 1991, p. 72; Dréze and Sen 1989, p. 93.

25 For 1990–1991, see Cekan 1993, p. 150.

26 See Tetzlaff 2018, pp. 272–276; Lecocq and Klute 2013.

27 See Glantz 1976a; Cross and Barker n.y. (1992), esp. pp. 79, 83, 92, 93–94; Raynaut et al. 1997; Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 77; Monimart 1989.

28 See Glantz 1976a; Lecaillon and Morrisson 1986, p. 41 and summary remarks in McCann 1999.

29 See Glantz and Orłowsky 1983; Mabbott 1989, p. 74.

30 “The idea that it [food security] depends mainly on climatological and ecological factors is good for fairy tales”, though it was believed in many NGOs, according to Oxfam's Annual Report from Mali 1988–1989, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, Mali.

31 Discussions are about amounts of rainfall and the extent of plant cover, judging from satellite imagery. See, for example, Mortimer 1998, pp. 6–7, 17–25; McCann 1999; Kaptué et al. 2015; Willems 2015; Behnke and Mortimer 2016 (quote p. 2); and already Collins and Moore Lappé 1980, pp. 122–123.

Rural development policies

International organizations were alarmed in the early 1970s by falling agricultural production per capita in the Sahel and rising imports, although the average diet of the population was not as low as in South Asia, for example.³² Until the end of the century, development policies verbally emphasized raising food production. In reality, however, they continued to focus on things other than agriculture, such as infrastructure; if pertaining to agriculture, they usually concerned cash crops; and if food was involved, projects focused on irrigated rice cultivation.

By the early 1970s, official development assistance to the region, and to Mali in particular, was small and stressed livestock.³³ According to politicians and advisors from the USA, U.S. interests in the region, which included the “more esoteric countries of Africa”, were “minimal”, and they explicitly regarded it as a European sphere of influence.³⁴ In 1974, the U.S. Congress approved a \$65 million program for the Sahel that emphasized agriculture and in Mali livestock.³⁵ The USAID set up the “Sahel Development Program”, contracted studies about the Sahel of doubtful value with several U.S. universities, feeding a new academic industry, and one USAID livestock project in Mali in the 1970s belonged to the “new generation” of poverty-oriented projects.³⁶ Perhaps because of public pressure in the 1970s, USAID spent more money per capita in the Sahel than in any other world region.³⁷

International ‘aid’ commitments to the Sahel rose from US\$664 million in 1974 to \$969 million in 1977 and hovered around \$1.6 billion annually in 1979–1984, most of which came from France, the ‘World Bank’ and the EEC.³⁸ ODA to Mali peaked after the two major droughts in 1974–1975 and 1984–1986; it fell slightly

32 UN World Food Council, WFC/17/Rev.1, 7 June 1976, FAO Library; Morrison 1984, p. 14; McMillan and Reardon 1999, pp. 135–136; “Statistical Appendix to Field Director West Africa’s Report – September 1970”, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, February 1970–November 1973; Gueymard 1985, pp. 223–224.

33 “Report of Field Director for West Africa”, December 1969, pp. 5 and 7 of the document, and “Statistical Appendix to Field Director West Africa’s Report – September 1970”, both in Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, February 1970–November 1973.

34 Memo Kissinger for Nixon, no date, for Nixon’s meeting with CILSS speaker Lamizana, Upper Volta’s president, NARA, Nixon papers, WHCF, Box 9, SF CO 161, Upper Volta 1971–74 (second quote); “Talking points for Your Breakfast with Robert McNamara Monday, January 11 [1971]” (first quote) and Hormats to Kissinger, 8 January 1971, NARA, Nixon, WHCF, SF CO Box 4, [EX] CO 1–1 Africa, 1/1/71-; “German Economic Relations with Developing Countries in Africa Compiled by AmEmbassy Bonn, Economic Section”, April 1970, NARA, RG 59, Gen. Rec., Economic 1970–73, Box 476, AID A 1/1/70 (“European hegemony”).

35 “Future Planning for Sahel”, 30 July 1974, Stanley Scott Papers, Box 2, African Drought 1973–74 (4).

36 Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 158; Franke and Chasin 1980, pp. 141–143; Horowitz and Painter 1986b, p. 4; Somerville 1986, pp. 97–99. For the uselessness of an MIT study, see Clarke 1978, p. 182.

37 Moore Lappé et al. 1980, pp. 85–86.

38 Franke and Chasin 1980, p. 138; Giri 1983, p. 282; Sharp 1984b, p. 92; for the 1980s and 1990s also Naudet 2000, pp. 280–281; Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, p. 96.

in the 1990s but rose in the 2000s.³⁹ Adjusted to inflation, however, it stagnated for years after 1975.⁴⁰ In the late 1980s, Canada, the USA and the Netherlands were other major “donors”.⁴¹ Mali was the favorite recipient of the African Development Fund, but only one-third of its loans in 1970–1993 were for rural development.⁴² An estimated 200 foreign government and NGO “aid” agencies operated in the country in the early 1990s. Other sources spoke of 65 or 140 foreign NGOs in 1988, up from the 10 in 1980 that began working in the north after Mali’s government had initially restricted their activities.⁴³ Three-hundred and forty “foreign aid missions” visited neighboring Upper Volta in 1981 alone.⁴⁴ Their number made coordination difficult. And a large part of the money for ‘development’ projects actually financed foreign experts’ salaries, vehicles, travel, accommodation and services for them.⁴⁵

In September 1973, during the Sahelian famine of 1972–1974, Mali and five other countries in the region formed the Permanent Interstate Committee for the Fight against the Drought in the Sahel (CILSS) to coordinate their efforts, increase their influence in international negotiations and public discussions and mobilize resources.⁴⁶ Among regional organizations, it is special because of its agricultural focus. Today, it has 13 member states. In 1973, demanding that “African priorities and criteria” should be decisive, the CILSS requested US\$975 million (downsized from three billion) for water control and livestock projects and also for research into commercializing the region’s grain sector.⁴⁷ Its research institution was the Institut du Sahel in Bamako, Mali, which collected data, served the diffusion of technology, and coordinated research in the region. Focusing on technical aspects, it also studied social issues like migration.⁴⁸

39 Bergamaschi 2009a, p. 223; Naudet 2000, p. 283. Dietz and Houtkamp 1998, p. 91 see a peak in the late 1980s.

40 Somerville 1986, p. 227.

41 Oxfam, Annual Report for Mali, 1988/89, Oxfam, Annual Report Africa K-R, Mali; Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, p. 128.

42 See English and Mule 1996, pp. 102–103.

43 Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, p. 99; Report on Mali, 13 May 1988, and Annual Report Mal, Bamako Office, 1988/89, both in Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, Mali; “Report on West Africa”, September 1980, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, West Africa; “West Africa Annual Report 1975”, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1974–Oct 1976.

44 *Feeding the World’s Population* 1984, p. 90.

45 Hamady 1978, p. 18.

46 The other founding members were Chad, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta. See Franke and Chasin 1980, p. 135; Chapter 3 of this study. Somerville 1986 is the most important study on the CILSS, see her pp. 111–112.

47 Memo Williams for “The Secretary”, 19 October 1973, NARA, RG 16, Gen. Corr., Box 5719, Grain 3, Aug 11, 1973- (quoting Minister Dakouré from Upper Volta); memo Rush for Nixon, 12 October 1973, Nixon papers, WHCF, SF, CO 161 Upper Volta 1971–74; “Proposition d’un programme FAO à moyen terme dans le cadre des activités proposés par le CILSS”, June 1974, FAO, RG 9, Div. of Technical Assistance Coordination, 1974: Sahel; Somerville 1986, p. 92.

48 CILSS, “Institut du Sahel. Historique et présentation”, no date (1977), FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 14, RU 7/46.1 General, vol. I.

Industrialized nations' counterpart to the CILSS was the Club du Sahel, a coordination and planning body founded in 1976, based in Paris.⁴⁹ Conceived in 1975 with the support of Henry Kissinger (who suggested an FAO-inspired multi-year operation to roll back the desert for US\$7.5 billion in Dakar, Senegal, in the spring of 1976), the Club du Sahel and the CILSS developed a \$10 billion plan until 2000 that 'donor' nations adopted in May 1977. The plan called for US\$3 billion to be spent in the first five years. Its first phase, which would run until 1990, was supposed to be directed at rainfed agriculture (which contradicted its budget), the second phase at irrigated crops and at making the Sahel food self-sufficient by doubling millet, sorghum and cattle production, increasing rice production by five times, sugar by 17 times and wheat by 70 times and at making the region a major exporter of meat and fish. The irrigated area was to be expanded in Mali as well as in the entire Sahel by almost five times.⁵⁰ Typical in its indeterminateness between irrigated and rainfed agriculture (as well as between food and export crops), the CILSS' and Club du Sahel's plan was based on unrealistic assumptions about Mali's and the region's potential for irrigated areas.⁵¹

'Aid' projects in Mali in 1973 began slowly, and they were not all emergency measures.⁵² The CILSS in particular displayed the fluent transition from emergency aid to development policy.⁵³ It and the Club du Sahel failed, arguably, to coordinate projects internationally, at least in the 1970s.⁵⁴ According to Thomas Hammer, the CILSS went through three phases by 1990: emergency response in 1973–1976, running 600 uncoordinated projects in 1976–1982, and a period of actually regional programs in 1982–1990. In the 1990s, its funds dried up.⁵⁵ In reality, foreign and international agencies often did not fund what CILSS proposed and bypassed the organization.⁵⁶ It should be added that in the 1980s foreign creditors coordinated their influence on Mali's development and food policies through a separate aid group, whose exact status is unclear. The group repeatedly held

49 Franke and Chasin 1980, pp. 140, 170; Somerville 1986, pp. 93–99, 116.

50 Franke and Chasin 1980, pp. 136–137, 149–150, 159; Krings 1978, pp. 128–136; FAO press release, 6 June 1977, FAO, RG 12, Comm. Div., FA 4/41, vol. Ic. Somerville 1986, p. 130 states there were lower target figures; see also *ibid.*, p. 118. For 1975, when a predecessor group called itself "Club des Amis du Sahel", see Parker to Lynn, 15 April 1975, Ford Library, Presidential handwriting Files, Box 22, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Aid (6).

51 See Moris and Thom 1990, p. 235. According to FAO, the irrigated area could be more than doubled, but according to CILSS, Club du Sahel and USAID, it could be increased 5.5 to seven times. Cf. Giri 1983, p. 193.

52 FAO, "Republic of Mali: Report of the Multi-Donor Mission to Evaluate Food Aid in 1973/74 for the Drought-Stricken Countries in the Sahel, Bamako, 7–12 October 1973", FAO, RG 12, Comm. Div., FA 4/21, vol. IB.

53 See, for example, Franke and Chasin 1980, pp. 141–142; Gerlach 2015, pp. 932–933.

54 See Jeanneret 1982, and also criticism by the chairman Oxfam, "Minutes of the Field Committee for Africa", 28 January 1976, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1974–Oct 1976.

55 Hammer 1997, pp. 276–277, 279, 287; see also Somerville 1986, pp. 233–234. I am grateful to Laura Waldorff for insights on CILSS.

56 See notes 62–63 of this chapter and already Robinson 1978, pp. 584, 586, 589.

conferences with Malian government representatives, for example, a “Donor Round Table” in Bamako in December 1982 and another meeting in 1985.⁵⁷

Programs such as the 1977 plan of the Club du Sahel and CILSS did not reflect the real ‘development’ activity in the region. Although all the region’s governments officially aimed at their countries’ food self-sufficiency, of the US\$7.45 billion in ODA to the Sahel in 1975–1980 just 16 percent was actually spent on food production, slightly over 4 percent for rainfed cereals (the main food crops).⁵⁸ Two-thirds of the ‘aid’ was for infrastructure and other things and much of the rest for cash crops.⁵⁹ At no time from the 1970s to the early 1990s did more than 30 percent of development ‘aid’ to the Sahel go to agriculture, according to another study.⁶⁰ Also, livestock had a low priority. And until November 1979, the countries with the highest per capita incomes in the region received the highest amounts of ‘aid’. This worked against Mali.⁶¹ What led to the low priority for rainfed cereals was, as Carolyn Somerville has shown, first that national governments put no clear emphasis on this through CILSS (with about 20 percent of proposed development funding for rainfed grain) and then that foreign and international agencies, ignoring even these wishes, restricted actual investment in rainfed grain production to a minimum.⁶² ‘Donors’ preferred projects for research, training and infrastructure rather than productive sectors, and cash crops over food crops and integrated rural development projects.⁶³ In the Sahel, foreign ‘donors’ were criticized for their rigid procedures, the usurpation of planning and top-down planning over the heads of the population.⁶⁴

Still, there were some foreign-funded projects involving peasants that were at least partly concerned with rainfed food crops in Mali. One in the 1970s was the USAID’s Gao Rice and Sorghum Project, which grew out of a ‘World Bank’ emergency program and was supposed to provide 20,000 farming families with improved seeds, fertilizer, pesticides and irrigation but included plans to reduce pastures.⁶⁵ It was a total failure. It provided Indian irrigation pumps but often no fuel, employed 94 people to manage a total of just 158 farming families, and preferentially benefited village elites; many locals had less seeds available than before,

57 See Crow 1990, pp. 33–34; Hall 1988, p. 35; for 1982, see “Food Strategies in Africa – Illustrative Case Studies” (a World Food Council paper), 26 January 1984, FAO, RG 12, UN 44/1, WFC Follow up, vol. III; Dumont 1986, p. 137. “International Donors’ Conference for Malian recovery and Development”, according to Bingen 1985, p. 4. For 1985, see Sivini 1987, p. 28.

58 See Sharp 1984b, p. 92.

59 Timberlake 1985, p. 38, referring to a study by Jacques Giri. See also Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, p. 96; Raikes 1988, p. 88.

60 Naudet 2000, p. 290.

61 Jeanneret 1982, pp. 451, 458, 460 (Jeanneret generally confirmed Sharp’s and Giri’s findings but cited higher amounts spent on rainfed agriculture); Somerville 1986, p. 177.

62 Somerville 1986, pp. 174, 180–183, 188–190, 192, 195, 199. See also Sivini 1987, p. 37.

63 Somerville 1986, pp. 93, 192, 195, 197–198, 204, 221.

64 Somerville 1986, pp. 164–167, 230.

65 Franke and Chasin 1980, pp. 203–208.

and traditional exchanges declined.⁶⁶ Like many other NGOs the Swiss Helvetas in 1993 started a rural poverty alleviation project by digging wells and building dams.⁶⁷ Many of the rural development projects in Mali were considered failures, including one of the three funded by the IFAD.⁶⁸ And some strengthened the positions of local elites.⁶⁹

Oxfam's staff in Mali believed that the government and bureaucracy lacked a clear plan (unlike those in neighboring Upper Volta/Burkina Faso and Niger).⁷⁰ There may have been something to this view. Unlike Bangladesh, Tanzania and Indonesia, Mali did not give rise to ideas or structures that other non-industrialized countries followed. Mali's administrations propagated food self-sufficiency and food security like many other countries and did so already before the 1972–1974 drought.⁷¹ Among the strategies used were its *opérations de développements*, comprehensive projects that usually covered a certain region and were largely financed from foreign sources. Adopted by Mali's government from a University of Michigan proposal in the late 1960s, first concentrating on rice production and from 1972 including millet, they soon covered almost the entire southern half of the country. In the 1980s, there were about two dozen *opérations*.⁷² At the government's request, many of these stressed irrigated agriculture.⁷³ Some resembled integrated rural development projects.⁷⁴ However, many provided only fertilizer but no other inputs and some seem to have largely involved the registration and control of products and thus were exploitative.⁷⁵ Giordano Sivini called the results of the *opérations* “negative, if not disastrous”.⁷⁶ A notable exception in the 1980s and 1990s was the area of the Malian Textile Development Company (CMDT), where there was widespread access to credit with high recovery rates, animal traction widely used, mineral fertilizer often applied also to corn, and not only cotton but also grain production picked up.⁷⁷

66 Moris and Thom 1990, pp. 236, 240–249.

67 Hammer 1997, pp. 128–135.

68 Naudet 2000, p. 84; Hammer 1997, p. 133; Jazairy et al. 1992, p. 368.

69 Schmoch 1983, p. 339; for the Dutch SNV, see Brinkman 2010, p. 183.

70 See Malcolm Harper, “Synopsis of West Africa tour report, October/November 1971”, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Feb 1970–Nov 1973; Michael Behr, “West Africa Annual Report 1976–1978”, no date, ditto, Jan 1977–Jan 1979. For Niger, see Weiss 1990.

71 See Jacqueline Mondot-Bernard, OECD, Development Centre, “Attempted Analysis of the Food Situation in Africa”, May 1974, p. 50 of the document, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/6 OECD; Mondot-Bernard 1982, p. 20; Phelinas 1992, p. 44.

72 Bingen 1985, pp. 7, 21–22; Hammer 1997, p. 167; Schmoch 1983, p. 202; Kébé 1981, pp. 36–38; Dembélé 1981, pp. 110–111; Lecaillon and Morrisson 1986, p. 53; Sivini 1987, pp. 61–100.

73 Bingen 1985, p. 89.

74 See Feder 1976, p. 537 on a ‘World Bank’ scheme; McNamara's speech to the Board of Governors, 30 September 1974, in: The McNamara Years 1981, p. 271; Koenig 1997, p. 168.

75 Sivini 1987, p. 63; for the latter point, see Schmoch 1983, p. 279 about Opération Mil (Mopti). This program for millet production, supported by USAID, was running from 1972 to 1984, covered one million people in 1,400 villages, but provision with fertilizer and pesticides was minimal and production results were disastrous: Sivini 1987, pp. 90–91.

76 Sivini 1987, p. 78.

77 Sivini 1987, p. 78; Tefft 2000, pp. 213, 215, 221, 223; Sijm 1997, pp. 257, 283.

Other Malian development formats were mutual help organizations such as *groupements ruraux*, *associations villageoises* and *tons villageois*, which especially mobilized youth for projects of common interest.⁷⁸ One observer assessed the *associations villageoises* a “vast social laboratory”, another viewed them as standing less under official control than the *tons*.⁷⁹ The members of the *tons*, instead of pursuing unpaid communal work, toiled increasingly for wages in the fields of well-off locals, which fostered social differentiation.⁸⁰ Mali’s five-year development plan for 1981–1985 (which was part of a long-term strategy to 2000) emphasized the *tons* at the expense of cooperatives.⁸¹ In the Keita era (1960–1968), cooperatives involved consumption, credit, but also production, but collective fields were small and their yields low as it was in Tanzania. Later the cooperatives were on the decline; only 2–3 percent of the population were members in 1993. In the two decades to follow, their number increased, especially in the cotton-growing areas.⁸²

The *projets des initiatives de base* (basis initiative projects) were in reality organized top-down through so-called ‘animators’ teaching locals about new agricultural methods (as in Indonesia). The large development programs (*opérations*) also employed animators, but few, and they were badly trained. Observers thought that Malian bureaucrats, including agriculture extension officers, arrogantly disregarded locals’ opinions or experiences and enjoyed an urban lifestyle without paying much attention to their work.⁸³

Mali’s budget was small, and the state allocated few resources to agriculture: 8.4 percent of expenses in 1980 and 1.5 percent in 1987.⁸⁴ No more than 10 percent of public investment in 1974–1978 was in agriculture; it was less in 1988 but slightly more than 10 percent in 2009.⁸⁵

Though the Malian state did not outsource the support of staple food production to foreign agencies – whose priority this wasn’t either – the country was highly dependent on ‘aid’. It exceeded 15 percent of GDP in 1974–1975 and much of the 1980s and 1990s, and 12–13 percent in the 2000s, as elsewhere in the Sahel.⁸⁶ Such a high inflow could not be without economic consequences. ‘Aid’ amounted to an

78 Hammer 1997, p. 167; Bingen 1985, p. 12 note 1; Koenig 1997, pp. 167–168; Dembélé 1981, pp. 125–130.

79 Belloncle 1985, p. 10; Sijm 1997, pp. 207–208.

80 See Ernst 1973, pp. 244–247. Some argue that the *tons* strengthened gerontocratic control, facilitated agricultural surplus and limited outmigration: Grosz-Ngaté 2000, p. 92. According to Dembélé 1981, p. 121, the leading political party transformed the *tons* in a forcible instrument of their party politics.

81 See Coulibaly 1985, p. 198; Lecaillon and Morrison 1986, p. 49.

82 See Ernst 1973, pp. 35–36, 110; Desfosses and Stryker 1975, p. 168; Sivini 1987, p. 72; Keita 2012, pp. 60–61. For Malian agriculture under Keita in general, see Coulibaly 2014, pp. 71–88.

83 Report on Mali, 13 May 1988, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, Mali; Bingen 1985, pp. 77, 120; Gakou 1987, pp. 54–55. For animators in Mali, see Creevey 1986 and Sivini 1987, pp. 61–104, and in Indonesia, Rui 2020.

84 Hart 1982, p. 100; Oxfam, “Annual Report of the West Africa Field Office, Financial Year 1986–1987”, May 1987, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, West Africa.

85 Coulibaly 1985, p. 200; Bingen 1985, p. 6; Jazairy et al. 1992, p. 443; Simmons and Howard 2009a, p. 196. According to Schmoch 1983, p. 102, 21.5 percent were devoted to the primary sector.

86 Bergamaschi 2009a, p. 223; Naudet 2000, pp. 66, 292; Somerville 1986, p. 226 and see also p. 218.

annual US\$23 per capita in 1975 and over \$60 per capita in the 1990s for the Sahel, which was more or less constant in real terms, and from \$29 to \$50 for Mali. This was higher than average for Africa and far above 'aid' flows per capita to Asia.⁸⁷ At times, the amount of foreign 'aid' was larger than the state's budget and revenues.⁸⁸ Except in 1974 and 1984–1985, little of this was food aid. In the 1960s, foreign contributions had already accounted for 78 percent of investments in Mali, and by 1976–1979, the figure had risen to nearly 90 percent.⁸⁹

Although much of this (at least in the 1990s) was in the form of grants, Mali's debt burden – mainly driven by concessional, not commercial loans – was always high, equaling or surpassing its GDP and amounting to several times its annual export earnings.⁹⁰ Foreign creditors, who gladly organized costly failed projects, such as building dams, that benefitted their countries' industries, imposed an austerity policy on Mali in the 1980s. A crucial point was foreigners' effort to abolish the state's marketing boards, especially the *Offices des Produits Agricoles du Mali* (Authority for Mali's Agricultural Products, OPAM). This parastatal purchased grain from farmers at low set prices and sold it to consumers at subsidized prices in a pan-territorial pricing system. OPAM had been founded in 1968 to bypass "speculative" private traders.⁹¹ Ordered to providing urban consumers with cheap grain but having to raise procurement prices, OPAM faced a growing debt.⁹²

In 1981, when the public debt was seven times the government's annual budget, eight foreign governments and some international 'aid' agencies compelled Mali to privatize the grain trade, dissolve 20 of its 30 marketing boards and cut the state budget. This was initiated by a multi-'donor' mission directed by FAO in 1978. According to the Cereal Market Restructuring Program (PRMC) of 1981–1986 (which was extended to 1990 and even 1999), reorganization was to proceed in steps, and foreign agencies would provide 50,000 tons of food aid annually to ensure food security.⁹³ A National Food Strategy, adopted in 1982 and drafted in collaboration with French 'aid' experts, USAID and the World Food Council, accompanied the PRMC. It aimed at increasing and diversifying food production

87 Giri 1983, p. 283; Naudet 2000, pp. 67, 286; Franke and Chasin 1980, p. 137; Sijm 1997, p. 227.

88 Oxfam, West Africa Field Office Report 1983–1984, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, West Africa; François 1982, p. 28; Dietz and Houtkamp 1998, p. 102; Schmoch 1983, p. 113 (1978).

89 Franke and Chasin 1980, p. 87; Bingen 1985, p. 6. See also Coulibaly 1985, p. 200. Investment always made up less than 7 percent of the government budget in 1974–1980: Kébé 1981, p. 97. 'World Bank' 1981, p. 146 offers even lower figures.

90 Ubogu 1987, pp. 76–77; François 1982, p. 28; Naudet 2000, pp. 68, 246; see also English and Mule 1996, pp. 102, 105. For concessional loans, see Somerville 1986, p. 227.

91 See Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, pp. 104–105; quote: Labonne 1982, p. 162. For low prices, especially for rice, see also Coulibaly 1985, pp. 226, 228; Sijm 1997, pp. 310, 314.

92 François 1982, p. 32 (debt was 77 percent of turnover in 1977); Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 56.

93 Madaule 1990, p. 95; Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, pp. 186–187, 224 note 2; O.M. [Otto Matzke], "Liberalisierung des Getreidehandels in Mali?", in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 24 March 1981, FAO, RG 13, GII, IN 2/1, vol. IV; François 1982, pp. 28, 34; Bingen 1985, p. 4; Hammer 1997, pp. 156–157; Sijm 1997, pp. 427–432. For 1999, see Dembélé and Staatz 2000, p. 150. For FAO, see Phelinas 1992, p. 44; Sijm 1997, p. 426. Sivini 1987, p. 157 sees pressure by France and the IMF at the origin of this.

through higher producer prices, the provision of inputs, credit, storage, extension, research and integrating livestock raising more into crop production.⁹⁴

However, Mali's government obstructed the dissolution of marketing boards. Its resistance broke down completely only in 1987, when Mali's Development Bank, which had lost about US\$100 million through corruption, needed foreign money to avoid collapse. This required a rescheduling of Mali's debt payments in 1988.⁹⁵ The creditors also eased the 'reform' program because of the drought in 1983–1984 and the collapse in world cotton prices in 1985–1986.⁹⁶ The planning departments in the ministries for agriculture, health and education were dismantled in 1989.⁹⁷ OPAM was still allowed to buy millet in certain months of the year, and it continued to deliver grain to government officials and urban consumers.⁹⁸ But by 1987, official farm prices were abolished by imposition of the 'donors', and OPAM's operations were reduced to maintaining the country's food reserve, handling foreign food aid and relieving local food deficits (which were usually in remote regions, so that deliveries incurred high transportation costs). As time progressed, food crisis mitigation became its main task, also for preventing more rebellions in the north.⁹⁹ Under foreign-imposed structural adjustment programs, Mali fully commercialized the coarse grain sector in 1990–1994.¹⁰⁰

Subsidies were one issue of contention with the creditors. Mali had cut the subsidies for agricultural implements but not for irrigation in 1977.¹⁰¹ It maintained its high subsidies for domestic and imported rice,¹⁰² which (together with an overvalued currency) had shielded urban consumers from price increases, especially during the 1972–1974 famine.¹⁰³ Giving in to foreign pressure, the state reduced them after 1981. It ended its fertilizer subsidies in 1987–1988, and the 'World Bank' opposed their reintroduction in the early 1990s.¹⁰⁴

As in Tanzania, the privatization of the grain markets legalized existing practices because anyway farmers privately sold much of their staple crops that they did not consume, 60–95 percent, depending on the crop, according to government and other estimates. It may have been less for rice, which was especially tightly

94 Davies 1996, pp. 90–91.

95 Oxfam report on Mali, 13 May 1988, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, Mali; English and Mule 1996, pp. 102, 105. Cf. Bergamaschi 2009a, p. 223.

96 Maiga et al. 1995, p. 43.

97 Bergamaschi 2009a, p. 222.

98 Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, p. 124; Oxfam West Africa Field Office reports 1983–1984 and 1984–1985, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, West Africa.

99 Oxfam report on Mali, 13 May 1988, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, Mali; Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 187; McIntire 1981a, p. 309; Dembélé and Staatz 2000, p. 150; Dioné 2000, pp. 130–134.

100 Sijm 1997, pp. 201–203; for partial deregulation before, see Kherallah et al. 2002, p. 86.

101 McIntire 1981a, p. 326; François 1982, p. 29.

102 Gallistel Colvin 1981, p. 277. World market prices exceeded those in Mali, see Badiane 1988, p. 30.

103 See McMillan and Reardon 1999, pp. 138–142.

104 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 188; Critchfield 1994, pp. 264–265.

regulated.¹⁰⁵ Most rural households were in the market to sell and buy cereals, although the overwhelming part of rainfed grain was consumed on farm.¹⁰⁶ Private grain transactions had a rich tradition in the Sahel.¹⁰⁷ What had been the black market for two decades was legalized in 1981.¹⁰⁸ When OPAM was a marketing board, private merchants mostly offered higher than official prices, but this was often not the case after the early 1980s.¹⁰⁹ The difference between what the state paid farmers and consumer prices decreased in the early 1980s as the former rose. However, farm prices fluctuated, many peasants received little benefit through the privatization of trade, production did not rise before 1985, and markets in 1985 and 1986 were depressed, in part because of belated foreign food ‘aid’.¹¹⁰ It would be too simple to say that the reorganization of the grain markets caused the 1983–1985 famine, but it certainly did not prevent it. One effect of privatization was that the supply of grain improved in most of the south, but merchants did not travel to some remote areas, especially in the north, and those that did charged very high prices.¹¹¹ Traders accumulated wealth at the cost of the northern areas and also by exporting millet and importing rice.¹¹² “The poor became poorer and the rich richer”, Oxfam’s country representative in Mali commented.¹¹³ However, not all traders grew wealthy; as their number increased, many had little capital and storage, small trade margins and profits.¹¹⁴

Another issue of the austerity policy was cutting the number of state employees. In 1968, there were about 24,000 and in 1980 50,000, not counting the several thousands working in parastatals. Around that year, foreign observers, on both the right and the left, described them as a burden to the country, a new class of predators or unproductive “state class”.¹¹⁵ Little did it matter that Senegal and Kenya, the

105 Gallistel Colvin 1981, p. 277; Bingen 1985, p. 6; Lele 1975, p. 32; McIntire 1981a, pp. 309, 321; Kébé 1981, p. 89; Lecaillon and Morrisson 1986, p. 74. Cf. Sivini 1987, pp. 144–145.

106 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, pp. 186, 195, 205; Sijm 1997, p. 390. For low marketization rates, see Sivini 1987, p. 149; Phelinas 1992, p. 47; Schmoch 1983, p. 249.

107 Guyer 1987b, p. 25; for market periodicity in Mali, see Smith 1971, p. 323.

108 Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, p. 117.

109 Schmidt-Wulffen 1988, p. 23; Kébé 1981, p. 92; Lecaillon and Morrisson 1986, p. 77, but see Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 176; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, p. 106; Madaule 1990, p. 96. For rice, see McIntire 1981a, p. 309; Hinderink and Sterkenburg 1987, p. 208; Grégoire 1983, p. 153.

110 “Food Strategies in Africa – Illustrative Case Studies”, 26 January 1984 (a World Food Council document), FAO, RG 12, UN 44/1 WFC Follow up; Hinderink and Sterkenburg 1987, p. 207; Madaule 1990, pp. 95–97; Oxfam, “Annual Report of the West Africa Field Office, Financial Year 1984–1985” and ditto for financial year 1986–1987, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, West Africa; “Annual Report Mali, Bamako Office, 1988/89” and report of 13 May 1988, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, Mali; Schmidt-Wulffen 1988, pp. 26–31; Sijm 1997, pp. 310, 314, 371; Dembélé and Staatz 2000, p. 157. For late 1970s’ official farm price levels, see Kébé 1981, pp. 75, 81.

111 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 189, 206–214; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, p. 128; see also Oxfam, “Annual Report Mali, Bamako Office, 1988/89”, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, Mali.

112 See Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, pp. 120, 124; Sijm 1997, p. 433.

113 “Annual Report Mali, Bamako Office, 1988/89”, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, Mali.

114 Dembélé and Staatz 2000, pp. 152–155; Sijm 1997, p. 433.

115 “Report on West Africa 1980 – September”, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, West Africa; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985, pp. 114–116; Schmoch 1983, p. 97; Desfosses and Stryker 1975, p. 177

darling of the ‘West’, had more government workers relative to their populations.¹¹⁶ Under foreign pressure, Mali fired 10,000 state employees (20 percent), one of the highest rates under ‘structural adjustment’ in Africa.¹¹⁷ Others had their salaries cut or frozen and turned to corruption.¹¹⁸ As a result, Mali had in the 1990s far fewer civil servants, compared to all registered employment and urban employment, than other countries like Tanzania or Ghana.¹¹⁹

Probably this round of dismissals also hurt Mali’s educational sector because teachers, many of which had been recently hired, were sacked.¹²⁰ Mali had devoted a relatively high proportion of its budget to education.¹²¹ Thus, the country’s current illiteracy rate of 60 percent is in part due to foreign-imposed austerity measures. William Easterly noted that Mali received 15 IMF and ‘World Bank’ adjustment loans from 1980 to 1999, when its per capita economic growth was -0.1 percent.¹²²

Foreign agencies wanted Sahelian countries to enlarge food reserves to prevent famine, or at least said so. The FAO sent “food security assistance missions” to the Sahel in 1974–1975.¹²³ Mali’s storage capacity in the 1970s was at 34,500 tons of sorghum and millet, which was only 4 percent of annual consumption. In 1981, its reserves stood at 58,000 tons (below the target set in 1976), most of which was kept in the cities.¹²⁴ The other major element of food security policy was food crisis early warning systems. By the late 1980s, Mali had at least two, one managed by the CILSS and the other introduced by the government after the 1983–1985 famine, which had a high national political standing but foreign ‘donors’ were reluctant to fund.¹²⁵ In addition, FAO’s Global Information and Early Warning System operated in Mali since 1975, a similar system was run by USAID, and in 1987, the British charity Save the Children established a regional warning system in the Niger delta.¹²⁶ The government had also established a drought policy committee in the 1970s, but it had little influence.¹²⁷ In 2002, Mali adopted a National Strategy for the Fight against Poverty, but because of the ‘World Bank’s’ disapproval had to replace it with another scheme in 2006–2007 which was liberal in its approach

note 8; see also Imfeld 1985, p. 73; François 1982, p. 32. For predators, see Müller 1990, p. 18; for “state class”, see Elsenhans 1981, esp. pp. 18, 161–162.

116 See absolute figures in Sincere 1990, p. 36; Ghai et al. 1979a, p. 19; see also Elsenhans 1981, pp. 14–15.

117 See Bergamaschi 2009a, p. 222; Moyo 2011, p. 49.

118 François 1982, p. 33; Sivini 1987, p. 31.

119 See Sijm 1997, p. 132 note 45.

120 See data on public spending on education and on female students in the 1980s in *Science in Africa* 1993, pp. 10, 138. For staff expansion, see Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 382.

121 Hart 1982, p. 100; see also Lipton 1988b, pp. 215–216.

122 Easterly 2006, p. 66.

123 UN World Food Council, WFC/18, “Follow-up action [. . .]”, 6 April 1976, FAO Library.

124 Nicholson and Esseks 1978, p. 694; Schmidt-Wulffen 1988, pp. 24–25; FAO, Committee of World Food Security, First Session, 5–9 April 1976, “Steps taken to implement the International Undertaking: Current Status of Net Cereal Stock Policies and Targets”, FAO, RG 15, LUNO, FA 13/2.

125 See Lambert et al. 1991, pp. 3, 63–64, 80.

126 Sijm 1997, pp. 502–505; Davies 1996, pp. 96–104, 311 note 4.

127 Berry and Downing 1993, p. 47.

and favored cooperation with agribusiness for “food security”.¹²⁸ Judging from the country’s recurrent famines, food security policy has had little effect.

In fact, it has been detrimental. Seasonal hunger is a serious problem for farmers in the months before the short rainy season from July to September and for pastoralists from March to May when pastures are dry. Cereal banks, which buy grain at set prices (to prevent merchants from exploiting farmers forced to sell right after the harvest at low prices)¹²⁹ and which sell at set prices in the lean season, were intended to solve the problem and promoted by ‘development’ planners. Initial assessments were favorable and more banks were created after the mid-1980s,¹³⁰ but according to a later report, “[u]nfortunately, most cereal bank programmes have failed” because of mismanagement and control by local elites who enriched themselves at the expense of the poor.¹³¹ Cereal banks were also hurt by free food aid, for example, sorghum from the USA, and high transportation costs.¹³² There were also reports of functionaries in pastoralist cooperatives not repaying their loans and embezzling money.¹³³

Economic developments

Mali was, and is, a country of agriculturalists, most of whom were involved in dry-land grain production. Theoretically, the land reserves are vast with just 2 percent of the country under cultivation in the early 1990s, and only 15% of the arable land in the 1980s.¹³⁴ Around 1980, the population density was very low, surpassing 15 persons per square kilometer only around Bamako, Sikasso, and Mopti.¹³⁵ Raised mostly by smallholders, its two important cash crops were then peanuts (the output of which fell greatly after the late 1970s) and cotton, but, though their cultivation expanded during the 1970s, they covered only 5–15 percent of the cultivated area.¹³⁶ In the early 1970s, much of the cotton production was relocated from the

128 Bergamaschi 2009a, p. 206; Coulibaly 2014, pp. 220–221.

129 For example, see Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 202. For hungry seasons, see Hill and Randall 1985a, p. 36; Davies 1996, p. 154. Money lenders and the state also insisted on major payments at harvest season: Davies 1996, p. 244.

130 Oxfam, Field Committee for Africa, “Item 5: Application Recommended for Consideration”, 25 May 1977, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1977–Jan 1979, on Upper Volta; on the technical functioning of cereal banks in Mali, see Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, pp. 219–221; for the mid-1980s, see Sijm 1997, pp. 441–442.

131 “Annual Report for the West Africa Field Office, FY 1987–1988”, May 1988, Oxfam, West Africa Annual Reports, on Burkina Faso and other countries. See also Fall 1991, p. 26, and François 1982, p. 31, both on Mali; Roche 1984a, p. 61, on Burkina Faso.

132 “Visit to the Cereal Bank at Bourzaga”, Oxfam, Box Staff Tours – Africa and the Middle East 1978–1987, file West African Tours 1978, on Upper Volta; Fall 1991, p. 23 on Mali.

133 Oxby 1989, p. 48; see also Ernst 1973, p. 249.

134 Cekan 1993, p. 147; Schmidt-Wulffien 1985a, p. 71; Sivini 1987, p. 33; Kébé 1981, p. 26.

135 Schmoch 1983, p. 117.

136 Ghai 1983, p. 66; “Food Strategies in Africa – Illustrative Case Studies”, 26 January 1984 (a World Food Council paper), FAO, RG 12, UN 44/1 WFC Follow up, vol. III; Somerville 1986, p. 21. For peanut production, see Giri 1983, p. 104; Berry and Downing 1993, pp. 43–44; Schmoch 1983, p. 328.

Niger inland delta to Mali's south.¹³⁷ Cotton production and exports grew from the 1960s to the 1980s.¹³⁸ Fruit and vegetable exports were insignificant.¹³⁹ Also, foreign private investment, which was mostly French, was negligible for a long time and concentrated on gas stations.¹⁴⁰ It increased somewhat during the 1990s.¹⁴¹

Mali's staple foods were millet, sorghum and rice; corn became a secondary staple in the 1980s (especially in the Kayes area), and cassava was of minor importance.¹⁴² Grain production in 1961–1977 had a peak in 1966–1967, after which yields and the per capita supply tended to fall.¹⁴³ The country did not reach the staple food production targets of its development plan for 1974–1978, which concentrated on the most productive agricultural areas.¹⁴⁴ But by 1997, output had more than doubled (though the population had grown by more) with a per capita supply of slightly over 200 kilograms.¹⁴⁵ It is inaccurate to call the 1980s a “lost decade” for agricultural production, as staple food production almost doubled in 1980–1988, with especially high growth rates for corn and rice (and cotton), but remarkable increases also for millet and sorghum.¹⁴⁶ But most of this growth was the result of the expansion of the cultivated area, and GDP per capita did not rise in the 1980s.¹⁴⁷ Millet yields in arid and semi-arid areas were at best stagnant in 1974–1984,¹⁴⁸ probably because its cultivation expanded into drier and less fertile areas. In much of the 1990s, the increase of grain production was just on par with population growth, with millet and sorghum output trailing behind faster growing corn and rice, though more ambitious rice production targets were missed.¹⁴⁹

From the late 1960s onward, Mali incrementally became a net importer of grain. After 1980, considerable amounts of cereals were from abroad,¹⁵⁰ especially rice

137 Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, p. 14; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985b, p. 56; McIntire 1981a, p. 324.

138 Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, p. 10; Raynaut and Lavigne Delville 1997b, p. 182 note 6; Giri 1983, p. 110.

139 François 1982, p. 30 (data of 1979); Schmoch 1983, p. 327 (100–300 tons of vegetables out of an annual production of 100,000 tons were exported).

140 United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations 1983b, pp. 289, 303, 338; Hveem 1975, pp. 83–86.

141 Von Lucius 2000.

142 De Vries and Toenniessen 2001, pp. 112, 124, 167–168; McIntire 1981a, p. 301; Reardon 1993, p. 20.

143 FAO, “Suggestions for the Short, Medium and Long Term Programmes for the Rehabilitation and Development of the Sahelian Zone of West Africa”, FAO, RG 9 Dev. of Technical Ass Coordination, Sahel: 1973 (for 1961–1972); McIntire 1981a, pp. 301–302; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985b, p. 44 (1971–1977).

144 Büttner 1985, pp. 76–77; Lecaillon and Morrisson 1986, p. 52.

145 De Vries and Toenniessen 2001, pp. 167–168; Naudet 2000, p. 62 suggests a notable increase of per capita production between 1970–1972 and 1990–1992.

146 Woodhouse et al. 2000, p. 34 (quote) and Sijm 1997, p. 591 in contrast to Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 72.

147 Woodhouse et al. 2000, p. 34; Maiga et al. 1995, p. 25.

148 Maiga et al. 1995, p. 24.

149 Dioné 2000, p. 135; Dembélé and Staatz 2000, p. 147; Diarra et al. 2000, p. 171; Coulibaly 2014, pp. 201, 229–231.

150 McIntire 1981a, p. 314; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, pp. 126–128; Badiane 1988, p. 10; FAO, “Suggestions for the Short, Medium and Long Term Programmes for the Rehabilitation and Development

and wheat for urban consumption.¹⁵¹ During the famine in 1973–1974, cereals accounted for over half of the monetary value of Mali’s total imports; in other years, it spent more on mineral oil and cars than grain. These imports were a substantial drain on its hard currency holdings.¹⁵² In the 1980s, Mali imported about 15 percent of the food its population consumed (half as food aid); in the 1990s, it was 10 percent (30 percent of which as aid).¹⁵³ In the late 1980s, protectionism against cheap grain from Europe, North America and Asia was a matter of public debate.¹⁵⁴ And yet, Mali was a traditional regional exporter of limited amounts of grain (i.e., rice), which it continued to be in many years during the 1970s. From 1978 to 1981, the country’s agricultural exports outweighed imports.¹⁵⁵ The intra-regional grain trade was encouraged by France and CILSS in the 1980s.¹⁵⁶ There was not much cross-border smuggling of grain because high transportation cost limited it.¹⁵⁷ In any case, net grain imports continued to be a concern for ‘development’ strategists and motivated their efforts to boost production, though Mali’s planners concentrated on rice and corn, neglecting millet and sorghum.¹⁵⁸

Intensive farming needed fertilizer. In the 1960s, much organic manure was used for food crops.¹⁵⁹ In the 1970s, consumption of mineral fertilizers was just 1 kilogram per hectare (far below the very low African average of 7 kilograms per hectare), and their use largely “restricted to export commercial crops”.¹⁶⁰ It rose to 3.5 kilograms per hectare in 1980–1989 and to 7 kilograms per hectare in 1996–2000.¹⁶¹ Total consumption remained extremely low at 4,300 tons in 1968–1969, 5,500 tons in 1970, 7,400 tons in 1974, 15,200 tons in 1990; it rose to 42,000 tons in 2001, but more as the result of the expansion of cultivation than the adoption of intensive farming.¹⁶² The development plan for 1981–1985 called for over half of all fertilizer to be allocated to cash crops.¹⁶³ Most fertilizer was applied to cotton.¹⁶⁴

of the Sahelian Zone of West Africa”, FAO, RG 9 Dev. of Technical Ass Coordination, Sahel: 1973 (for 1961–1972).

151 See Reardon 1993, p. 23; Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, p. 165.

152 Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 199; McMillan and Reardon 1999, pp. 135–136; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, p. 127; Badiane 1988, pp. 10, 16.

153 Woodhouse et al. 2000, p. 34; see also Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 72; Raikes 1988, p. 189; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, pp. 126; Sijm 1997, p. 468; Phelinas 1992, p. 46.

154 Reardon 1993, p. 17.

155 See Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, pp. 14–16; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985b, p. 44; Rau 1991, p. 75; Lecailon and Morrisson 1986, p. 37.

156 Bingen 1985, p. 6; De Haan et al. 1995, pp. 67, 70. But see Sijm 1997, p. 462.

157 Reardon 1993, pp. 24–25. See also estimates in Kébé 1981, p. 91. And see Sijm 1997, pp. 449–450.

158 McIntire 1981a, p. 323 (1978–1978 plan); Coulibaly 1985, p. 200 (1981–1985 plan).

159 Ernst 1973, p. 178.

160 “10th FAO Regional Conference for Africa, Arusha, Tanzania, 18–29 September 1978”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 9, Arusha. Fertilizer application was also still extremely restricted in neighboring Niger and Upper Volta in 1980: Giri 1983, p. 87; Matlon 1988, p. 73.

161 Agency for International Development 2003.

162 Michalski 1974, p. 131; Kherallah et al. 2002, p. 56; Earth Trends n.y.; Agency for International Development 2003.

163 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 55.

164 Kherallah et al. 2002, p. 55; Sijm 1997, p. 272.

The government's pricing policies repeatedly inhibited fertilizer use. It was often too expensive to be profitable.¹⁶⁵ From 1974 to 1978, fertilizer prices rose faster than agricultural producer prices (which made use on millet unprofitable), after 1981, the state reduced, and in 1987–1988, it ended the subsidies. Unsubsidized, fertilizers were too expensive to use on corn and sorghum, but rice farmers still found them cost-effective.¹⁶⁶ In around 1980, one-third of rice growers in the area administered by the Office du Niger (the country's largest development project) used fertilizer (more than in other rice-growing areas), and in another area, half of the millet farmers used it in the late 1980s.¹⁶⁷ In the same decade, farmers in the south mostly applied mineral fertilizers to sorghum and millet, but after the subsidies ended, they switched to manure as sedentary cattle raising spread.¹⁶⁸ Unlike Nigeria, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, Mali did not build any fertilizer factories, although it has its own rock phosphate mine.¹⁶⁹

Pesticide consumption was limited and concentrated on cash crops, though that may have changed slowly in the 1980s. In 1982, consumption barely exceeded US\$10 million.¹⁷⁰ A later "subsidy/tax reduction system" was supposed to "benefit small-scale farmers producing food crops",¹⁷¹ but the development plan for 1981–1985 called for 90 percent of pesticides to be used on cotton.¹⁷² In around 1980, a study found the use of pesticides substantial in only two of six major irrigated rice-growing areas.¹⁷³ But the anecdotal evidence is mixed. A local case study in the late 1980s found a rising use of insecticides on rice and also some application to millet.¹⁷⁴

The adoption of high-yielding seeds and plows had a greater impact than either fertilizers or pesticides. There were considerable efforts in plant breeding. The use of high-yielding seed varieties of grains in West Africa was extremely low in the mid-1970s.¹⁷⁵ Rice improvement studies in Mali began at colonial times in 1952 and were intensified after 1962.¹⁷⁶ Research on new varieties of millet and sorghum plus rice multiplication started circa 1970, with an increasing number of companies involved; a new type of pearl millet was released in 1981.¹⁷⁷ Research

165 Sijm 1997, p. 275.

166 Fell 1983, p. 115; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, pp. 121–122; Gerner et al. 1998, pp. 920–921; Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 188; Kherallah et al. 2002, pp. 42–43. For rice growing in the 1990s, see Naudet 2000, p. 73.

167 McIntire 1981b, p. 336 as opposed to McIntire 1981a, p. 305; Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 138.

168 See esp. Sanders et al. 1996, pp. 47, 61–63; Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 194 see little use of fertilizer.

169 Gerner et al. 1998, p. 925; Sijm 1997, p. 276 note 39.

170 Knirsch 1987, p. 37.

171 Farah 1994, p. 18.

172 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 55.

173 McIntire 1981a, p. 305.

174 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 138; Naudet 2000, p. 73.

175 FAO, WCARRD, "Review and analysis of agrarian reform and rural development in the developing countries since the 1960s", p. 48 of the document, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 32, RU 7/46.33 Annex.

176 Vallet and Vuong 1978, p. 244.

177 Juma 2011, p. 152; "List of UNDP (Special Fund) Projects Approved by the Governing Council at the 12th Session in June 1971", FAO, RG 9, DDI, IP 22/8 general; Dalrymple 1986, p. 75.

was organized by the CILSS, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), and a research network of farmers, set up by the NGO World Neighbors, that developed new sorts of peanuts and millet which were then reportedly rapidly diffused.¹⁷⁸ The International Institute for Tropical Agriculture in Ibadan, Nigeria, developed new sorts of corn in the 1970s with markedly higher yields.¹⁷⁹ Mali's agricultural research station in Cinzana, founded in 1979 and funded by the USAID and the Ciba-Geigy Foundation, was also involved. It experimented with crop rotation, intercropping, and organic fertilizer use, but its greatest success was in further improving pearl millet.¹⁸⁰

However, Mali had few researchers relative to the size of its rural population, and very few Malian farmers accepted the new rice, sorghum and millet seeds in the 1970s.¹⁸¹ Still, by about 1980 high-yielding rice was widespread in four of the country's six major rice-growing areas.¹⁸² New seeds raised corn yields in 1983–1985 and sorghum and millet yields in the late 1980s but larger growers had higher rates of adoption than small peasants, and corn output fell when the government withdrew its price supports.¹⁸³ In the late 2000s, Mali's government asked the Syngenta Foundation (the successor of the Ciba-Geigy Foundation) for help with expanding rainfed rice production with elevated productivity through the newly developed Nerica variety.¹⁸⁴ The Malian case confirms that most African plant research was funded by foreign 'aid' and national governments, not multinational or domestic firms, and that many farmers continued to plant traditional varieties, especially of millet and sorghum. Nevertheless, in Mali, unlike globally, millet and sorghum yields did not fall in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁸⁵

The second area of change was traction. Tractors never played a significant role in Malian food production. A major late colonial effort in 1945–1958 to mechanize agriculture and introduce heavy plows had failed. However, after colonialism light ox-drawn plows were developed, as were lighter implements for use in the north to preserve soil fertility.¹⁸⁶ As Mali expanded cultivation, the use of draught animals increased greatly though unevenly. In rice-growing areas, the use of animal-drawn plows, often for wages in money or kind, was already common in

178 Hammer 1997, p. 278; "FAO Activities and Programmes in Support of Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries" 1978–1979, FAO, RG 12, ES, UN 29/12; for ICRISAT, see Plucknett et al. 1986, p. 299; Wortman and Cummings Jr. 1978, pp. 168–170; for World Neighbors, see Chambers and Toulmin 1991, pp. 35–36. For earlier, similar research in Zaria, Nigeria, see USAID, Office of Public Affairs, press release of 3 December 1973, Ford Library, Stanley Scott Papers, Box 2, African Drought 1973–74 (4). A less positive assessment is in Matlon 1988, p. 71.

179 McCann 2005, p. 57.

180 See Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, pp. 178–182; Sijm 1997, p. 233.

181 Sijm 1997, pp. 244–245.

182 McIntire 1981a, p. 305; for researchers, see Vallaeyts et al. 1988, p. 153.

183 Sanders et al. 1996, pp. 59, 64; McCann 2005, p. 220; for corn, see also Sijm 1997, p. 245; for wealthier peasants, see Koenig 1986b; for corn support, see Raynaut and Lavigne Delville 1997b, p. 165.

184 See Sütterlin 2008.

185 See De Vries and Toenniessen 2001, esp. pp. 22–23, 41, 79–80, 112, 125.

186 Schmoch 1983, pp. 260, 330.

the late 1960s.¹⁸⁷ In 1975, the FAO counted 80,000 plows in Mali, which, though more than in most other Sahelian countries, indicated that most families did not own one.¹⁸⁸ According to other data, Mali had about 72,000 plows in 1967–1968, 107,000 in 1975–1976 and 140,000 in 1981–1982. In the late 1970s, 30–40 per cent of families owned a plow, many of them in the country’s south.¹⁸⁹ But reportedly, not all farmers who owned the equipment were plowing “because they found this too time-consuming”.¹⁹⁰ The state cut its plow subsidies in 1974–1976, and the disproportionate rise in prices in 1970–1977 may have hampered their spread. The country’s one agricultural equipment factory was inefficient, and orders had to be made 10–14 months in advance.¹⁹¹ Plows were common on relatively large farms of large families in the area administered by the Office du Niger.¹⁹² Country-wide, they spread further in the 1980s.¹⁹³ A light, affordable type that local blacksmiths developed in the Ségou area went into mass production in that decade.¹⁹⁴ Ox-plowing teams became popular during the 1980s, but rates of ox ownership differed regionally,¹⁹⁵ and the short rainy season limited ox rental.¹⁹⁶ In the 1990s, ownership rates in rice-growing areas were high.¹⁹⁷ Donkeys were also used in the early 1990s.¹⁹⁸ Also, animal-drawn carts for transportation became more popular in rural areas in the 1980s.¹⁹⁹ However, few millet farmers used plows even in the late 1980s.²⁰⁰

Mali’s only notable facility to produce inputs was a mid-sized factory in Bamako that made agricultural implements. It began operations in 1974 and produced several thousand plows annually as well as chassis for ox carts and domestically developed multi-purpose machines called “multiculteurs” (inter alia, for plowing) at the demand of peasants. Most of this equipment was sold in the cotton-producing area.²⁰¹

One reason why smallholders did not adopt ‘modern’ inputs was the lack of access to institutional credit, a problem that was often acknowledged²⁰² but never solved. Instead, peasants continued to get indebted to wealthy merchants and local

187 Ernst 1973, pp. 240–242; see also Matlon 1988, p. 69.

188 Giri 1983, p. 84.

189 Schmoch 1983, pp. 269–270, 287; Lecaillon and Morrison 1986, pp. 89–90 note 26; Labonne 1982, pp. 101–102. Vallel and Vuong 1978, p. 247 with higher data for Mopti region in 1975.

190 Labonne 1982, p. 108.

191 Franke and Chasin 1980, p. 175; Bingen 1985, pp. 75, 80, 133; Gueymard 1985, p. 225 and Kébé 1981, p. 58 (for 1967–1977); Labonne 1982, p. 102–103; see also Schmoch 1983, p. 270.

192 Coulibaly 1985, p. 217.

193 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 216; Raynaut and Lavigne Delville 1997b, p. 167.

194 Koenig et al. 1998, p. 24.

195 Toulmin 1991, pp. 121–122; Toulmin 1992, pp. 159–173; Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 217.

196 Matlon 1988, p. 70; cf. Cissé 1981, pp. 320, 322.

197 Naudet 2000, p. 73.

198 Woodhouse et al. 2000, p. 39.

199 Starkey 1991, p. 84.

200 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 138.

201 See Schmoch 1983, pp. 223–224, 227–228, 261, 270, 277; Twagira 2021, p. 10.

202 “Recommendations made by Governments in their Country Review Papers”, January 1979, FAO, WCARRD, Box 6, Inter-Departmental Committee.

elites.²⁰³ In the late 1980s, the government ended its credit program for millet growers (but not for sorghum and cotton farmers who practiced crop rotation).²⁰⁴ The background seems to have been that some officials considered millet, although its output had risen significantly, a backward crop without potential.²⁰⁵ Even for many rice growers at the Office du Niger, access to credit remained a problem.²⁰⁶ In the late 2000s, only 7.6 percent of the adults in Mali had a bank account, and opening one required high fees and overcoming high bureaucratic hurdles.²⁰⁷ Microfinance agencies in Mali reported that they had only 100,000 customers in 2005.²⁰⁸

While intensive farming methods hardly penetrated the dominant production of the rainfed food crops millet and sorghum, investment concentrated on irrigated rice farming, a small sector in terms of output and area.²⁰⁹ Such irrigation projects were very expensive, over US\$1,000 per hectare according to one estimate (and between \$5,000 and \$20,000 according to another), leaving little hope that they would ever pay off.²¹⁰ That is, irrigation projects were cases of high subsidies,²¹¹ but a type thereof that ‘donors’ were willing to give credit for. Ridiculously, they supported irrigation projects, as they said, because they were profitable.²¹² One expert calculated that developing all of the 1.5 million hectares of irrigable land in Mali would cost US\$30 billion.²¹³ Like foreign ‘experts’, the Malian government had the perception that rice was more nutritious and had more ‘development’ potential than millet.²¹⁴ Another factor was the political importance of rice as the preferred staple of urban dwellers. In the early 1970s, the state spent seven times more subsidizing urban consumer prices than it paid farmers for rice.²¹⁵

Rice – one species was probably domesticated in the Niger river’s inland delta more than 1,000 years ago – was grown in different ways in Mali: in riverside swamps, in river flooding areas, rainfed, and under controlled irrigation in the area of Ségou and under the *Office du Niger*.²¹⁶ Rice production stagnated in the 1960s and 1970s though traditional methods of limited irrigation expanded.²¹⁷ The *Office*

203 Lachenmann 1993, p. 197.

204 Eicher 1990, p. 523.

205 See Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, p. 163, and De Haan et al. 1995, pp. 63–64.

206 Diarra et al. 2000, p. 183.

207 IBRD 2009, pp. 26, 92.

208 Landingin and Lapper 2007.

209 See also McIntire 1981a, p. 329; Dumont and Rosier 1966, p. 169. For similar developments in Nigeria, see van Apeldoorn 1981, pp. 131–138. Rice was planted on 83 percent of the irrigated area: Sijm 1997, p. 286.

210 Aseffa 1991, p. 19 (\$1,080 per hectare, 3 projects); Matlon 1988, p. 66 (citing CILSS and IBRD estimates for the Sahel); Dimithè 2000, pp. 191–192 (\$8,000 according to a ‘World Bank’ estimate of 1989).

211 See also McIntire 1981b, p. 343.

212 Somerville 1986, p. 221.

213 Reyna 1990, p. 61.

214 McIntire 1981a, p. 327.

215 Sivini 1987, pp. 168–169, 175; for subsidies, see Gallistel Colvin 1981, p. 277. For rural rice consumption, see McIntire 1981, p. 322.

216 McIntire 1981a, pp. 304–306; Moris and Thom 1990, p. 41. For the origins, see Gilbert 2015, p. 213.

217 McIntire 1981a, pp. 309, 321; Giri 1983, pp. 93–94, 193.

du Niger, which was originally a French colonial scheme for cotton and rice production, was independent Mali's largest agricultural development project and supported by the 'World Bank', the CILSS, France and China in the 1980s. It was plunged into crisis in the late 1970s and 1980s, when rice production dropped by one-third, many farmers were in debt, and the population was shrinking. This trend was reversed in the early 1990s with the renovation of irrigation facilities, some degree of privatization of services and input provision and smaller fields assigned, the result of which was doubled yields, increased output, and higher incomes for many but by far not all.²¹⁸ Events in the *Office*, more than anything else, raised Malian rice production during the 1990s, despite the rise in cheap Asian imports.²¹⁹ After initial gains, rice production in the Mopti rice scheme, financed by the 'World Bank', France, the African Development Bank, and Mali's Ministry of Agriculture also fell in the 1980s.²²⁰

Immediately after the 1972–1974 famine, there were large irrigation projects. The CILSS wanted to expand the area under irrigation and increase rice production in the Sahel, including Mali, fivefold.²²¹ However, projects brought in reality only a small part of the planned area under irrigation.²²² Inundated areas remained around 150–250,000 hectares.²²³ Waterlogging and salinization took as much land out of effective irrigation in the Sahel in the 1970s and early 1980s as was newly put under irrigation. In Mali, too, there was a need for technical rehabilitation.²²⁴

Ambitious plans to increase rice yields did not materialize for a long time.²²⁵ In the Ségou rice-growing scheme, the area under irrigation doubled from 1972 to 1983, but the yields remained low, and output did not come close to ambitious targets because farmers did not receive or did not use some inputs or did not change their cropping methods. Consequently, loan repayment rates fell. Thus, intensification largely failed.²²⁶ Yields in the flood plains in the area of Mopti stagnated between 1974 and 1991, and in the *Office du Niger*, large increases came only in the 1990s.²²⁷ But that eventual success should not make one lose sight of the fact that the costly rice projects just managed to raise the incomes of 250,000 out of 5.5 million rural Malians, as one observer argued in 1981 – if incomes were actually improved (see later in this chapter).²²⁸

218 Hammer 1997, pp. 142–156, 163–165, 169–173; Maiga et al. 1995, p. 57; Maiga et al. 1998, p. 541; Sijm 1997, p. 205. For the colonial period, see van Beusekom 2001; for the population in the area increasing significantly less than in the rest of the country 1960–1976, see Gallistel Colvin 1981, p. 272.

219 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 176; Maiga 1995, p. 60.

220 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, pp. 156–160.

221 Frank 1981b, p. 88; Diemer and van der Laan 1987, p. 19; Franke and Chasin 1980, pp. 149–150.

222 Aseffa 1991, p. 19 (4 percent on three projects). For potential and reality, see Carruthers 1983, p. 117; Diemer and van der Laan 1987, p. 19; Giri 1983, p. 193.

223 For example, see Moris and Thom 1990, 235–237; Sijm 1997, p. 287.

224 Timberlake 1985, p. 79; Carruthers 1983, p. 111.

225 See Dumont 1971, p. 5 for government plans.

226 Bingen 1985, pp. 40–57, 79–88, 119; Raikes 1988, p. 213.

227 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 156; Hammer 1997, pp. 164–165.

228 McIntire 1981a, p. 328.

Two large dams were built in Sélingué and Manantali to generate electricity and expand irrigation. For the first, 22,500 people were resettled, starting in 1979, and 10,000 people were moved from 1987 for the second. They were given land, though not enough; houses; and pumps, but not all of them in the case of Sélingué because of insufficient funding. In both areas, USAID was involved in the resettlement. Among Manantali resettlers, the lack of resources led to conflict. The Manantali dam, a project long delayed, produced power only after 2000, and the amount of land it irrigated is unclear, but it was far less than the 100,000–400,000 hectares (one-third in Mali) envisioned.²²⁹ The Sélingué dam soon produced electricity, but there were no customers for it for a long time, and it irrigated 180 hectares of rice instead of the planned 56,500 hectares.²³⁰ Loans to build the dams and their power stations (which totaled ECU123 million for Sélingué, provided by the ‘World Bank’, the EEC and others, and over US\$500 million for Manantali, which was originally expected to cost \$20 million) came from a ‘donor’ consortium that included the EEC, several Western European and Arabic countries, international institutions, and others. Much of the money never reached Mali but flowed to a West German-led consortium of firms.²³¹ These projects were extremely wasteful and harmful and had little influence on agriculture. They more than any other projects threw Mali into debt.

The living conditions of rice farmers involved in irrigation projects were precarious. Those who lived under the *Office du Niger* received services and subsidized inputs, but they did not own the land they farmed – in fact, they were semi-bonded tenants – and could be stripped of it, or part of it, or being fined, for misbehavior, poor harvests, or ignoring the mandatory calendar for agricultural works. They had to pay a fixed annual fee, regularly submit 14 different documents, sell their rice (except for an amount for their own consumption) to a parastatal at fixed prices and had little autonomy in running their farms. They gained more freedom of action in the 1990s but the fees were increased and the subsidies reduced.²³² Given these conditions, many farmers under the *Office du Niger* in the 1970s and 1980s made little profit or suffered losses and close to half complained about not having enough to eat. Even after the reforms, one third of households in the *Office* showed signs of deep poverty. Incomes were also very low in the Ségou and Mopti schemes, at least for those who did not sell their rice on the black market, which was much harder to do under the *Office du Niger* because of the many check-points, which were

229 Koenig 1997, p. 162; Horowitz et al. 1993; Adams and So 1996, pp. 201, 278; Derrick 1977, p. 561; Moris and Thom 1990, p. 25; Adams 1981, p. 348; UNDP, Progress Report 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 11, UNDP; see also Imfeld 1985, pp. 71–73; Bänziger 1987, p. 108. Barraclough 1991, p. 90 estimated the costs for the Manantali dam at US\$750 million and for the power station at 300 million. See also Horowitz 1990, p. 19.

230 Hagen 1988, p. 137.

231 Raikes 1988, p. 214; Horowitz et al. 1993, pp. 233, 248 note 2; Hagen 1988, pp. 66, 137; Adams 1981, p. 348.

232 McIntire 1981b, p. 335; Hammer 1997, pp. 169–170; Coulibaly 1985, p. 214; Diarra et al. 2000, pp. 172–175, 185; Coulibaly 2014, p. 128; Aw and Diemer 2005. For the documents, see Belloncle 1985, pp. 168–169. Some aspects resembled conditions in Ségou: Müller 1990, p. 40; Gakou 1987, p. 49.

even set up between fields and villages (but peasants, and especially women, were smuggling).²³³ In the Mopti area, the average rice holdings in around 1990 were much too small to feed a family.²³⁴ Village polders in that region – more locally organized – had higher outputs, but they required high investments and more labor and did not bring food security.²³⁵

In the *Office du Niger*, all of this resulted in an atmosphere of repression, precariousness, hunger and, according to some reports, an extremely high level of child mortality.²³⁶ Chéibane Coulibaly has called the Office du Niger after 1970 an example of “the use of the most brutal methods of ‘development’”.²³⁷ One way in which indebted and impoverished cultivators responded was to flee.²³⁸

The CILSS also called for over 70,000 new wells in the Sahel.²³⁹ In Mali, many organizations were involved in drilling wells, including NGOs, USAID and the African Development Bank. The latter did mostly so in the dry northeast in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁴⁰ Control of and access to wells was subject to social differentiation with original settlers (families that had come first to an area) having privileged access to water their livestock. Some landowners took control of wells, there were high water fees and violent fights about the use of wells.²⁴¹

The issue of pastoralism

Mali had the largest animal herd in the Sahel. The increase in the number of animals in the 1960s reputedly contributed to the 1972–1974 disaster. The reasons for this growth were complex and included declining terms of trade for livestock owners and higher taxes on livestock after independence, through which the government tried to boost animal and meat exports. About one-third of the 1.3 million cattle and perhaps 40 percent of all livestock, including goats, sheep and camels, died in the crisis. But herds were restocked afterwards. The number of cattle reached 1.8 million head in 1982 and then hovered between 1 million and 1.35 million in the 1980s and 1990s.²⁴² In other Sahelian countries, the animal population remained high

233 McIntire 1981b, p. 347–348; Kébé 1981, p. 53; Hammer 1997, pp. 163–164, 169–170, 173–174; Coulibaly 1985, pp. 204–209, 221; Coulibaly 2014, p. 112; Aw and Diemer 2005, p. 68. See also Naudet 2000, p. 73; Gakou 1987, pp. 52, 92–95, in reference to rice and peanut farmers. In 1980, 52 percent of people surveyed called their biggest problem with the *Office du Niger* lack of food: Coulibaly 2014, p. 122. For smuggling, see Twagira 2021, pp. 178–179, 184–190.

234 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, pp. 169–170, 178.

235 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, pp. 177–179.

236 Sivini 1987, pp. 84–85; Coulibaly 2014, pp. 117–118.

237 Coulibaly 2014, p. 110 (“d’application des méthodes les plus brutales de ‘développement’”).

238 Coulibaly 2014, p. 113; for widespread debts *ibid.*, pp. 129–130.

239 Franke and Chasin 1980, p. 151.

240 “Supplementary Report on Food Shortages, March 1974”, 9 April 1974, FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Div., FA 4/15, vol. IV; Somerville 1986, p. 23; English and Mule 1996, pp. 104, 106.

241 Toulmin 1991, pp. 123, 125; Bourgeot 1981, p. 174.

242 Ramisch 1999, p. 1; Mabbott 1989, p. 78; Franke and Chasin 1980, p. 103; Clarke 1978, p. 90; Derrick 1977, p. 559; Moris and Thom 1990, p. 195. Much higher figures (4–5 million heads of cattle and 10–11 million sheep and goats in 1977–1983, and 5.1 million cattle in 1991) are in Maiga et al. 1995, pp. 24, 26; see also Lecaillon and Morrisson 1986, p. 114 and for 1996 and 1997 Coulibaly

as well.²⁴³ About half a million Malians lived primarily from pastoralism in the 1970s, either as nomads or sedentary population.²⁴⁴ Herders slaughtered their cattle only for occasional religious or social purposes; they sold them to pay taxes and buy food and other necessities.²⁴⁵ Domestic meat consumption in the 1970s was substantial at about 15 kilograms per capita annually. Together with 13 kilograms of fish, Malians had a quite high intake of protein.²⁴⁶ More cattle but less sheep were exported in the 1970s than before.²⁴⁷ In the 1970s and 1980s, Mali's livestock exports were hurt by cheap meat imports to the region from the EEC, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand.²⁴⁸

The mode of raising livestock changed. Though most Kel Tamasheq replenished their herds after 1973, many could not do so after the drought that ended in 1984.²⁴⁹ Traditionally, livestock raising was based in northern dry areas, from which nomads guided their herds to the south in the dry season, fertilizing farmers' fields along the way in exchange for provisions and water. Then livestock raising became a (semi-)sedentary practice, in which many farms – owned by people from all ethnicities, namely elderly household heads – kept cattle as draught animals. These animals also provided manure and lessened the need to host passing herds and herds from neighboring areas.²⁵⁰ More animals were held in the south (Sikasso, Kayes and Bamako areas in particular) than before, but less in the northern area of Gao.²⁵¹ Facilitated by increasing water supplies through wells, animal husbandry was thus subordinated to tillage with the result that pastoralists lost control over areas along rivers with shortages of pastures and conflicts between agriculturalists and herders arose.²⁵² Increased traction plus more manure raised grain yields during the 1980s but milk production fell.²⁵³ Even when they were taught in the CMDT program to replace manure by mineral fertilizer, farmers stuck to the former.²⁵⁴ The result came close to an integrated system of cultivation and livestock raising.

Also, social differentiation spread in the livestock sector with the increasing concentration of capital and the number of animals owned by urban-based absentees –

2014, p. 202. For taxes, see Schmidt-Wulffen 1985a, pp. 40–41; Siddle and Swindell 1990, p. 121. For growing herds in the Sahel in general, see Wiseberg 1975, p. 310. Smaller losses 1972–1974 are suggested in Kantara 1986, pp. 118–119.

243 Timberlake 1985, p. 90.

244 Estimate in Kébé 1981, p. 25.

245 Hama 1981, pp. 247–248.

246 Franke and Chasin 1980, p. 159.

247 Lecaillon and Morrisson 1986, p. 114.

248 Woodhouse et al. 2000, p. 34; Franke and Chasin 1980, p. 184; Turner 1993, p. 408; Hill 1989, p. 183; Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 51; Bosma et al. 1996, p. 66.

249 Hill 1989, p. 185.

250 See Ramisch 1999; Bosma et al. 1996, pp. 23, 28, 32–33, 35, 87–88; Raynaut and Lavigne Delville 1997a, p. 125; Mabbott 1989, p. 78; Oxby 1989, p. 3; Hama 1981. For a continued need for Fulani herds among Dogon farmers near Timbuktu, see Franke 1987, p. 267.

251 Lecaillon and Morrisson 1986, p. 126.

252 Cissé 1981; Toulmin 1992, esp. pp. 76–78, 143, 148; Kaasschieter et al. 1998, p. 81; Oxby 1989, pp. 7–8; Bosma et al. 1996, pp. 88.

253 Sanders et al. 1996, pp. 33, 35, 47, 64; Bosma et al. 1996, p. 48.

254 Koenig et al. 1998, p. 224.

politicians, civil servants and merchants, in addition to wealthy farmers – which downgraded herders to employees. The beginnings of this process had already made pastoralists more vulnerable to hunger in the drought in the early 1970s (see Chapter 3).²⁵⁵ Pastoralist families were again hard hit by hunger in the crisis of the 1980s. Nomads were also affected by the decline and in part prohibition of their traditional caravan trade.²⁵⁶ “A hierarchical class structure, determined by ethnicity and caste, evolved toward a capitalist system in which ethnicity played a lesser role” in livestock raising, Matthew Turner concluded.²⁵⁷ These changes in livestock ownership and production also led to the economic and social rise of some ethnic groups and the decline of others. For example, some Kel Tamasheq were reduced from dominance to beggars,²⁵⁸ while others took up a variety of occupations such as truck driving, commerce, and making textiles, and many Kel Tamasheq, especially men, moved into urban or semi-urban settlements, which grew in the south but also in the arid north.²⁵⁹

National governments and urban elites in the Sahel had long been hostile to pastoralists.²⁶⁰ In 1973, Marcel Ganzin, the head of the FAO’s food policy and nutrition division, repeated their as well as colonial tropes, displayed a good deal of ignorance, and perpetuated the myth of self-sufficiency in portraying Sahelian nomads as an economic burden and too well fed:

I dare repeat here that the nomads’ social condition is impossible. [. . .] Possessing only what they carry, they care about nothing, reject manual work, balk at taxes and hesitate to sell their animals for various and sometimes sound reasons. As a result, they do not contribute to the economic life of their countries [. . .]. These people are now an anachronism. Their nutrition is a luxury and waste because 50% of their energy requirements is met by animal products.²⁶¹

During the famine in 1972–1974, they were also denounced because of their animals with the governments of Mali, Mauritania and Niger declaring what a journalist called a “war on the goat” for eating tree bark.²⁶²

255 Turner 1993, pp. 409–413; Raynaut and Lavigne Delville 1997a, p. 122; Oxby 1989, p. 4; Toulmin 1992, p. 22.

256 Hammer 1997, p. 119; Siddle and Swindell 1990, p. 121; Claudot-Hawad 2006, pp. 665, 671.

257 Turner 1993, p. 416.

258 Lachenmann 1993, pp. 199–200.

259 See Hama 1981, p. 248; Schiffers 1980, pp. 62–76; Georan, pp. 21–26, 237–244; Scheele 2012, especially pp. 1–24; Amselle 2020a, p. 59.

260 Horowitz 1986a, pp. 256–258; Horowitz 1990.

261 Marcel Ganzin, “Summary Report on the Food and Nutrition Situation in the Drought-Stricken Sahelian Zone”, 28 August 1973, p. 10 of the document, FAO, RG 9, Div. of Technical Assistance Coordination, Sahel: 1973. Some excerpts of this report are also in Horowitz 1990, p. 10. Payer 1979, p. 302 ascribed it erroneously to the CILSS. For the background of Ganzin’s study, see Bonnecase 2010, p. 36. For market exchanges representing half of Kel Tamasheq households’ economy, see Caldwell 1975, pp. 34–35; Spittler 1984, p. 39.

262 Martin Walker, “Drought”, in: *New York Times*, 9 June 1974 (*Food and Population* 1975, p. 46).

Reducing their herds meant removing much of the pastoralist population, as Uma Lele stated in 1975 (about the East African Massai).²⁶³ Many wanted the Sahel's pastoralists resettled and made sedentary. The influential conservative U.S. journalist Pat Buchanan, a presidential adviser at the time and later a presidential candidate, recommended: "If the U.S. wishes to do something for the starving nomads of the Sahel it [would] be better to provide them with a month of free food and bus tickets out of that God-forsaken region of West Africa".²⁶⁴ He was not alone with such phantasies. Oxfam observers summarized the conclusion of a scholarly conference at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in July 1973: "There seemed to be little doubt that the Sahelian zone cannot support its present population, that the population is increasingly affected by migration to the coast by the young nomads – but that additional resettlement will be necessary".²⁶⁵ In 1974, Oxfam's Field Director reported that the Malian government, the CILSS and foreign NGOs wanted to resettle the nomads, but had so far done little more than herding them into camps.²⁶⁶ The problem was, wrote Michael Glantz, that nomads wanted to keep their lifestyle; thus, the famine was an opportunity to make progress: "Perhaps it is now, during this crisis (a time of great social upheaval), that the nomads could be persuaded to consider options other than the perennial ones of a subsistence way of life".²⁶⁷ During the famine, the U.S. embassy in Bamako suspected that the Malian government was withholding grain deliveries for nomads in the northern Gao Region to keep them in refugee camps. Food denial seems to have forced many nomads to flee abroad.²⁶⁸ In 1975, after some hesitation, Mali's government called on southerners to welcome northern migrants in sparsely settled areas. However, the government's resettlement projects, run together with the World Food Program and foreign NGOs, received little funding.²⁶⁹

The number of nomads in Mali fell by one quarter (from 426,000 to 317,000) in 1976–1987. Male drought refugees, most of them poor, became (mostly poor) farmers and artisans; many young men left the north; and women continued to weave mats.²⁷⁰ Nomads who settled in the Niger valley were excluded from irrigated land, financial support, and, occasionally, from employment.²⁷¹ The British NGO ACORD tried to "retrain ex-herders" as farmers, but many returned to herding, and NGOs' various sedentarization projects in the 1980s, which involved a few hundred families, paled in comparison to the tens of thousands of ex-pastoralists who were proletarianized in urban and rural areas.²⁷²

263 Payer 1979, p. 302.

264 Patrick Buchanan, "Pie in the Sky Over Nairobi", *New York Times*, 11 May 1976, Ford Library, Michael Raoul Duval Papers, Box 16, Kissinger Trip to Africa.

265 Africa Committee, "Drought in West Africa and Ethiopia", 27 September 1973, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Feb 1970–Nov 1973.

266 "Annual Report for West Africa 1974", 20 December 1974, Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1974–Oct 1976.

267 Glantz 1976b, p. 9.

268 Clarke 1978, p. 127; Derrick 1977, pp. 560–561.

269 Koenig 1997, p. 161.

270 Randall 1998, pp. 71–78; Diawara 1985a, p. 70; Cissé 1981; cf. Messiant 1975, p. 66 (only 200,000 pastoralists).

271 Lachenmann 1993, pp. 204–205.

272 See Oxby 1989, pp. 12, 16, 19, 21; Franke and Chasin 1980, pp. 232–234 and François 1982, p. 31 for the 1970s. For landless rural workers, see "Agrarian Reform: Contribution to Economic

On the other hand, and despite ecological concerns about overgrazing, many development agencies worked to restore or increase animal herds. The CILSS' program for 1977–2000 called for doubling the number of cattle and enlarging sheep and goat stocks 2.5 times,²⁷³ and after the drought of 1983–1984, 'aid' organizations worked to revitalize livestock raising in the Sahel, convinced that it was viable.²⁷⁴ This work included digging boreholes in the north for sedentarization, which Oxfam pursued after the 1970s and 1980s droughts, though sedentarization ran the ecological risk that nomads would stay in areas that could not sustain their herds or would be reversed when 'aid' ceased.²⁷⁵ Such rural sedentarization programs for the Kel Tamasheq had already existed in the 1960s.²⁷⁶ Now there were even forced removals in this vein: in 1985, the government of Niger rounded up Kel Tamasheq refugees in the capital Niamey and deported them back to their regions of origin in the northeast and in Mali.²⁷⁷ But overall, more pastoralists either returned to their home areas or voluntarily took up sedentary lives elsewhere than were forced to do so by 'development' projects.

Social change

Independence brought the formation of a national bourgeoisie – already in the 'socialist' 1960s, according to a Marxist analyst, consisting of a commercial group primarily active in trade, transportation, and construction; an "agrarian bourgeoisie"; and a "bureaucratic bourgeoisie".²⁷⁸ I have outlined some tendencies of capital concentration in the livestock sector after the late 1960s in the previous section, and merchants seem to have strengthened their economic position in the 1970s.²⁷⁹

Mali was, and is, a country of small farms, whose hectareage was limited more by the availability of labor than of land. But, as Pierre François noted: "The peasantry is not homogenous; classes, ethnic groups and caste groups divide it".²⁸⁰ And the position of groups changed, though exact figures are hard to come by. Land ownership was concentrating,²⁸¹ but this was not entirely new. At the time of independence, 14 percent of farms consisted of less than 1 hectare; 18 percent were between

Development: A brief progress report", revised draft, 15 October 1976, FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Div., RU 31/1 Gen., vol. I. The sedentarization of the Kel Tamasheq only 'worked' in the 1990s through forced migration during civil war and years in refugee camps, in part abroad, and then return to Mali. See Randall and Giuffrida 2006, pp. 438–458. The paramilitary groups persecuting the Kel Tamasheq in the early 1990s were in part financed by French, Swiss and U.S. 'aid'. See Claudot-Hawad 2006, p. 668.

273 Franke and Chasin 1980, p. 149.

274 Seddon 1993, pp. 83–85.

275 See documentation concerning Oxfam, Africa Development Schedule, July 1975, in Oxfam, Africa Field Committee, Jan 1974–Oct 1976; "Rapport Annuel 1987 du Programme Oxfam-Grande Bretagne en Mali", 25 February 1988, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, file Mali. Glantz 1976b, p. 13; Randall and Giuffrida 2006, p. 437.

276 Siddle and Swindell 1990, p. 121.

277 "Michael" to Brierly, 18 July 1985, Oxfam, Box Tour Reports Africa A-Z, file Ghana-Niger Tours.

278 Ernst 1973, p. 50 note 22.

279 Schmoch 1983, p. 113.

280 François 1982, p. 36. See also Noronha 1985, pp. 81–82 on the Bambara and Franke 1987, pp. 267–268, on the Dogon, contrary to his claim of little stratification.

281 For the *Opération Riz-Ségou*, where average land holding sizes declined from 3.17 hectares in 1969–1970 to 2.19 hectares in 1977–1978, see Bingen 1985, p. 56.

1 and 2 hectares; and 40 percent were from 2 to 5 hectares.²⁸² In the late 1960s, over 63 percent owned less than 4 four hectares.²⁸³ In around 1970, 20 percent of polder land in the *Opération Riz-Ségou* was controlled by 4 percent of owners, mostly an elite of local merchants and administrators.²⁸⁴ As Kary Dembélé put it in 1981, in the north of the country, “the Tuareg and Peul masters, the marabouts, own the best land and have sharecroppers work it”.²⁸⁵

Later social differentiation in rice projects was the result of unequal access to credit and other resources. Some peasants made gains, but many others accumulated debts to parastatals. Among the wealthy rice farmers were veterans, chiefs, active and retired civil servants, and their relatives.²⁸⁶ Cotton land began to be concentrated in the hands of merchants, officials and politicians.²⁸⁷ Guy Belloncle observed in a cotton project area “the aggravation of internal social conflicts between young and old, men and women” as they competed over the new ways to make money.²⁸⁸ Peanut growing was similar, and some scholars have argued that many of the farmers who saw profits with peanuts or cotton also did so with millet and sorghum.²⁸⁹

New settlers were at a disadvantage concerning the size, location and quality of their land.²⁹⁰ In the Sourou valley on Mali’s southern border with Burkina Faso, poorer farms had 2.8 hectares and wealthier ones 4.6 hectares on average.²⁹¹ Many rural families did not live by agriculture alone: the affluent and the poor had other forms of income, while middle peasants came closest to conform to the ‘development community’s’ image of the pure owner-cultivator.²⁹² According to official data, the most common non-farm sources of income in this diversification process in 1976 were working in the textile sector (for women), in metal trades (for men), and weaving mats and baskets (for Kel Tamasheq women). From the 1960s to the 1970s, the trend was that such activities, secondary at first, became primary occupations, which indicated their professionalization.²⁹³ One study about the Niger delta found animal products, fish and wage labor to be bigger sources of cash income than selling cereals.²⁹⁴ Income from such activities (and labor migration) served to pay the head tax that the postcolonial state continued to claim.²⁹⁵ Like in Tanzania, the diversity of sources of income was not new to Malians, as reports from the 1930s show,²⁹⁶ and it is an open question in how far this was on the rise in the late 20th century.

282 “Draft paper on magnitude of the rural poverty problem”, 24 January 1974, FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., Subject Files: FAO/IBRD Round Table.

283 Ernst 1973, p. 236; see also Gakou 1987, p. 46.

284 Bingen 1985, pp. 57–58.

285 Dembélé 1981, pp. 106–107, 115 (quote).

286 François 1982, p. 30.

287 Raynaut 1997b, p. 258.

288 Belloncle 1985, p. 96.

289 For example, see Koenig 1997, pp. 46–47.

290 Koenig 1997, pp. 170–171; Koenig et al. 1998, pp. 214–219.

291 Woodhouse et al. 2000, p. 57.

292 Koenig 1997, p. 171.

293 See Schmoch 1983, pp. 128–141, 147.

294 Davies 1996, p. 190.

295 Schmoch 1983, p. 241.

296 See Lydon 2000, pp. 67, 69.

The state in the 1980s was this. A study in 1985–1986 found that 39 percent of rural dwellers were net buyers of grain.²⁹⁷ Though there was generally very little landlessness, in 1982, over 40 percent of farming families in the peanut-growing areas sent family members abroad to work because their farms were too small to live on what they yielded. Nuclear family households were in the process of replacing larger family units,²⁹⁸ although countrywide this was a very slow process.²⁹⁹ According to reports, when grain prices were high in 1988–1989, it was traders rather than peasants who reaped most of the benefits.³⁰⁰

These processes took place under complex, murky and fluid conditions. Customary land rights prevailed, according to which elites could appropriate land, though the community could stop them and settle land conflicts. Usually, the chief of a village (the head of the family recognized as the first to settle there) assigned fields to its households.³⁰¹ This was also ethnicized. During one of the most important waves of settlement, Sheikh Ahmadu (1818–1862) founded Rimaibe, Marka, and Bambara settlements obliged to deliver grain to Fulani masters, largely excluding the Kel Tamasheq from owning land.³⁰² In the Niger inland delta, customary land rights pitted Bambara against Rimaibe, and all against Fulani herders.³⁰³ This made it difficult to impossible for newcomers to own land, or even work as tenant farmers, which forced many of them to become agricultural laborers.³⁰⁴

In some places, much land was under tenancy.³⁰⁵ In others, the land belonged to whomever cultivated it.³⁰⁶ The 1986 Law on State Property and Land (which revised a French colonial law of 1937) gave customary land rights priority over individual ownership but the state's authority to requisition land had precedence over both. The law recognized recent users' holdings if they had made improvements to the land.³⁰⁷ Legislative efforts in the 1990s did not change the status quo significantly.³⁰⁸ State-owned commercial farming collided with customary land rights and destabilized the respect for them. The same has been said about government-organized development operations.³⁰⁹ In some places, limited individualization of land rights set in.³¹⁰ Less fertile land was also sold, although this was illegal.³¹¹ But most land disputes, especially those between villages and between cultivators and herders in the same

297 Reardon 1993, p. 231; Dioné 2000, pp. 125, 127; see also Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, pp. 186, 195, 205.

298 See Raynaut and Lavigne Delville 1997c, p. 284 (and see pp. 275–282) and Raynaut 1997b, p. 259.

299 Koenig et al. 1998, p. 106.

300 Annual Report Mali, Bamako Office, 1988/89, Oxfam, Annual Reports Africa K-R, Mali.

301 Hinderink and Sterkenburg 1987, p. 214; Lavigne Delville 1999, p. 1.

302 See Hill 1985b, p. 7; Horowitz 1981, pp. 75–76. For previous waves of Sonrai and Bambara settling in, see Cissé 1985a, p. 146.

303 Cissé 1985a, p. 143.

304 Lachenmann 1993, p. 201; for an opposite example, see Woodhouse et al. 2000, pp. 46–47.

305 Woodhouse et al. 2000, p. 48.

306 Lavigne Delville 1999, p. 5.

307 Woodhouse et al. 2000, p. 61; Oxby 1989, p. 8; for the French law, see Noronha 1985, p. 118.

308 Lavigne Delville 1999, pp. 10–11.

309 Hill 1989, pp. 17–18; Cissé 1985a, p. 151.

310 Lachenmann 1993, pp. 202–203; Raynaut and Lavigne Delville 1997c, pp. 275–282; Reyna 1990, p. 64.

311 Noronha 1985, p. 137.

village, arose from lands getting settled more densely. Herders' position tended to deteriorate. Many conflicts could no longer be solved by traditional local negotiation mechanisms, which by the 1990s sometimes led to massacres.³¹² This still happens today, but the international media portray it as Islamist violence.

Changes in the lives of women illuminate the social processes that ensued. Enjoying equal rights after independence by law but not in practice, women did traditionally more agricultural work in some ethnicities (Bambara) than in others (Soninke, Senufo, Peul, Kel Tamasheq).³¹³ In some areas of southern Mali, rice was only grown by women, including married women.³¹⁴ But women's access to land may have become more restricted after droughts, and restocking for pastoralist Kel Tamasheq women as well.³¹⁵ Women kept some money for themselves, indicating monetarization and individualization within families.³¹⁶ Rural Minanka, Dogon and Senufo women from the Sikasso Region interviewed in 1988–1989 said that had become freer to do work they wanted, and had gained self-confidence. They grew vegetables, raised small animals, brewed millet beer and traded.³¹⁷ Female migration, especially seasonal migration, increased. Rural women moved to towns to work in the service sector and to rice-growing areas.³¹⁸ This increase in wage labor also meant a heavier female workload, which also increased where women stayed and young men went away, as was very often the case. Increasing labor migration also raised the number of postponed marriages, unmarried women, polygamous households, extramarital births, and births in general, especially in the dryer zones.³¹⁹

Development agencies probably did not contribute much to these trends. The FAO's development projects in the 1970s still focused on the outdated home economics that would have tied, or thrown back, women to the household.³²⁰ And contrary to their rhetoric, British NGOs' projects for pastoralists in Mali paid little attention to women.³²¹ Such practices funneled resources to men, not women.

However, development projects did contribute to social differentiation by bringing capital to the countryside which was then appropriated by local elites. An evaluation in 1982 of the large *Opération Arachide et Cultures Vivrières*, which the 'World Bank', the FAO and France supported, concluded that after eight years the main beneficiaries were Mali's government, the operation's staff, and "a few 'pilot peasants'", many of whom were actually merchants, local priests and well-off

312 See Maïga and Diallo 1998 and also Woodhouse et al. 2000, pp. 48–53; Amselle 2020a, p. 59.

313 Raynaud and Lavigne Delville 1997c, p. 264; Monimart 1989, pp. 214–215; Mondot-Bernard 1982, pp. 40, 48. Generally, men and women spent similarly long hours working in Mali, if domestic work and child care were included: Mondot-Bernard and Labonne 1982, pp. 176–183; Davies 1996, p. 258.

314 Raynaud and Lavigne Delville 1997b, p. 163; Woodhouse et al. 2000, pp. 46–47.

315 Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, p. 80; Lesser Blumberg 1981, p. 55.

316 See already Raynaud 1977 (for Niger).

317 Rondeau 1994, esp. pp. 110–112, 114–115, 303–314.

318 Narayan 2000, p. 191.

319 Monimart 1989, pp. 35–40.

320 "Working Paper, Part I: A Summary of Activities in 1974/75 in the Home Economics and Social Programmes Service, FAO", April 1975, FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Div., RU 7/39.

321 Oxby 1989, p. 30.

peasants with government contacts.³²² Similarly, *Opération Riz-Ségou* benefitted local civil servants and larger farmers.³²³ The British charity ACORD modified its poverty alleviation projects in Mali in the 1980s because they “had been unduly benefitting some of the wealthier members of the local population”.³²⁴ According to a Malian analyst, the regional development operations led to commercialization, the transition from gerontocracy to plutocracy, social differentiation and the decline of old customs.³²⁵ An NGO agroforestry project in Burkina Faso to keep water in the soil through a series of small dams had been running for 13 years when it was evaluated in 1992. Though commonly considered a success, the evaluation found that it was so only technically, had had “little impact on the life of the people”, was in “social terms [. . .] not successful”, had indirectly helped “richer households” instead of the poor, and had made the lives of most of the women involved harder. The evaluator thought that 13 years were just “too short” for a positive social impact.³²⁶ Control of boreholes, many of which foreign development agencies had dug, was another factor: in Kala, households that had wells were larger, employed more workers, owned more cattle and, consequently, enjoyed higher millet yields.³²⁷ Increasingly, cattle ownership also socially differentiated peasants.

It must be added that moral-economy-type practices, like mutual help through patronage, clan structures, kinship and friendship, also remained widespread, at least until the 1990s. This was so among cultivators, including cereal gifts, as well as Kel Tamasheq pastoralists, who are an example that such practices may apply inside but not outside the ethnic or clan group.³²⁸ There were fluid transitions between wage labor and various mutual help rituals and forms of communal work.³²⁹ The village associations played a role in this.³³⁰ People met shortages through a combination of food purchases, working for cash or kind, gifts, and taking (mostly informal) loans.³³¹

Though increasing inequality exacerbated differences in life prospects, living standards, and the distribution of malnutrition, there are no signs of further mass impoverishment like, for example, in Bangladesh. Though Mali continued to be a land of famines, it, perhaps surprisingly, was not, and is not, the country among my case studies worst affected by chronic hunger.

322 Grégoire 1997, p. 97.

323 Bingen 1985, pp. 60, 65, 121.

324 Oxby 1989, p. 28.

325 Dembélé 1981, pp. 112–113.

326 Atampyre 1993, esp. pp. 114 (first quote), 128, 133 (second and third quotes). See Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, p. 100.

327 Mortimer 1998, p. 51.

328 See Adams 1993; von Braun et al. 1998, pp. 93–94; Sijm 1997, p. 101 note 14; Brother Angelo Abala, “The Joy of Friendship: The Tradition of Cattle Loaning among the Wodaabe Fulani”, February 1978, Oxfam, Project Files, Box 2198, NGR 17 (on Niger); Spittler 1984, p. 99. See also the general argument in Mortimer 1998. Swift 1981, p. 86 saw tendencies that mutual aid mechanisms among the Kel Adrar were eroding.

329 Adams 1993, p. 46.

330 Narayan 2000, p. 145.

331 Adams 1993, p. 47.

Table 10.1 Data on nutrition in Mali in 1967–2007³³²

	1967– 1969	1968	1969– 1971	1971	1975– 1977	1978– 1980	1980 (?)	
Daily calorie consumption	[2,068]	2,120	2,170	2,060	[1,974]	[1,997]	2,111	
As percent of daily requirements	88			88	84	85		
Daily protein consumption in grams		64	68.9	64				
	1982	1985	1990– 1992	1992	1995– 1997	1997	2000– 2002	2005– 2007
Daily calorie consumption	[1,739]	2,181	2,180	2,314	2,220	2,029	2,390	2,580
As percent of daily requirements	74							
Daily protein consumption in grams						61		

Ignoring outliers, the average daily calorie intake fluctuated between 2,000 and 2,200 calories from the 1960s to the 1990s, with a possible dip in the 1970s, and then, it increased markedly. It is worth noting that 2,100 calories was about the average intake of the French population in 1825–1834, at the end of the Restoration, and much higher than the 1,750 calories in 1781–1790, the time of the French Revolution.³³³ Mali is a land of livestock raising, which explains the continuously high level of protein consumption, also derived from fishery.³³⁴

332 “Statistical Appendix to Field Director, West Africa’s Report – September 1970”, Oxfam, Box Africa Field Committee, February 1970–November 1973; UN World Food Conference 1974 a, p. 52; Almeida et al. 1975, p. 104; Marei 1976, p. 10; “10th FAO Regional Conference for Africa, Arusha, 18–29 September 1978”, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 9, Arusha; Giri 1983, p. 58; Hopkins 1988, p. 132; Howson et al. 1996, pp. 62–63; Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 166–171; ChartsBin, <http://chartsbin.com/view/1150> (accessed 22 March 2018). Much lower data with little credibility are in Parikh and Tims 1989, pp. 12–13, for 1961–1963, 1969–1971, 1979–1981 and 1983–1985: 1,827, 1,836, 1,752 and 1,793 calories per capita, respectively. For relatively high data in the *Office du Niger* in 1958, see Jacqueline Mondot-Bernard, OECD, Development Centre, “Attempted Analysis of the Food Situation in Africa”, May 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/6 OECD, table T1.

333 Giri 1983, p. 61.

334 Jacqueline Mondot-Bernard, OECD, Development Centre, “Attempted Analysis of the Food Situation in Africa”, May 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/6 OECD, table T2. See also Krings 1978, p. 133; and Aall and Helsing 1974, p. 315 for neighboring Niger.

But for Malians, the consumption of cereals is of utmost importance (even among nomads and urbanites), accounting for 73.48 percent of per capita calorie intake in 1979–1981; roots, tubers and oilseeds were marginal food-stuffs.³³⁵ The preferred or customary grain differed regionally. Millet and sorghum were most popular in 1971–1972 and they and corn in the 1990s.³³⁶ Diets changed. A study of the Sikasso Region in the late 1980s revealed that the earlier diverse diet had given way to a concentration on a few foods, many of which were bought. Sorghum and rice had displaced sweet potatoes and other staples; beef, mutton, and goat had replaced game; smoked fish from another region had replaced local fresh or salted fish; tomatoes, onions and bouillon cubes had supplanted wild and garden vegetables and herbs; and sugar had superseded honey and raisins.³³⁷ Wild foods, which had been common and particularly important in times of famine, were less available as the countryside became more densely settled, forests were cut down and cultivation expanded. But one study found that they were still an important part of the diet in the mid-1990s.³³⁸

Surveys from the 1980s and 1990s reported that many Malians did not consume enough food.³³⁹ But according to medical examinations in the 1970s to 1990s, signs of severe malnutrition or acute undernutrition were much rarer (5–11 percent), though little children were more often affected than adults.³⁴⁰ Food intake varied considerably among regions and ethnic groups.³⁴¹ It was estimated that, taking regional and social differences in nutrition into account, average calorie intake needed to rise to 115 percent of the requirement of 2,350 calories for all Malians to consume enough.³⁴² This level has not been reached. In terms of micronutrients, deficiencies in vitamin A, vitamin C, riboflavin and calcium were widespread; goiter was found frequently, and anemia among women and older children.³⁴³

335 Badiane 1988, p. 6; Giri 1983, p. 58.

336 Jacqueline Mondot-Bernard, OECD, Development Centre, "Attempted Analysis of the Food Situation in Africa", May 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/6 OECD, table T2; Sissoko et al. 1998, p. 595.

337 Rondeau 1994, p. 103; Dumestre 1996, pp. 698–699 and in general for food habits.

338 Koenig 1997, p. 172; Nordeide et al. 1996.

339 Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 197 (for a study from the late 1980s); Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 166–171 (for a study from 1995–1997).

340 Chabasse et al. 1985a, p. 325; Martin 1985a, p. 290; Kumar 1988b, p. 40; Svedberg 1991, p. 167 (for studies between 1974 and 1979); Sijm 1997, p. 75 (for a study from 1987); Howson et al. 1996, p. 65 (for a study from the 1990s).

341 See Jacqueline Mondot-Bernard, OECD, Development Centre, "Attempted Analysis of the Food Situation in Africa", May 1974, pp. 14–19 of the document, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/6 OECD. Mondot-Bernard 1982, p. 30 found diets higher along the Niger river, but 'World Bank' data of 1988–1989 assessed that rural poverty rates were the highest in Mopti, Sikasso and Ségou Regions; Sijm 1997, p. 143.

342 Schmidt-Wulffen 1985, p. 119.

343 Mondot-Bernard 1982, pp. 32–33, 38; Jacqueline Mondot-Bernard, OECD, Development Centre, "Attempted Analysis of the Food Situation in Africa", May 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/6 OECD, p. 31 of the report.

In 1972, the incidence of severe child malnutrition was quite low, but it seems to have increased by the late 1990s.³⁴⁴ Severe malnutrition was highest for children in their second year (and seasonally, in April and May).³⁴⁵ Social status was a major factor in the rise. One study argued that, in 1971–1973, malnutrition in urban areas and close to them was relatively low among children from families of artisans and shopkeepers; higher for those from the families of farmers, fishermen, and civil servants; and highest among the children of wage earners. Reported calorie consumption was low in pastoral and peanut-farming areas.³⁴⁶

On balance, the data on food intake do not align well with life expectancy data.

Table 10.2 Data on life and death in Mali in 1960–2013³⁴⁷

	1960	1965	1970	1972	1975	1977	1981	1984	1985	1989	1990	1991
Crude death rate	29					22						
	30											
Life expectancy	35	39		39	37	42	45		47	48	45	48
	37										46.5	
Infant mortality per 1,000	233		204	122			148	176	163	167		161
Under five mortality per 1,000	400			220			177			>280		162
							179			287		
		1992	1997			2000		2010		2013		
Crude death rate												
Life expectancy			48			49.1		53.8		55.0		
Infant mortality per 1,000		130										
Under five mortality per 1,000			239									

As in the other case studies, the data include contradictions and leave gaps, but the general picture is clear. For a long time, life expectancy was low. It stagnated

344 *Ibid.*, pp. 32–34 of the report; Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 178–183.

345 Mondot-Bernard 1982, pp. 36–37.

346 Jacqueline Mondot-Bernard, OECD, Development Centre, “Attempted Analysis of the Food Situation in Africa”, May 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/6 OECD, p. 32 and table T3 of report.

347 USAID, “Introduction to the FY 1974 Development Assistance Program Presentation to the Congress”, Ford Library, Vice Presidential Papers, Box 136, AID; Caldwell 1975, p. 7; 10th FAO Regional Conference for Africa, Arusha, Tanzania, 18–29 September 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 9, Arusha; Hart 1982, p. 132; Wagner 1986, pp. 278–279; Iliffe 1987, p. 231; Morgenthau 1988, p. 159; Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, pp. 30, 125, 133; Cross and Barker n.y. (1992), p. 74; Thomas 1994, pp. 58, 74; Sijm 1997, pp. 79, 227 (also: under 5 mortality 1980/1993: 310/217, life expectancy 1993: 46); Sen 1999, p. 100; Deutsche Welthungerhilfe 2000, pp. 190–195; UNICEF 2016a. For optimistic census data from 1987 (an under 5 mortality rate of ca. 180, a life expectancy of 56 years), see Maiga et al. 1995, p. 37; cf. Jazairy et al. 1992, p. 393.

about 1960–1975, in the 1980s and 1990s, with a negative trend in mortality for infants and young children; it rose in the second half of the 1970s and slowly improved after 2000. The picture for infant and under five mortality rates before 1980 is contradictory and unclear.³⁴⁸ UNICEF data suggest that the death rate for children under five declined from a very high level in the 2000s, falling below 200 per 1,000 in 2003, below 150 per 1,000 in 2008 and approaching 100 per 1,000 in 2017.³⁴⁹ Regional differences were considerable.³⁵⁰ Striking variations have also been found between ethnic groups.³⁵¹ In the late 1950s, the crude death rate for farmers seems to have been higher than for pastoralists, and so it was among infants and children under five in the early 1980s, but there are also opposite data.³⁵² And many infants born out of premarital pregnancies apparently died of neglect. Some studies indicate that low castes among the Kel Tamasheq and Fulani pastoralists (and possibly agriculturalists) were better nourished and had lower mortality rates for young children than the high (cattle raising) castes.³⁵³

In Mali, too, there is no strong correlation between the development of calorie intake and life expectancy until the mid-1980s. Before 1981, people started to live longer without eating more, or better. The fact that life expectancy did not rise stronger owes much to Mali's weak health sector and may have to do with more people who moved in the name of development into areas along the Niger river, particularly the Niger inland delta, where health conditions could be more difficult, leading to high death rates.³⁵⁴

The impact of migration

Social change in Mali was accompanied by great migratory movements, which had repercussions for its rural society. The rise in emigration was much greater than in the other case studies. Including seasonal migrants, 25,000 Malians lived abroad in 1960, 428,000 in 1970, about the same number in 1975–1976, and two million in 1983.³⁵⁵ Most were adolescents or young adults. This was not only about men. Forty percent of Malians living abroad were women in 1976, and close to half in the 1980s.³⁵⁶ For men, emigration was an escape from the country's caste-like

348 See Caldwell 1975, p. 7; Kakwani et al. 1993, p. 154. See also "Nutritional Surveillance in West Africa" in Sheets and Morris 1974, p. 160. Prosterman 1984, p. 15 sees a steady decline from a high level, reflected in figures for five-year intervals 1950–1955 to 1980–1985: 211.1/200.0/189.4/179.4/169.5/160.4/148.5 per 1,000 life births.

349 See UNICEF website, <https://data.unicef.org/country/mli/> (accessed 8 August 2019).

350 For example, see Easterly 2001, p. 10.

351 Chabasse et al. 1985a, p. 336; Hill 1985c, p. 48.

352 Swift 1977, p. 466; Hill 1985c, pp. 47–48.

353 See Hilderbrand 1985a, p. 282 and Hilderbrand et al. 1985a, p. 186. For premarital pregnancies, see Toulmin 1992, p. 233.

354 See Van den Eerenbeemt 1985a, p. 102; Martin 1985a, p. 290; Hill 1985c, p. 48.

355 Schmidt-Wulffen 1985, p. 125; slightly different data in Schmidt-Wulffen 1985b, p. 56; Raynaud 1997, p. 89 note 9.

356 Gallistel Colvin 1981, p. 267; Maiga et al. 1995, p. 40. The local study by Ruthven and Koné 1995a, p. 109 mentions a rate of 15 percent.

structures that locked them into certain occupations (as farmers, potters, blacksmiths, etc.) and limited their choice of marriage partners.³⁵⁷

Most migrants lived in neighboring countries. In colonial times, most emigrants went to Senegal and Ghana, but this shifted later to other coastal countries like Nigeria and in particular Côte d'Ivoire, which was the destination of almost 90 percent of Mali's emigrants in the mid-1970s, when some of them went to work on Ivorian plantations, and the home of 1.2 million Malians in 1983.³⁵⁸ Many Malians, like the famous singer Fatoumata Diawara, were born in Côte d'Ivoire. Seven percent of the population lived abroad in 1976, 24 percent in 1987 and 28 percent (3.5 million Malians) in 1992.³⁵⁹ By the early 2010s, the percentage was still about as high.³⁶⁰ Mali became a major source of migratory labor for West Africa; later, Malians also moved to other parts of Africa, for example, Gabon.³⁶¹ Expulsions of migrant workers, as in Côte d'Ivoire after 2000, had the potential to become a major shock to Mali's economy, and the Ivorian civil war in 2003 hurt Mali's exports, 70 percent of which passed through Côte d'Ivoire.³⁶² Few Malians went to Europe, mostly to France, the former colonial occupier, where 35,000 Malian citizens resided in the early 1970s and 37,693 in 1990.³⁶³

There was also extensive migration within Mali. One trend was migration from rural to urban areas, where 19 percent of the population lived in 1991.³⁶⁴ Already in 1976, the majority of urban dwellers were female.³⁶⁵ While many women and girls moved to towns for social reasons (related to marriage or family), others did so for work, often as domestic servants, or took on economic activities at the new place of residence.³⁶⁶ Major droughts increased migration of vulnerable people, though many of the poor could not afford the ride.³⁶⁷ Part of the nomadic Kel Tamasheq population affected by drought settled in towns and agricultural areas. Many refugees from the north settled in the Office du Niger in the 1970s and probably also in the 1990s.³⁶⁸

357 Narayan 2000, p. 182; Schmoch 1983, pp. 151–175.

358 Gallistel Colvin 1981, pp. 265–268; Cordell et al. 1996, p. 6; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985, p. 125; Maiga et al. 1995, p. 41. See also UNICEF 2016a; Caldwell 1975, p. 28.

359 Vaa 1990, p. 172; Woodhouse et al. 2000, pp. 34–35.

360 UNICEF 2016a.

361 Gallistel Colvin 1981, p. 260; Woodhouse et al. 2000, pp. 34–35; UNICEF 2016a.

362 Woodhouse 2008, p. 44; Juma 2011, p. 88. In the 1980s, Malians were forcibly expelled from Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Niger, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia: Koenig et al. 1998, p. 100.

363 Raynaut 1997a, p. 89; see also Woodhouse et al. 2000, pp. 34–35. In 2013, every tenth emigré from Mali went to France: UNICEF 2016a.

364 Raynaut 1997a, p. 78; Vaa 1990, p. 172.

365 Schmoch 1983, p. 122. According to Cordell et al. 1996, p. 236, 247, 250, internal migration was widespread especially among females in Upper Volta/Burkina Faso as well.

366 Vaa 1990, p. 174; Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 285; Grosz-Ngaté 2000, pp. 94, 96.

367 Hampshire and Randall 1999, p. 368, about the 1990s.

368 Lachenmann 1993, pp. 204–205. For the refugees, see Twagira 2021, p. 206; Aw and Diemer 2005, p. 39.

Within the southern areas of Mali, there was also strong mobility between rural areas. This included drought refugees, but aside from peasants and pastoralists also workers, fishermen and civil servants.³⁶⁹ Many people moved away from the declining cotton areas near Sikasso and Bougoumi to areas north of Sikasso, north of Ségou and west of Bamako, often settling along the Niger River.³⁷⁰ After the millet harvest in Mopti Region, many men migrated temporarily to take part in the harvest in rice-growing areas.³⁷¹

Domestic and international migration were related. Many people moved from north to south, from the areas of Timbuktu and Mopti to the southwestern part of the country, while other residents from that part left Mali toward Côte d'Ivoire or Ghana.³⁷² Around 1980, every second family in the district of San in southeastern Mali sent seasonal laborers to other parts of Mali or Côte d'Ivoire; in 1995, the rate in the Sourou valley was even higher.³⁷³ Migrants came from all income groups, but especially the better-off.³⁷⁴ Most emigrant workers sent small amounts of money home, especially those who had migrated somewhere else in Africa.³⁷⁵ This remained the case even during the global boom in the 2000s, when remittances from workers abroad measured as a percentage of GDP or of export earnings did not put Mali in the top ten of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. It was ninth in absolute terms.³⁷⁶ Malians in France sent larger amounts. Despite the fact that individual contributions were small, workers' remittances largely offset Mali's trade deficit in much of the 1980s.³⁷⁷ However, rural Malians at home spent most of what they received on consumption rather than investing it in their farms or hiring labor.³⁷⁸ Kel Tamasheq who had moved to Mali's towns also sent only small amounts home.³⁷⁹

Overall, there was a mix of short-term, seasonal and long-term migration. The absence of so many young men, especially in the long dry season from October to June, caused a shortage of agricultural labor.³⁸⁰ Thus, many men, and younger adults or adolescents in general, were missing during the time when celebrations and social and family projects tended to take place.³⁸¹ Lack

369 Koenig et al. 1998, pp. 99–132, 214–219, 224–231.

370 Raynaut and Janin 1997, pp. 48, 53; Schmidt-Wulffen 1985, pp. 11–12.

371 Sijm 1997, p. 130.

372 Raynaut 1997a, p. 76; Woodhouse et al. 2000, p. 34.

373 Hinderink and Sterkenburg 1987, p. 216; Woodhouse et al. 2000, p. 39.

374 Ruthven and Koné 1995a, pp. 109, 113–115.

375 For example, see Ruthven and Koné 1995a, pp. 109, 121, 123; Broekhuis and de Jong 1993, p. 199; Spittler 1989.

376 Gupta et al. 2007, pp. 4–5, 27, 37. Between 1995 and 2004, Mali received between US\$73 and 155 million in remittances. See UNICEF 2016a for somewhat higher remittances in 2010 and after.

377 Koenig et al. 1998, p. 78, in contradiction to Lecaillon and Morrisson 1986, p. 61.

378 Gallistel Colvin 1981, p. 266; Ruthven and Koné 1995a, p. 125; Davis 1995b, pp. 15–16 also discusses the exception of Bankass.

379 Lachenmann 1993, p. 206.

380 Gliese 1988, pp. 472, 474; Davis 1995b, pp. 5, 12.

381 Hammer 1997, p. 122; see Lecomte and Krishna 1997, p. 80.

of manpower also often led to cassava being cultivated instead of millet.³⁸² And some aristocratic women were now forced to work in the fields.³⁸³ Among poorer families in which mothers were left alone to care for the family, child mortality sometimes rose.³⁸⁴ But the conclusion that migration in and from the Sahel breeds poverty at home is disputed.³⁸⁵ Overall, migration, and international migration in particular, implied a proletarianization of rural Malians. It also brought women heavier workloads and hampered the spread of intensive farming methods.

Conclusion

National and international development policies in Mali focused on expensive irrigation projects and, thus, on rice.³⁸⁶ Even for rice, outcomes were mixed at best, for increases in production and in peasants' incomes in the early 1990s were unequal and irrigation did not expand decisively. That focus also meant that fewer resources were allocated to rainfed cereals (millet and sorghum), and any effect was at best ambivalent because local elites appropriated many of the resources. Oxfam's field director concluded in 1978 that foreign 'aid' projects in the Sahel did have an impact but not a good one. Among other negative effects, they worsened the urban-rural divide by establishing their organizational infrastructure in cities.³⁸⁷ Many felt little effect of the small peasant approach. The foreign-imposed grain market liberalization in the 1980s also contributed to the increase in grain output in 1985–1989, including dryland crops, but the benefits reached relatively few peasants. Compared to Bangladesh, Indonesia and Tanzania, Mali had the weakest position in negotiations with foreign development agencies, despite joining the CILSS, a regional organization aiming at poverty reduction which did not exist in the other cases.

The envisioned intensification of rainfed staple food production in Mali has not taken place. Nor, of course, has industrialization. Agricultural output grew through the expansion of cultivation, which was fueled by population growth, changes in livestock raising, and the increased use of draught animals, also new seeds. Though Mali had more than enough land for this expansion, the land along rivers became scarce and local conflicts, particularly between agriculturalists and pastoralists, emerged. Because of the expansion, diets became more monotonous and wildlife receded.

382 Schmidt-Wulffen 1985, p. 73.

383 Leisinger and Schmitt 1992, pp. 82–83; Lachenmann 1993, pp. 192–194.

384 Hill 1989, p. 175.

385 Hampshire and Randall 1999, p. 381 about northern Burkina Faso.

386 This was again the focus of a new agricultural government program in 2007: Coulibaly 2014, p. 216.

387 Michael Behr, "West Africa Annual Report 1976–1978", Oxfam, Africa Field Committee Jan 1977–Jan 1979, in reference to the Sahel and Upper Volta.

All of these changes resulted in some wealth differentiation in the countryside, especially but not only in rice-cultivation areas. Most rural families remained poor and depended on wage remittances. After the 1980s, Mali exported one quarter of its population in seasonal or permanent migration. Others migrated domestically. But the money they sent home led to little investment in staple food production.

Many Malians experienced proletarianization, the country continued to be stricken by famines, and it has been one of the world's poorest countries in terms of GDP per capita for decades,³⁸⁸ but other evidence is in contrast to this. There is relatively little chronic hunger, social differentiation in the countryside is limited, and traditional rural practices of mutual support and collective work continue.

388 Jazairy et al. 1992, pp. 394–395 list Mali as the worst in terms of a basic needs index for the mid-1980s (a times of acute crisis in Mali).



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General observations



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11 Comparing the case studies

In this chapter, I compare the four case studies and make some generalizations. Over the last half-century, all of the studied countries have remained predominantly agricultural, dominated by small farms. None has solved its hunger problem, but life expectancy in each has risen greatly, about 30 years on average, about 20 years in Mali. The same applies to Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia in general.¹ The prime reason for people living longer is that fewer small children die, and that has been due much more to better medical treatment, sanitation and hygiene than to better nutrition.² This reduction in the mortality of infants and children under five has also been a general trend.³ While new therapies and improved sanitation reduced deaths through diarrhea worldwide from about five million in around 1980 to 0.5 million in the early 1990s,⁴ hunger was reduced much less. In my case studies, falling child mortality and rising life expectancy have been fairly steady trends, with the exceptions of regression in Tanzania and near stagnation in Indonesia in the 1990s.

Life became longer, but not necessarily “better, [. . .] more cheerful”, to quote Stalin.⁵ Average calorie intake in Mali and Indonesia grew steeply from 1960 to 2010 to well above the minimum requirement. In Bangladesh, the latter was still hardly met in 2010, after a much less impressive ascent, and in Tanzania, the average did not increase by much over that period, but it was comparatively high in the 1970s and 1980s. In all four countries, people generally consumed more food in 2010 than they had in 1960, but this was not a story of unqualified and unimpeded

1 See Young 1997, pp. 27, 148. Chronic hunger declined somewhat more in other world regions 1970–1990. However, Moyo 2011, p. 30 suggests a relapse in Africans’ life expectancy.

2 In 1987, Tanzania and Bangladesh had a lower ranking in terms of GNP per capita than measured by the Human Development Index (indicating, among other things, their relatively good health services), whereas it was the opposite for Mali and Indonesia. Gall 1996, pp. 532–533; see also Simon 1995, p. 34.

3 See Easterly 2006, p. 177 (for Sub-Saharan Africa 1960–2000); Nishigaki and Shimomura 1998 (for 1965–1990, East Asia and the Pacific had greater gains than Sub-Saharan Africa); Riddell and Robinson 1995, p. 10.

4 See Prinz 2021, pp. 284, 289.

5 Quoted in Fitzpatrick 1999, p. 6. Stalin asserted this in 1935, while the great sacrifices and social disruptions of industrialization and enforced collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union were still ongoing. This context was actually not so different from issues discussed here.

rise.⁶ Each country experienced decades of declining consumption: the 1960s for Indonesia, the 1970s for Bangladesh and Mali, and the 1980s and 1990s for Tanzania.⁷ National calorie supply grew faster than the food intake of poor people. Average calorie intake (in part based on overall food availability) hides great social inequality, for in all four countries, many people were chronically undernourished (and still are). The population share of those affected was especially large in Bangladesh, initially also in Indonesia, and considerable and persistent in Tanzania. But in Mali, despite recurrent famines and the lowest life expectancy among the four, the percentage of the population that was chronically underfed was lower than in the other countries, and around 2010, as in 1970 (though not always in the interim), average Malians had at least a higher calorie intake than Bangladeshis and Tanzanians, and sometimes also a higher one than Indonesians.

These facts raise doubts about macroscopic comparisons contrasting Africa and Asia. Food intake increased in large Asian nations but at very different rates.⁸ And according to the FAO, food availability per capita in Sub-Saharan Africa dropped slightly from the early 1960s to the early 1990s (from 2,100 calories to 2,040 calories), but it increased in South Asia and surpassed that in Africa in the 1980s.⁹ Yet in many parts of Asia, inequality may have been greater than in Africa. As one important example, India's supposed reduction in the rate of poverty from the early 1970s to 2000 was largely based on definitional manipulation – the yardstick for poverty was changed but calorie intake on which it was based did not improve for many, or even on average.¹⁰ Foodgrain availability per capita virtually stagnated from 1956 to 1981, and from the late 1980s to the 2010s, average food intake fell slightly, but it fell below the recommended minimum level for the vast majority of rural dwellers arguably because increases in income did not keep pace with increasing expenditures on non-food items such as fuel.¹¹

Internationally, the number of people with a minimal income might fall, but the consumption of the poorest might as well.¹² Already in the 1950s and 1960s, the result of income inequality in non-industrialized countries was that average incomes rose much more than average food consumption.¹³ On the whole, chronic hunger persisted, although smaller parts of the population were affected. For example, 35–40 percent of the rural population in the eastern Indian states of West

6 The same as about energy intake could be said about protein and micro-nutrients.

7 This was not necessarily in parallel with GDP per capita data (see Menzel 2015 [1992], pp. 159–160), but these appear less relevant here.

8 Timmer 1991, p. 148 for 1965–1985; see Chandler Jr. 1979, p. 4; Booth 1988, p. 243. According to Ravallion 1995, Indonesia overtook Bangladesh/East Pakistan in terms of lower infant mortality rate before 1960, in life expectancy in 1966 (this was actually reversed in the early 2000s), in average food energy intake in 1970, and in per capita income 1971–1972.

9 Bush 1996, p. 173.

10 Patel 2007, p. 30; for the 1990s and 2000s, see ChartistBin, <http://chartsbin.com/view/1150> (accessed 22 March 2018).

11 See Tyagi 1993, p. 266; Basole and Basu 2015.

12 Rist 2008, pp. 234–235 for the 2000s.

13 See Lipton 1977, pp. 31–32.

Bengal, Bihar and Orissa did not get even “two square meals” per day for some months in 1983.¹⁴ The world hunger problem was not solved.

Political systems

Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mali and Tanzania had authoritarian governments from the 1970s to the 1990s, Bangladesh for the shortest period (1975–1990) and Tanzania (1961–1995) and Indonesia (1966–1998) for a very long time. Except in Tanzania, these were military dictatorships that gave themselves civilian airs. But each country had a public sphere to some extent, in which issues of ‘development’ were openly discussed (perhaps least in Mali). Each country was involved in wars, domestic or abroad. Indonesia occupied East Timor from 1975 to 1998 and suppressed domestic independence movements, notably in Aceh and West Papua; Bangladesh was devastated by the 1971 independence war, and the government fought a protest and independence movement in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1976–1993; Tanzania – domestically relatively calm – invaded neighboring Uganda in 1978–1979; and Mali’s government repeatedly fought uprisings led by the Kel Tamasheq and had border skirmishes with Upper Volta/Burkina Faso in 1974 and 1985. Military spending grew substantially to the detriment of other programs except in Indonesia, where the military increasingly financed itself through its own, often shady, economic activities.¹⁵

There is much public talk, but less scholarly literature about developmental dictatorships. Military dictatorships have had diverse economic policies, not fundamentally different from civilian dictatorships.¹⁶ Military rule has often been said to bring about either social stagnation or the rise of corrupt elites entangled with the military, as in Mali, Bangladesh and Indonesia.¹⁷ But, as I have shown, many military dictatorships cared very much about their public image, many claimed that they had taken power because the deposed regime had caused or failed to respond to famine (see Chapter 3), and many made considerable efforts to prevent further hunger crises.¹⁸

Rooted in domestic political movements, the turn to a bourgeois-democratic political order in the four countries more or less coincided with the beginning of an upsurge in the world economy (the A-phase of a Kondratiev cycle¹⁹) in 1992. In line with foreign political pressure and international economic opportunities, they

14 Mukherjee 2004, p. 30.

15 Internationally, however, there seems to be no clear relationship between the financial military burden and welfare indicators. See Wolpin 1986, esp. p. 66.

16 See the remarkable synthesis by Büttner 1989. Lewis 2007, pp. 65–82 describes similar phenomena but prefers the term “neopatrimonialism”. See also Robison 1988. For theories of developmental states, see Tetzlaff 2018, pp. 39–41.

17 For the former view, see Büttner 1989, p. 354; for the latter, see Riaz 1993; Robison 1988; Bingen et al. 2000.

18 See also Gerlach 2015, p. 934.

19 For Kondratiev cycles, see Shannon 1996, pp. 131–136; Komlosy 2022, pp. 13–100. The literature about this topic has become large.

introduced some liberalization in foreign trade, with an emphasis on exports in Indonesia and Bangladesh. However, they did not change their rural development policies fundamentally. Moreover, the transformation of the political system showed no clear correlation with the concurrent trends in living conditions indicated by data on nutrition and mortality. In Bangladesh and Mali, the transition occurred at a time when living conditions were static, and it was followed, after some time, by marked improvements. But in Indonesia, the Suharto regime collapsed in a moment of crisis, after years in which gains had slowed and stagnation had set in (though at a relatively high level), followed first by decline and then slow recovery. And in Tanzania, decline and stagnation continued to alternate after the first multi-party elections. Bourgeois democracy does not necessarily reduce poverty.

Three of the four countries had governments for some time that claimed to be socialist: Mali from 1960 to 1968; Bangladesh in the first years after 1971; and Tanzania, more consistently, from 1967 to the late 1980s, when it repudiated socialism under foreign and internal pressure. But what sort of socialism was this? Though it was more a matter of rhetoric, as was then common, in practice it concentrated on state ownership of major industries and finance. It also involved the state's control of foreign trade and domestic trade, in particular through parastatals, but non-socialist governments did the same, including Indonesia's staunchly anti-communist regime. None of the four practiced socialism in the countryside, which remained under capitalist conditions. The vast majority of rural dwellers worked on privately owned land (their own or someone else's) and sold a large and increasing part of their surplus produce to private merchants and, often, their labor to neighbors. Farming was the bulwark of private enterprise. The Tanzanian attempt to collectivize agricultural production never gained much ground and was abandoned in 1973–1974. All of this was the background of rural development policies.

Rural development policies and violence

The four countries, like so many others, embarked on policies to reduce rural poverty through the intensification of staple food production. This was not merely rhetoric. They allocated a growing share of development funds to agriculture and rural development, although over half was still spent on industry and infrastructure and thus concentrating on urban areas. All four governments subsidized technical inputs for staple food production. For some time, three gave foreign actors responsibility for rural development policies in certain regions. Indonesia ended the practice in 1970–1971 because transnational corporations were not effective, Bangladesh and Tanzania made this experience with international organizations and industrialized nations' governmental agencies in the 1970s and 1980s. Three of the four countries tried to mobilize local peasant cooperation under the concept of *gotong royong* in Indonesia, *tons villageoises* in Mali, and in Tanzania through block farming after the project of collectivized *ujamaa* fields had failed – but without much success. All four countries slowly privatized trade in the 1980s and 1990s but with only moderate impact because most farmers were already selling

their crops unofficially anyway. Liberalization of the sales of inputs had a range of results. Many foreign demands coming with structural adjustment policies were compatible with the small peasant approach: the former's stress on higher prices for farmers' produce, new marketing systems, a smaller role for parastatals, and a reduction in food subsidies, but not necessarily the elimination of subsidies for inputs.

The points of emphasis in rural development policies differed among the four. Mali focused on state-controlled cultivation in large irrigation projects, combined with the provision of credits and input. In Bangladesh, it was credit institutions – first cooperatives, then NGOs together with public banks – accompanied by, first, supplying farmers with inputs and later propagating raising additional income outside staple food production and health programs. Indonesia provided credit and input packages, primarily for wet rice farming. Tanzania emphasized villagization, education and health services. These differences showed that nations mattered and there was no one-size-fits-all international imposition, although these national policies harmonized, broadly speaking, with the kind of those propagated by UN agencies and industrialized countries. The small peasant approach to alleviating poverty was not simply a 'white', or Pan-European,²⁰ project, but an international and cross-continental co-production, as concepts like the Comilla model, Grameen Bank and BRAC in Bangladesh, *ujamaa* in Tanzania, Mali's *tons villageoises*, and Indonesia's mass guidance (BIMAS) program show. (As a side note, except for BIMAS, each of these institutions and programs put much emphasis on collectives.) In any case, most of these development policies failed to reduce poverty and hunger or even to expand the use of 'modern' farming inputs. Project approaches were technical and top down.

Irrigation projects were typical for technocratic, inefficient approaches.²¹ Many policies emphasized irrigation, neglecting rainfed agriculture, where other inputs were also less in use. This was the case in Indonesia, Mali and, to a lesser degree, Bangladesh.²² There were similar large irrigation projects in Nigeria, Senegal, Mauritania and Kenya.²³ Among international financiers, the 'World Bank' (by far the biggest source of funding), the ADB, and West German and Japanese agencies were especially insistent about such projects²⁴ for they catered to the interests of the big engineering, machinery, electrical, and construction corporations in industrialized countries. So did bodies like the Trilateral Commission, which in 1977 advocated a plan, based on the Japanese model, to solve the world food problem within 15 years by investing US\$52 billion in irrigation projects in 12 South and Southeast Asian countries.²⁵

Large irrigation projects were very expensive and often did not fulfill their promise. Six projects in Africa in the 1980s brought only 4 percent of the area

20 'Pan-European' includes former settler colonies like the USA.

21 See also Hagen 1988, p. 53.

22 The same could, for example, be said about Nigeria: Sano 1983, p. 39.

23 Lele 1988, p. 328.

24 Carruthers 1983, pp. 25, 29–30.

25 For the Trilateral Commission's plans, see Colombo et al. 1977; De Koninck 1979, pp. 265–266.

originally envisioned under irrigation at a cost of more than US\$4,000 per hectare. Other sources put the outlays for irrigation projects in the area somewhere between \$1,500 and \$8,400 per hectare.²⁶ Managerial optimization, for example, through mid-sized projects, brought little improvement.²⁷ Small-scale irrigation projects in Asia were considerably cheaper (US\$800 per hectare).²⁸ An impressive local study about 1970s Senegal shows the contrast between so-called administrative development and peasant-organized development, that is, centrally organized versus locally initiated irrigation projects and state-led proletarianization versus voluntary village cooperation.²⁹ Though they also demanded great effort from locals, often over decades, and did not always live up to plan, small, local irrigation projects were still more productive. As a result, 30 percent of Asia's cultivated land was under irrigation while in Sub-Saharan Africa it was less than 2 percent in the 1980s.³⁰ In so far as irrigation projects were effective, they led to regional inequality because investments focused on these areas.

Integrated rural development, an approach which was applied in all four countries, embodies the dream of comprehensively determining a society's evolution, of total social engineering in a certain area. It usually failed.

What highlights the ruthlessness and the potential consequences of social engineering in the name of 'development' is that all four countries engaged in large resettlement schemes and violence. (In what follows, I omit the expulsion of parts of commercially influential minorities like people of Chinese descent from Indonesia, people of South Asian descent from Tanzania, and Hindus and 'Biharis' from Bangladesh.) In Bangladesh, this was about the Bengali conquest of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, which displaced the local population and led to almost two decades of violent conflict and to misery among those settled and displaced alike; and the huge plan to build cluster villages, primarily in coastal areas, which popular resistance pre-empted. In Mali, projects (some involving force) for the resettlement of northern pastoralists were given up after several years,³¹ though some pastoralists moved to cities or the south on their own. The government also attracted other migrants to expanding irrigation areas, but many of the new inhabitants suffered from poverty and oppressive living conditions. Somewhat similar to Bangladesh in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Indonesia responded to a guerrilla uprising in occupied East Timor by forcefully resettling at least half of the local population in strategic villages. About 10 percent of the population died in the process, and the annexed province was never very productive. The state also resettled millions of Javanese and Balinese on outer islands, where they tended to suffer from poverty and many became (or remained) part-time proletarians instead of farmers. It settled

26 Aseffa 1991, p. 19; Moris and Thom 1990, esp. p. 39, 513; Zalla and Moris 1990, p. 454.

27 Carruthers 1983, pp. 16–18, 23.

28 Zalla and Moris 1990, p. 454.

29 Adams and So 1996, esp. pp. 136, 153, 158, 167, 170–171; see also Franke and Chasin 1980, pp. 194–197, 218–225; Adams 1981; Moris and Thom 1990, pp. 228–234.

30 Lipton 1988, p. 109.

31 For similar forced resettlement of Somalian nomads southward in 1975, see Gebre-Medhin and Vahlquist 1977, p. 198. For the impact of temporary expulsion in Mali, see Randall and Giuffrida 2006.

shifting cultivators and hunter-gatherers as well. The Tanzanian government's forced villagization in the first half of the 1970s was the largest of these population movements.

These resettlements, which affected from hundreds of thousands to millions of people, had many things in common. They enjoyed international support, especially from the 'World Bank'. Because most employed force and were badly underfunded, they put the burden on the people, and many resettlers lived in misery, at least initially, which caused many deaths. Many of the programs involved planned villages. Economically, none was an unqualified success. Instead of the envisioned poles of economic growth and development, the frequent result was that the resettled just got by, enough to keep them where they had been moved but insufficient for a substantial contribution to reduce hunger. The projects set off complex processes of social differentiation and mobility, at the end of which few families had the flourishing farm they may have dreamt of at the start.³²

Foreign impact on development policies

Foreign influence worked less through imposition, which industrialized nations and international organizations could not sustain, and more through "permanent negotiation".³³ The 'World Bank' called this "country dialogue".³⁴ A critic has objected to the term "dialogue" because representatives of industrial countries showed little respect for non-industrialized nations, to which negotiations appeared denigrating.³⁵ Though it may be true that the 'World Bank' and other agencies used development projects to gather intelligence on countries,³⁶ how much of it was actionable is another question. 'Aid' may be intended as a means of imperialist control over non-industrialized countries,³⁷ but this study has shown that it was not very effective.

Chapters 4 and 5 and the case studies showed, first, that the reorientation toward rural poverty alleviation through the small peasant approach by international organizations and agencies in capitalist industrialized countries was often

32 Similar phenomena are well known from resettlement for large dam-construction projects. See Cernea and Guggenheim 1993, esp. pp. 20–26, 386 and more generally about resettlement Griffin 1987, p. 15.

33 Whitfield 2009b, p. 350. Siegel 2018, p. 187 and Kirk 2010, p. xxxi present a similar argument about India.

34 Ayres 1983, p. 21. Concerning the 'dialogue' in credit matters, Donald 1976, p. viii characterized the "kinds of people thrown together" in development meetings as "the U.S. professors, chiefly agricultural or general economists and a few social scientists; AID staff from Washington and regional Missions; a large number of administrators of credit programs in the region; a roughly equal number of regional officials from departments as agriculture or cooperatives, and from cereal banks; and a small number of local private bankers, university professors, and representatives of groups like the Ford Foundation, local marketing boards, or international cooperative organizations" plus an FAO representative.

35 Islam 2005, pp. 411–424, quote p. 421.

36 Escobar 1995, pp. 231–232, note 22.

37 Dupuis 1984, p. 75.

merely verbal, a shameless lie, and the substance of these agencies' operations revealed other objectives. This was especially true for bilateral 'aid'. Second, in as much as the intensification of agriculture in non-industrialized countries was actually pursued, these efforts were often not oriented to small producers. Third, when they were, many policies and projects taking the small farmer approach failed in their design or implementation and, as a result (as in the second case), often had a negative impact on the social position of small agriculturalists. The impact was especially severe on landless workers and sharecroppers (except under special conditions like those in Indonesia in the late 1970s and early 1980s). As in the 1950s, 'development aid' still involved injections of capital, which ended up in the hands of wealthy ruralites because either the providing agencies could not control their distribution or that was what they intended.

On the policy level, most of the UN agencies, regional organizations, and development agencies in industrialized countries adopted the small peasant approach as their strategy of rural poverty alleviation in the 1970s. They tried to influence the governments of non-industrialized countries to do the same in their national development policies and promoted concepts like integrated rural development. And so did scholars in industrialized nations. These experts and agencies found like-minded politicians, functionaries and experts in many Asian and African countries. This convergence reflects the common social background of the former and the latter: they were middle class (or, more precisely, *bürgerlich*³⁸), highly educated and urban.

The convergence is visible in the history of the so-called 'aid clubs' and 'aid consortia' (including the Club du Sahel). This study suggests that such consortia were no matter of simple imperialist remote-control; neither could they determine national policy nor specific projects. This challenges the prevailing understanding of them along the lines of dependency theory. Remembering how India's aid consortium came about, I.G. Patel, an Indian government representative in Washington in the 1950s, said: "The Aid India Consortium was, of course, our direct objective and first achievement in the breakthrough on aid", which implies that it was not simply a foreign imposition.³⁹ More generally, the design of development projects was often not simply foreign but influenced by international creditors/'donors' and, to at least the same extent, homegrown. In any case, neither international nor domestic design gave projects the capacity to have much of an impact on the lives and productivity of the majority of rural dwellers.

Effects of 'aid'

As for resource flows, analysts have cited the large amounts of foreign and international 'aid' that non-industrialized countries received. This argument was primarily applied to Sub-Saharan Africa after 1980, where the annual 'flow' of ODA

38 *Bürgerlich* in German comprises people of the bourgeoisie, petty-bourgeoisie and intelligentsia.

39 Interview with I.G. Patel, 9 March 2001, p. 8, in: United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007.

was US\$19 per capita, as opposed to less than \$5 in South Asia.⁴⁰ (The figure for Bangladesh and Indonesia in the mid-1970s was at about \$10.) Resource flows of over 10 percent of GNP, as in Africa in the 1980s, early 1990s, and the 2000s (and in the Sahel from the early 1970s on), could not remain without economic consequences, but this could much less be claimed for the ‘flows’ of between 1 and 2 percent in Asia’s low-income countries. In 1990, the rate was 19 percent for Mali and a staggering 48 percent for Tanzania; in 1993–1995, it was 17 percent and 31 percent, respectively.⁴¹ Total figures of US\$300 billion to \$1 trillion in ‘aid’ to Africa have raised alarm.⁴² Experts argued that foreign actors financing almost all of a country’s development budget would also have to have political consequences.

However, it has to be kept in mind that ODA data are misleading as up to half of ODA did not arrive in the ‘target’ country but paid the salaries of ‘experts’ from the ‘donor’ country. These funds were at best imported services, and little of them was spent in the relevant non-industrialized country. South Africa’s President Thabo Mbeki reportedly told a UNDP functionary in the 2000s:

You and your blue flags, and your people running around in huge Mercedes with blue flags, and your big houses, and ultimately we get one dollar for all that bombast. [. . .] It’s all very ceremonial, and the money is very little. But they pay themselves very well [. . .].⁴³

To be sure, similar things could have been said about national ‘development’ spending. In the 1970s, Nigeria’s public National Accelerated Food Production Project spent less than 10 percent of its budget on agricultural inputs; most went for vehicles, travel, salaries and publicity.⁴⁴

Another large portion of foreign ‘aid’ arrived in non-industrialized countries as goods that had been produced in some industrial country, replacing commercial imports.⁴⁵ And most ‘aid’ was not meant for the rural sphere. In 1977 and 1978, my four case-study countries received annual ODA commitments for agriculture and rural development between \$2 and \$7 per capita (of which up to half was not real flows). Evenly spread, that could make for little change.⁴⁶ Moreover, most of it was in the form of loans.

40 Timberlake 1985, p. 36; see also Simon 1995, p. 29; Lele 1988, p. 323.

41 Krueger et al. 1989, p. 40; Simon 1995, p. 29; Berg 2000, p. 11; Naudet 2000, pp. 66, 292; Moyo 2011, p. 70.

42 Moyo 2011, pp. 58, 69, 85.

43 Interview with Devaki Jain, 12 March 2002, p. 82, in: United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007, citing Mbeki talking to Mark Malloch Brown.

44 Van Apeldoorn 1981, p. 139.

45 According to a UN document from the late 1970s, ‘aid’ basically evened out many non-industrialized countries’ balance of payments 1971–1976: “The Transfer of External Resources to Developing Countries”, n.d., FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 26, RU 7/46.28, vol. IV.

46 Compilation in FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. Services Division, RU 7/39.

In material terms, the primary intention and effect of ‘aid’ is to redistribute resources within industrialized nations to two recipients, namely, the intelligentsia and companies in certain industries (e.g., agricultural equipment, grain, and engineering). USAID administrator William Gaud stated in 1968: “The biggest single misconception about aid programs is that we send money abroad. We don’t. Aid assists American equipment, raw materials, expert services and food”.⁴⁷ Above all, ‘aid’ benefited in industrial nations the intelligentsia⁴⁸ in state bureaucracies, academia, and even transnational corporations, which emphasized in the 1970s that what they provided above all were management skills (see Chapter 6). Two secondary effects of ‘aid’ were the creation of public employment and the construction of infrastructure in non-industrialized countries. What actually reached villages (as a tertiary effect) was often appropriated by local elites.

Putting aside the frequent claim that ‘aid’ makes recipients passive and dependent, more tangible effects are worth considering. According to some studies, high levels of ‘aid’ do not stimulate economic growth, but de-incentivize savings, boost production more than investment, and may even reduce investment.⁴⁹ They fuel consumption, which can generate inflation.⁵⁰ In my view, this inflationary tendency is a serious consequence of ‘aid’ with the potential to harm the poor and sometimes, as in Bangladesh, to become one of the causes of famine. In the form of subsidized imports, ‘aid’ may also lead to an overvaluation of the national currency and influence interest rates.⁵¹ By increasing the public debt of non-industrialized countries, especially in Africa,⁵² ‘aid’ limited their economic policy options.

Even without taking into account that much of it was spent on foreign experts’ salaries, because of repayments with interest, foreign ‘aid’ sometimes caused net outflows of resources from non-industrialized countries.⁵³ In the 1980s, this was generally true of financial flows between non-industrialized countries and the IMF and ‘World Bank’; in 1986–1987, it was the result of U.S. ‘aid’ to Africa’s 29 poorest countries.⁵⁴ Latin America was the first region where the net direction of overall flow of ‘aid’ was reversed.⁵⁵ In the early 1990s, Indonesia’s total ‘aid’ repayments also exceeded its inflows (and in 1970–1977, foreign direct investment led to net capital outflows, as happened so often).⁵⁶ The fact that public debt abroad was more than offset by private capital exports, mostly by Africans (though not in Mali and only marginally in Tanzania), has given rise to the thesis that “Africa [is] a net creditor”.⁵⁷ This may also indicate large private appropriations of foreign ‘aid’ funds and the socialization of liabilities. In summary, the impact of international

47 Quoted in Rugumamu 1997, p. 46.

48 See also Green 2014, pp. 1–2.

49 Moyo 2011, p. 84; Faaland and Parkinson 2013 (1986), p. 235; Naudet 2000, pp. 42–44.

50 Moyo 2011, p. 102.

51 Naudet 2000, p. 46; Moyo 2011, p. 104.

52 See Jansen 1983b, pp. 12–13; Krebs 1988, p. 158; see also Mandel 1987, p. 299.

53 See Twele 1995, p. 113 for 1984–1990. See also Petras 1984, p. 94.

54 Kakwani et al. 1993, p. 135; Cheru 1993, p. 26; George 1997, pp. 208–210.

55 Clark 1986, p. 64.

56 See Sjahrir 1993a, p. 40, and Arief and Sasono 1981, pp. 125–126.

57 See Boyce and Ndikumana 2001; Rugumamu 1997, p. 274.

‘aid’ resource flows on rural areas was limited, the harm to the poor probably outweighed the benefit, but this harm’s extent is hard to measure.

No doubt, the four countries in my case studies were subjected to imperialism. They were entangled in an international trade system that undervalued agricultural products and overvalued technology, and industrialized nations had written its rules. Eventually, they were heavily in debt. The two African countries had structural adjustment policies imposed on them from abroad; the two Asian countries were under considerable foreign pressure. Foreign powers tried to influence the agricultural and social policies of all of them. U.S. blackmail against Bangladesh in 1974 was murderous.

However, one needs to be more specific about what kind of imperialism this was. Resource flows were primarily public money from industrialized nations channeled through bilateral organizations, international organizations, and, to a lesser degree, NGOs. As Issa Shivji wrote in 1976, “imperialism itself has become multilateral”.⁵⁸ Later, this multilateral state imperialism was modified. Under the influence of neoliberalism, official ‘donors’ in the 1980s and 1990s turned to channeling somewhat larger funds than before through NGOs as cherished private entities, “less bureaucratic, non-corrupt and more efficient”.⁵⁹ NGOs offering microcredit, fostering entrepreneurship among the poor, matched the neoliberal agenda in particular.⁶⁰ Most of them were subsidized.⁶¹

Official ‘aid’ often came with political conditions, which is unsurprising given what ‘partners’ were involved. The ‘World Bank’ and USAID practiced aid conditionality already in the 1960s; in the 1980s, they did so more openly.⁶² But these conditions were difficult to enforce, and the policy coordination among ‘donors’ that ubiquitous aid consortia made possible had its limits. Nonetheless, such conditionality sometimes killed people in large numbers, as it did in the Bangladesh famine in 1974. To some degree, food scarcity in 1972–1975 was crafted.

By contrast, foreign private investment and other business interest in all four countries was small, less than ODA inflows, especially for agribusiness.⁶³ Private investment was greater in Indonesia than in the other three but still restricted.⁶⁴ In fact, the 1950s to the early 1970s was a period of private foreign divestment. In the 1960s, colonialists left Mali and Tanzania, some foreign firms were nationalized, and many so-called ‘South Asians’ driven out of Tanzania; Bangladesh expelled Pakistanis and seized their property in 1971–1972; and Indonesia nationalized Dutch companies in the 1950s and 1960s.⁶⁵ In all four countries, the economic

58 Shivji 1976, p. 21.

59 Kiondo 1993, p. 169.

60 Karim 2011, p. xiii; Meyerowitz 2021, p. 210.

61 Allen 2007, p. 49; von Pischke 2007, p. 139.

62 Hayter 2005, pp. 90–91, 101.

63 See also Mosley et al. 1991, p. 9 with data for non-industrialized countries in general. FDI concentrated in about 10 non-industrialized countries plus OPEC states, and by sector, in mining and oil extraction: Kirkpatrick and Nixon 1981, pp. 374–377.

64 See also Cable and Mukherjee 1986, esp. pp. 88–89.

65 Middlemen minorities faced violence in all four countries: people of South Asian and Arab heritage in Tanzania, people of Chinese heritage in Indonesia, ‘Biharis’ in Bangladesh and Kel Tamasheq in

importance of foreign-owned plantations decreased. In none were contract farming or foreign land grabbing big issues in the 1970s and 1980s, and in three this has remained so. (Land grabbing started to play a major role in Indonesia in the 1990s and a smaller one in Tanzania in the 2000s because of the agrofuel boom.)⁶⁶

What about trade? In general, non-industrialized countries became much less important markets for agribusiness than some had envisioned. However, grain-trading companies did expand their markets and found long-term customers in Asia and Africa, which imported 73 million and 23 million tons of grain, respectively, in 1983, about half of world imports.⁶⁷ The majority of these purchases were commercial transactions. Most went to urbanites, who came to consume more wheat and corn than traditional staples, unlike many rural dwellers. Foreign engineering firms also made a lot of money building fertilizer factories in Indonesia, Bangladesh and Tanzania. But foreign pesticide and fertilizer producers' sales in the four were smaller; foreign seed companies had almost no presence in their seeds markets; and agricultural machinery companies did little business. Technically and in terms of service it was often unsatisfactory what foreign firms offered. In summary, transnational agribusiness was incapable of penetrating the countryside in non-industrialized nations (see Chapter 6).

Economic changes

The intensification of farming in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mali and Tanzania was a long process. The outcome of this process differed widely and cannot be reduced to a common denominator. All of the four countries were characterized by peasant farming. The adoption of new technologies and production methods was almost always slower than expected, involved only some of the farms and areas, and it did not guarantee large production increases where it did occur. Tanzania did not significantly expand its use of improved seed varieties, fertilizers or traction and saw no major increase in yields or per capita production. In Indonesia, yields for several crops went up substantially, but especially for irrigated rice through high-yielding varieties, a higher use of fertilizers and pesticides, with the greatest gains in the 1970s and 1980s. A similar development occurred in Bangladesh only in the 1990s and 2000s. In Mali, production increases were less steep than in these two Asian countries, for the most part in the 1980s and 1990s, for corn, sorghum, millet and later for rice, but higher yields were not the prime drivers of the increases; most was the result of acreage expansion, the increased use of draught animals and manure.

Mali. But while there were many traders among most of them, this was not the case for the 'Biharis', and Kel Tamasheq were marginalized, not expelled (at least not before the 1990s).

66 See Dinham and Hines 1983, p. 158. For studies on contract farming, where none of the four case-study countries played a role except for limited activities in Tanzania's tea farming and Malian vegetable production, see Glover and Kusterer 1990; Little and Watts 1994, esp. pp. 64, 68, 227. For land grabbing, see "Die globalen Landdeals" 2012; Fritz et al. 2015, p. 183. There is a vast literature on palm oil production in Indonesia.

67 Racine 1986, p. 44.

The picture changed over time: between 1970–1972 and 1982–1984, Tanzania and Indonesia saw a spectacular rise in grain production; Bangladesh made substantial gains, but Mali little. In per capita terms, Indonesia's production rose over 40 percent, Tanzania's about 18 percent, and Bangladesh's about 2 percent, but Mali's production fell by 3 percent.⁶⁸

There were also strong regional variations. In Mali, grain production rose much more in some zones of irrigated as well as rainfed agriculture than in others (in rainfed areas, it increased notably in combination with cotton production). Rainfed areas in Indonesia – on many outer islands – produced less of a success story than irrigated rice. In Tanzania, the southern highlands emerged as the new center of national grain production, but other areas were in decline. In general, intensive farming methods were rarely applied to rainfed agriculture and to certain crops, like cassava and millet, that were deemed backward. Even for rice in South and Southeast Asia, the adoption rates of technologies considered 'modern' were low in rainfed areas.⁶⁹ Intensification was regionally and locally uneven, which produced inequality. However, whether large, medium or small peasants adopted new technologies and methods first and which did so most completely is unclear. Because they invested the most labor, the latter tended to produce the most per unit area.⁷⁰

In each of the four countries, animal production was a sideshow of development policies. Mali was part of the epicenter in this field – about half of all pastoralists worldwide lived in Western Africa in the 1970s. None of the case-study countries experienced a breakthrough in the productivity of pastoralism in terms of meat or milk production or herders' incomes. Summing up pastoral development policies in Africa, Walter Goldschmidt said: "Nothing seems to work".⁷¹ But in all four, cattle provided crucial animal labor, organic fertilizer for staple food production and fuel for cooking. In Bangladesh, and Mali, since the 1980s, agricultural practice approximated pre-industrial integrated crop-animal production.

The extent to which technical inputs were adopted in the production of staples was different among the four countries, but input industries emerged in each. In the 1970s and 1980s, Indonesia and Bangladesh were building large fertilizer industries supplied by domestic sources of natural gas to meet domestic demand. And Bangladesh started to produce simple irrigation pumps. By contrast, Mali produced only some agricultural implements, like Tanzania which had a medium-sized fertilizer factory in addition. In all four countries, public institutions and international organizations ran programs to breed improved varieties of staple crops, which had some notable successes. And they all developed small food processing industries. Beyond food, sizable industries emerged in Indonesia and Bangladesh, but not Tanzania and Mali; in Bangladesh, this concentrated on the textile sector, in Indonesia it was more diverse.

68 See Krebs 1988, p. 43.

69 David and Otsuka 1994b, pp. 12, 18–20.

70 Bryceson 2001, pp. 24–25; Tyagi 1993, p. 255

71 Goldschmidt 1981, p. 116; see also Galaty et al. 1981, p. 41.

For the most part, visions of making an agriculture greatly intensified by technical inputs drive capital accumulation in these countries did not come true. Indonesia may have come closest. To the extent that it did occur, capital was usually accumulated elsewhere than in staple food production: through migrant labor remittances, trade and control of business licenses, and through misappropriating government and ‘aid’ money. In agriculture, relatively few amassed capital through grain production, while many turned to raising vegetables and small livestock to earn additional income and to non-agricultural activities like food processing, trade, crafts, services and wage labor. This diversification of the sources of household income, which occurred throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America, involved many women and many informal economic activities.⁷² It was facilitated by seasonal variation in the demand for agrarian labor.⁷³ But it made few rich; most just managed to make a living. Eventually, development agencies, NGOs in particular, promulgated income diversification as the new solution to rural poverty.⁷⁴

In the process of capital accumulation, population size and density mattered. In Sub-Saharan Africa, low population densities and the resulting bad rural infrastructure made for poorly integrated markets.⁷⁵ Most of Africa’s “least developed countries” in 1980 had fewer than five million people.⁷⁶ As its population grew, Tanzania built a national market. It was easier for the more populous nations of Indonesia and Bangladesh to generate national markets and raise the capital needed to establish industries, and to evade impositions of foreign ‘donors’.

South-south economic entanglements

A central theme of this book is an attempt to integrate non-industrialized countries into the world economy. The case studies show its result was limited. And the resulting integration was no simple ‘north-south’ matter. As in many non-industrialized countries, the production of export crops was on the decline in Tanzania, Bangladesh and Indonesia, though not in Mali.⁷⁷ More generally, these countries’ export orientation was not strong. The growth of world trade slowed in 1970–1976.⁷⁸ Thus, the claim that family farms became more tightly integrated in global

72 For example, see Moser 1991, p. 119 note 70 (for British ‘aid’ projects); Swindell 1985, p. 13. For the widespread character, see Booth 2004b, p. 29.

73 Ellis 2000, p. 293.

74 For the South Asian Commission on Poverty recommending such policies in 1991, see interview with Ponna Wignaraja, 6 March 2001, pp. 88–89, in: United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007.

75 Booth 2004a, p. 20. Booth likened such conditions to Indonesia’s eastern islands.

76 A. Condos, “Food and Agriculture in the Least Developed Countries in the 1980s: Problems and Prospects”, contribution by FAO, draft, 11 January 1981, FAO, RG 12, ES, UN 29/15.

77 A variation to this pattern was feeds exports. In 1982, only Indonesia exported large amounts (ca. 1 million tons) to the European Community; the other three countries did not. Schumann 1986, pp. 20–29. For stagnating or slowly growing agricultural exports, see von Blanckenburg 1986, p. 216.

78 “Commodity and Trade Problems of Developing Countries [. . .]”, n.d., ca. 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Agenda – International I; Mandel 1987, pp. 18–20.

agro-food complexes is doubtful.⁷⁹ As Lionel Cliffe put it, “the forces of international capital . . . are not . . . capable of fully transforming Africa’s forces or relations of production”.⁸⁰ Foreign capital played little role when industries did emerge in Bangladesh, though a bigger one in Indonesia, and there was little foreign private investment in staple food-related industries. The one sector in which there was significant integration in the world economy for Mali, Bangladesh and Indonesia was labor migration after 1970 (chronologically and in terms of the share of the affected population in the order listed). With support of international organizations, the three supplied cheap labor for foreign industrial and service sectors, but the main destinations of their emigrants were not Europe or North America but Africa and Asia.

These migration patterns are part of a broader, nearly worldwide process of continental socioeconomic integration.⁸¹ Stronger continental integration has also become apparent from the growing importance of trading partners in the same region, which is now being discussed as “polycentric” world trade and a new geography of trade, an aspect that I cannot cover here in detail.⁸² Other trends could be cited, including in private and public foreign investment. Although there is not enough room here to explain this in detail, I think this is part of the emergence of two distinct, though interrelated, spheres of the world economy, or two world economies, if you like.

In this context, though the development policies of industrialized nations did help to keep the countries of my case studies capitalist and politically stable (in particular, as dictatorships), they were much less able to control their capital accumulation and the related economic processes, for the four pursued their own economic paths and strengthened their integration within the Afro-Asian economic area.⁸³ This owed more to the initiative of many individuals than to formal inter-governmental south–south cooperation. The vision of an integration of post-colonial states in the global economic system at favorable terms laid down in plans for a New International Economic Order of 1974⁸⁴ did not come true. This was a vision of globalization developed by non-industrialized countries, but it called on industrial nations to end economic protectionism, which they never did. Facing

79 Cf. Bello 2009, p. 24.

80 Lionel Cliffe, “Rural Political Economy in Africa”, in Peter Gutkind and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds. *Political Economy of Contemporary Africa*, 1976, p. 126, quoted in Bingen 1985, p. 10.

81 For example, see Bakewell et al. 2009.

82 Horner and Nadvi 2018; Didier 2017, pp. 140–141. See World Bank 1981, p. 154; recent data in country profiles in <https://wits.worldbank.org> and <https://oec.world/>. Among the four case-study countries, Bangladesh is exceptional in that most of its exports do go to industrial nations, especially in Europe and North America. But most of its imports are not from there.

83 Some important trade items are worth consideration, notably imports of mineral oil and the rice imports of Mali, Bangladesh and Indonesia. Much revolved around the oil-exporting countries at the Persian Gulf, but much more through labor migration and oil deliveries than Arab development ‘aid’, which was conventional, limited in scope and not very effective (see Hunter 1984; Shihata 2011). Big business in Germany seems to become aware of and worried about their delinking, see for example Kronauer 2020.

84 See the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, 1 May 1974, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/218450?ln=en>.

their continued protectionism (including agricultural subsidies and new obstacles to labor migration put up by them) and limited interest of their private industry in exports and investment, non-industrialized countries turned to continental integration instead.

The general argument of this book is that policies of poverty reduction through the small peasant approach often reproduced hunger in non-industrialized countries but less through the activities of international big business than through complex processes of internal capital accumulation driven by their national development policies as well as capital inflows through ODA.

Africa versus Asia: a useful comparison?

It has become fashionable to frame ‘development’ issues through comparing Asia and Africa: success versus failure, accumulation versus non-accumulation, and progress versus hunger. This framing presents Africa as *the* continent of hunger and the “last frontier of capitalism”.⁸⁵ It is true that since the 1980s famines have persisted in Africa but not in Asia (with few exceptions).⁸⁶ Also, many have argued that poverty in Africa grew markedly in absolute and relative terms but fell in parts of Asia in the 1980s and 1990s.⁸⁷ However, in 2004, the percentage of children under five who were underweight was still higher in Indonesia (28 percent) than Tanzania (22 percent), and though in Mali it was higher (33 percent), Bangladesh was far worse (48 percent). In general, South Asia surpassed Sub-Saharan Africa (46 percent vs. 28 percent). Over half of the world’s underweight young children lived in four Asian countries: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia. The same was true for women in the 1990s, that is, other world regions were worse affected by undernutrition than Africa.⁸⁸ The bulk of food ‘aid’ was redirected from Asia to Africa in the 1980s, when Sub-Saharan countries’ grain imports were still a fraction of Asian countries’ but rose to similar per capita levels.⁸⁹ If Africa is the continent of famine, Asia continues to be the chronic hunger continent.

Staple farming was greatly intensified in parts of Asia but hardly at all in Africa (see Chapter 5). Increases in cereal yields per unit area under cultivation in Africa and Asia differed markedly in 1960–1980: Mali and Tanzania were in the lowest category of 0–0.5 percent annual increases while Bangladesh and India had annual growth between 2 percent and 2.5 percent, and Indonesia was over 3 percent. Unlike in much of Asia, grain production increased in Sub-Saharan Africa

85 For the latter point, see Zeman 2023, p. 197 (citing Antonio Guerreiro who criticizes Achille Mbembe).

86 Except for the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and, until 1983, Indonesian-occupied East Timor. Others have cited Haiti, Brazil, Bolivia and Bosnia as exceptions: “Hunger – the 20th century” 1996.

87 Bello 2009, p. 77 (pointing to Oxfam data); Moyo 2011, p. 85. For a comparison between Indonesia and Nigeria in 1970–2000, see Enweremadu 2013, p. 208.

88 UNICEF 2006, pp. 2–3, 12, 30, 31; Howson 1996, p. 60, pointing to South Asia, Southeast Asia, the People’s Republic of China and parts of Central America.

89 Iliffe 1987, p. 258; Becker 1989, p. 227; Krebs 1988, p. 100.

primarily because of expansion in the acreage under cultivation.⁹⁰ The introduction of input packages for rice, millet, and sorghum in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1970s failed to increase production.⁹¹ Fertilizer use per unit area cultivated grew by more than five times in Asia in 1968–2002, but Sub-Saharan Africa's much lower level of use only doubled in the same period and stagnated at between 7 kilograms and 10 kilograms per hectare after 1982.⁹² One reason for the stagnation, even according to the 'World Bank', was the elimination of subsidies.⁹³ Production drives like Ghana's Operation Feed Yourself and Nigeria's Operation Feed the Nation channeled most of their inputs to larger farmers.⁹⁴ In 1962–1997, the rise in the land under irrigation in Sub-Saharan Africa paralleled Asia's, but the total acreage stayed very low.⁹⁵

Some of the differences concerning intensification have been attributed to differences in general conditions. Contrary to in much of Asia, small agriculturalists in Sub-Saharan Africa lacked labor, not land. Thus, they sought to increase their profit per worker, not per unit of area cultivated, and, consequently, adopted extensive rather than intensive farming.⁹⁶ Accordingly, some have disputed the widely held view that Sub-Saharan Africa was overpopulated.⁹⁷ Africa (unlike South Asia and China) maintained large land reserves, with only the best soils under cultivation – 6 percent of the total area (even less in semi-arid West Africa) – and left fallow for long periods. In some areas (including in Tanzania), these fallow systems came under pressure from rural population growth in the 1980s.⁹⁸ Thus, one would have expected fertilizer use to rise. Because of this selective use of land, the quantity of arable land per farm worker was not much higher than in Asia: 1.2–1.5 hectares in various parts of Sub-Saharan Africa compared to 1 hectare in India and 0.7 hectares in Indonesia, also a country with large land reserves.⁹⁹ Farmers plowed more to cultivate larger areas than to raise yields. But animal traction remained uncommon in Tanzania and parts of Mali, perhaps because farmers there did not have to clear many trees.¹⁰⁰

Many trace the difference with respect to intensive farming to policy differences on the two continents. However, my case studies indicate no major policy difference. The agricultural policies of most African countries changed after

90 Weber and Sievers 1985, p. 26; Krebs 1988, pp. 57–58, 69 for 1970/72 to 1982/84, but see von Blanckenburg 1986, p. 216 for 1965–1983.

91 Woodhouse 1988, p. 3.

92 Von Braun 1989, p. 187; International Fertilizer Industry Association 2004; Jayne et al. 2003, pp. 1–2; Grigg 1986, pp. 154–158; Lele et al. 1989; De Vries and Toenniessen 2001, pp. 11, 25. It was similar with tractors (*ibid.*).

93 Critchfield 1994, pp. 264–265.

94 See Lemmenmeier 2012, pp. 46–50; Sano 1983, pp. 58–60.

95 Gakou 1987, p. 10; de Vries and Toenniessen 2001, p. 11.

96 Olivier de Sardan 1993, p. 50.

97 Bush 1996, p. 170.

98 Matlon 1988, pp. 59–60; Lele et al. 1989, pp. 5, 15; Colombo et al. 1977, p. 5.

99 Paulino 1988, pp. 35–36. For land use in Indonesia, see Thorbecke and van der Pluijm 1993, p. 67.

100 Noronha 1985, p. 92; Starkey 1991, p. 79.

1986: governments cut subsidies and raised producer prices.¹⁰¹ If at all, a minor difference could be found in the fact that some Asian governments maintained such subsidies longer.¹⁰² Agricultural taxes were low in Asia, but African governments also greatly reduced them in the 1970s.¹⁰³ One difference may be found in more frequent currency devaluations, as in Indonesia if compared to Nigeria.¹⁰⁴ But Indonesia was exceptional among oil exporting countries because the government reinvested a large percentage of the country's oil export revenue into agriculture through subsidies for inputs like fertilizer.¹⁰⁵ If Africa, as many have argued, was disconnected from world trade and finance in the second half of the 20th century,¹⁰⁶ this could also be linked to currency policies to some degree.

In social terms, some have argued that 'aid' money disappeared through corruption in both Asia and in Africa, but it was more often productively invested in the former than in the latter, where it was hoarded or used for private consumption.¹⁰⁷ Others have held that, unlike in Asia, in Africa, it was primarily the state through which elite-building worked, with high-level predatory bureaucrats tied to an urban clientele and buying agricultural land, real estate, commercial and manufacturing property, but not using it productively, and promoting development strategies that served only their own interests.¹⁰⁸ However, one sees the same pattern – and growing bureaucracies – in Bangladesh and Indonesia. In 1990, they were among the six most corrupt countries in the world, according to a ranking.¹⁰⁹ In David Enweremadu's more sophisticated understanding of corruption, it can stimulate, rather than impede, economic growth, but more centralized 'Asian' and decentralized 'African' forms of corruption have different effects and in Indonesia, for example, money earned through corruption was more often productively invested than in Africa.¹¹⁰ In general, however, the Africa–Asia juxtaposition is too general for useful explanation. 'Africa' is no causation and no argument.¹¹¹

Social change

The whole point of the small peasant approach, as it was advertised, was a fairly equitable growth of incomes and of food production to tackle the problems of extreme poverty and hunger. What transpired was not even close. Instead, its infusions of capital into the countryside in the name of development were often

101 Cheru 1993, pp. 15–16.

102 For India, see Tyagi 1993, p. 258.

103 Gibbon et al. 1993, p. 12.

104 See Fuady 2013.

105 Booth 1988, p. 2.

106 Engel 2000, pp. 67–68.

107 Moyo 2011, p. 96.

108 See Bates 1981; Guyer 1987b, p. 3. The argument by Elsenhans 1981, pp. 118, 161–162 was not restricted to one particular continent.

109 Easterly 2001, p. 245 about the International Credit Risk Guide.

110 Enweremadu 2013, esp. 202, 210–219.

111 For a contrary type of argument ("the development problematic is unique in Africa"), see Hyden 1980, quote p. 259.

appropriated by better-off people and local public figures. This fueled social inequality, which tended to exacerbate hunger.

The picture had some variations. In Bangladesh, as in India, farms continued to shrink, the number of the landless rose, the polarization between minifundists and wealthy peasants worsened, and rural wages remained very low.¹¹² Inequality also grew in Indonesia in the 1970s, though the average farm size remained constant, but, arguably, the 1980s brought some gains in rural wages and equality. Roughly speaking, 10 percent of rural households owned 50 percent of the agricultural land in Bangladesh and Java in the 1970s. Mali and Tanzania underwent some social differentiation, which was reflected in diverging farm sizes, but they had less landlessness and inequality than the other two.

Cooperatives illustrate the tendency toward inequality. Especially in the 1970s, they were intended to provide ‘modern’ inputs to small farmers, who could then begin to accumulate capital.¹¹³ In Bangladesh, Mali and Tanzania, if one regards the *ujamaa* program as a failure of producer cooperatives, cooperatives were state-supported vehicles of individual accumulation by means of illegal appropriation at the expense of others, rather than catalysts of collective accumulation. This was the case in many countries. One observer noted that where cooperatives thrived at all they

have emphasized stratification and resulted in rewards for the ‘notables’ and ‘big men’ of rural society as distinct from the humble farmers. ‘Cooperatives are for big men’, ‘cooperatives are for the rich’, are remarks to be found all too commonly, not only in East Africa but in India, and in Latin America.¹¹⁴

According to another, “the history of cooperatives in South Asia has been as melancholy as that of all the other development institutions. Cooperatives also have almost invariably been taken over (or even initiated in the first place) by village elites in their own interest”.¹¹⁵ Most of them did not reduce poverty and increased conflict instead of production.¹¹⁶ “As a result, in some parts of Africa, co-operative is considered a dirty word by the local people”.¹¹⁷ According to Gavin Williams, “[the] World Bank recognises that cooperatives have been costly and inefficient, and that they have benefitted traders, landlords and richer farmers”.¹¹⁸ A critic of this view asserted that cooperatives were popular with villagers in the Sahel and

112 For India, see U.S. Agricultural Attache New Delhi, “India: Agricultural Situation”, 21 January 1976, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 59, IN India (New Delhi) 1976 DR.

113 Gyllström 1989, p. 13.

114 Hunter 1993, p. 128. For India, see also Unger 2015, p. 149 (quoting Indira Gandhi in 1971), Shah 1971, p. 453, and Verma 1980, pp. 30–31; also Oxfam, “Field Director’s Report: Central India 1977”, 22 December 1977, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee Nov 1976-Jan 1980; for Egypt in the 1950s and 1960s, see Kirsch 1979a, p. 311.

115 Blair 1978, p. 74.

116 Attwood and Baviskar 1988, p. 8, for Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda.

117 Attwood and Baviskar 1988, pp. 2–3.

118 Williams 1981, p. 25.

cited authors according to whom claims that cooperatives disadvantaged the poorest were “not always true”.¹¹⁹ This was not a far-reaching statement.

The argument that development and foreign ‘aid’ in general had little economic impact but instead further empowered governments and state machineries and that the “expansion of state power” was its aim is unpersuasive. It is beyond doubt that ‘development aid’ strengthened regimes, and often dictatorships, but if it served the interests of an “extractive ‘bureaucratic bourgeoisie’”,¹²⁰ what did it extract and where did those resources go? According to a more cautious variation of the argument, “classical capitalist accumulation is a brutal process” that led to a “concentration of resources by the powerful” in Africa. They invested only some of their misappropriations in productive sectors, and “it is likely that the profitability of these enterprises will depend” on subsidies, grants, state quotas and cheap credit.¹²¹ It seems that in Africa more of governments’ budgets went to pay state employees than in Asia or Latin America.¹²²

But resource inflows from development policies were not misappropriated by one clearly delineated group, nor did many families succeed to found rich dynasties this way. As the case of Bangladesh shows, considerable downward social mobility among the wealthy after some time prevented this and limited capital concentration in the countryside.

Despite rural social differentiation, the tendency of households to diversify their sources of income prevented the much-discussed ‘death of the peasantry’.¹²³ In the 1970s, income diversification was not new, but possibly accelerated.¹²⁴ It also prevented, by and large, the emergence of large estates, on the one hand, and a rural proletariat, with class-consciousness and its associated organizations, on the other hand.¹²⁵ Many peasants were not dispossessed of all their land, and thus of all of their means of production, as in the primitive accumulation of capital, according to Marx.¹²⁶ (But the small-scale agriculture and local economies that emerged were not necessarily good news ecologically.) The peasantry had been too heterogeneous to constitute a social class, it became even more differentiated and included

119 Creevey 1986, pp. 159–160 (Editor’s Note; quote p. 160).

120 Ferguson 2014 (1990), pp. 252, 265, 266 (second quote), 268, 271 (first quote). Green 2014, p. 161 also makes the point that development policies, despite the liberal rhetoric, result in the rise of the number of rural civil servants. According to Islam 2005, p. 399 some foreign-sponsored NGOs also grew into big, inflexible bureaucratic bodies.

121 Raikes 1988, p. 46.

122 Thirty percent of recurrent costs as opposed to 15 and 20 percent, respectively: Glickman 1988, p. 11.

123 Among the advocates of the ‘death of the peasantry’ thesis was Eric Hobsbawm in the tradition of Marx, see Hobsbawm 1996, p. 289; also Radkau 2017, p. 63. See also Watts 1983, p. 513; Bryceson 2001a, pp. 5–6; Bryceson 2001b, p. 323 and the discussion in Bryceson et al. 2001 and Bryceson and Jamal 1997. Others objected: Bello 2009, pp. 12–13; Hyden 1980b, pp. 218–219; for Latin America, see Burbach and Flynn 1980, pp. 31, 140–162; and van der Ploeg 2008, esp. p. 273, who sees a re-peasantization.

124 See Chapter 9; also Lipton with Longhurst 1989, p. 176.

125 Mooij 2001, p. 219; van Schendel 1982, p. 293; Ellis 1998, pp. 1–2.

126 See Marx 1979 [1867], pp. 741–791.

part-time farmers. Similar things can be said about rural merchants and, perhaps, even the landless.¹²⁷ Whether the deepening social disparities in the countryside amounted to class differentiation is open to debate.¹²⁸ The struggles and infighting there have made a mockery of romanticizing myths of village unity.¹²⁹ And where some presumed the existence of a one-way road from subsistence to market, for rural dwellers there was always a chance to go back to a great deal of self-supply.¹³⁰ The social relations that resulted from processes influenced by the small farmer approach were complex and more monetized than before but blurred. It is characteristic that the largest part of the proletarianization of Malians, Bangladeshis and Indonesians was dislocated abroad in the Persian Gulf area, Southeast Asia, and the plantations and cities of Côte d'Ivoire.

127 Harriss 1990a, esp. p. 101; Franda 1982b, p. 7 for the landless in Bangladesh. Ellis 1998, pp. 2–3 cautions that rural income diversification can either accentuate or reduce inequality, depending on the circumstances. The effects of income diversification on agricultural production can also differ (pp. 21–23).

128 Epstein et al. 1988, pp. 52–55, 204.

129 See Brass 2000.

130 For example, see Zeman 2023 about northern Mozambique; Sigrist 1976, p. 40 about the Indian state of Kerala in the 1960s; Evers and Schiel 1979.

12 Projections and predictions

Imaginations of the future

This is the first of three chapters which offer general observations that place the findings of this study within broader contexts. This chapter reveals some basic structures of thought behind development policies to tackle the world food and hunger problems. It shows the technocratic outlook with which politicians and ‘experts’ tried to solve social problems with technical means and their inability to control socioeconomic processes.

In the course of my research for this project, the abundance of statements about the future in primary and secondary sources stood out. Imaginings of the future are intriguing and reveal a great deal about the mindset of their imaginers. Predictions are fascinating, of course, because of their contrasts with reality, historical actors’ perplexingly wrong and sometimes absurd expectations and plans that never came true.¹ This is why this chapter treats this subject as it pertains to hunger and ‘development’ a bit more systematically. In doing so, imaginations of the future are used not only as a topic but also as an approach, a gateway to make new insights accessible. I begin with some insights from the conceptual literature.

People cannot predict the future. So dubious is prophecy that St. Augustine, Florida, USA, had an ordinance until 1987 that prohibited predicting the future for money.² One reason is the lack of sources. In addition, as Reinhart Koselleck has argued, “things in the future principally elude our experience”. There are only “patterns of processes” whose likely repetition helps us.³ Therefore, experts may have some competence to anticipate future iterations of recurring processes but progressive ones are especially hard to predict. Accordingly, most present-day historians, though not most economic historians, reject the idea that there are laws of history.

Another problem is that futurists have never agreed upon their methods. Often there is an eclectic mix without “anything like a coherent whole”.⁴ The choice of method appears often murky and arbitrary. (Fortune tellers have no universally

1 Radkau 2017 is strong on this count.

2 Jamieson 1988, p. 73–74.

3 Koselleck 2000, pp. 204, 218.

4 Wagar 1991, p. xviii.

accepted method either – they read palms and coffee dregs and consult the stars, cards, crystal balls, sacrificial blood, etc.⁵)

By the 1960s, forecasting used computers and claimed to be scientific, but, arguably, the resulting flood of data restricted what could be imagined and limited the period of anticipation mostly to 10–30 years. In other words, through professionalization, predictions became technical in character and limited in temporal reach, whereas utopias disappeared.⁶ One explanation of this limitation of future possibilities that were considered lies in mental implications of the threat of nuclear annihilation.⁷ As a result, many predictions have been “strikingly poor [. . .] in political-sociological terms”.⁸

If there were discernible methods for forecasts and predictions that I mention in this chapter, many were based on little more than trend extrapolations. Such trend projections can be tricky. For example, one author argued in 1983 that at the then-current growth rates the People’s Republic of China would need 2,900 years to close the gap in gross national product per capita with the OECD countries.⁹ Some of the forecasters employed historical analogies, and a few used scenarios. A common tool in futures studies, scenarios, which are often combined with computer simulations, are arguably merely stories or imagined situations.¹⁰ One theorist has argued that futurists do not produce knowledge but “visions of plausible alternative futures”.¹¹ Other methods of futurists like game theory, chaos theory, decision-making models and input-output analysis play no role in this chapter.¹²

In parts of the text that follows, I focus on the 1970s, a peculiar period that offered little to optimists. As Edouard Kodjo, an *homme de lettres* and Togo’s young Minister of Finance, put it at the annual meeting of the IMF’s Board of Governors in October 1974:

And, so, the time of disenchantment has come . . . Where are the promises of yesteryear for a world in perpetual expansion? What has become of the assurances so often renewed by our experts who by an extrapolation and in an idyllic vision of past trends produced figures of constant reassurance for the future? I seek in vain, in the present figures reflecting a somewhat dour actuality and an increasingly harsh reality, the hope awakened in our hearts only recently by the adoption – in time of euphoria – of a new strategy for economic development. But now is the time for gnashing of teeth and disillusionment.¹³

5 Minois 1998, pp. 713–716.

6 See Hölscher 1999, pp. 219, 222; Radkau 2017, p. 15; Samuels 2009, pp. 113–114.

7 Neckel 1988, p. 481.

8 Flechtheim 1969, p. 19.

9 Ayres 1983, p. 81.

10 Jamieson 1988, pp. 75–78; Noack 1996, p. 91.

11 Wagar 1991, p. xviii.

12 For methods, see Tetlock and Gardner 2015; Hölscher 1999, p. 223; Armstrong 2001; Flechtheim 1969, pp. 119–163; Samuels 2009, pp. 3, 13; Wagar 1991, pp. 7–9; Cornish 1977, pp. 103–127.

13 Quoted in Huyser to Yriart, “Report on annual meetings – Board of Governors of IMF and World Bank”, 17 October 1974, FAO, RG 9, UN 12/1.

Doomsday prophecies

There were a lot of drastic warnings about imminent huge hunger disasters. In the 1960s, such Cassandran calls were often connected with Malthusian concerns about the rapid growth of world population (which, in fact, started to slow after 1970). Some authors, like C. P. Snow, predicted the beginning of local famines, or even a world-wide famine, for 1975. Such prophecies generated much publicity and were taken up by influential figures like 'World Bank' President Robert McNamara in order to promote their policies.¹⁴ Others expected "the 'food crunch' to strike the world" in "1980–1985" and were surprised when it seemed to arrive earlier.¹⁵ According to William and Paul Paddock, some countries had a future while others simply had none.¹⁶ The fashionable framing of threats as "world problems" suggested universality, shared human interests and depoliticized the 'problem'.¹⁷

The number and ominousness, though not the accuracy, of such doomsday prophecies increased during the world food crisis. Many were very general. Many authors were would-be experts or activists who called for food aid and the large-scale use of agricultural inputs. Norman Borlaug, a plant geneticist and winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1970, spoke of the possibility that "tens of millions" would starve to death in the near future,¹⁸ and, according to a press report, he said that the world had come very close to losing 50 million to 60 million lives through famine in 1973.¹⁹ Sri Lanka referred to Borlaug's warning that 20 million people could die of hunger in 1975 in its proposal to the World Food Conference for the founding of a World Fertilizer Fund.²⁰ Similarly, the law professor and land reform expert Roy Prosterman warned of 10 million to 30 million deaths from hunger and related diseases within 12 months, beginning in September 1973.²¹ During a plenary session of the World Food Conference on 11 November 1974, NGOs predicted 10 million deaths from starvation within the following six months without food aid.²² Fortunately, none of these predictions came true.

According to a West German newspaper report, a 1976 study by the newly founded International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington concluded on

14 McNamara's speech at the University of Notre Dame, 1 May 1969, in: McNamara 1973, pp. 42–43. See Paddock and Paddock 1967, p. 56; Samuel 2009, p. 130; Shaw 2007, p. 163.

15 Office of Policy Development, U.S. Department of Commerce, "World Food Supply and Demand: A Need For Coordinated Action", December 1973, Ford Library, Paul C. Leach Files, Box 9, World Food, November 1973–April 1974. One such study was Dumont and Rosier 1966, pp. 12, 220.

16 Devereux 1993, p. 58.

17 Anderson 2019, pp. 131–132.

18 Borlaug 1975, p. 16.

19 Lewis M. Simons, "Nobel Winner Seeks World Food Sharing", 13 September 1973, FAO, RG 15, LUNO FA-4/1.

20 "Preparatory Committee for the World Food Conference, 4 June 1974, Proposal by Sri Lanka: The Establishment of a World Fertilizer Fund", FAO, RG 22, WFC Documents/Documents of the Preparatory Committee, 4th folder. Press reports in January 1974 referred to the same warning for 1974: Sobel 1975, p. 55.

21 Roy Prosterman, "The Growing Threat of World Famine", Wall Street Journal, 14 September 1973, NARA, Nixon, WHCF, Box 38, GEN FO 3–2 Mutual Security 1/1/73-[8/9/74].

22 See Khan 1975, p. 201.

the basis of a computer model that a world famine, worse than all previous crises, was inevitable.²³ The threat of the coming calamity seemed to grow with the author's lack of expertise. In the same year, the second major computer-based study commissioned by the Club of Rome predicted that a major hunger crisis would begin in the early 1980s, peak around 2010, and 500 million children would die in South Asia by 2025.²⁴ In 1990, two other authors were still anticipating several hundred million excess deaths from hunger by 2020.²⁵ A German journalist reporting on the World Food Conference in 1974 predicted that, in total, "some 20, 50, 100 million people more" than the 40 million that would do so 'normally' "will starve to death" by the end of that year (and presumably in the near future).²⁶ The author and activist Lester Brown, known for his alarmism, predicted even a rising global death rate for 1974, contrary to the opposite long-term trend.²⁷ Topping these wild exaggerations, the 120 scientists participating in the Second International Conference on Environmental Future in 1977 declared that "the death by starvation of a thousand million people can well be the final tragedy of this century".²⁸ The numbers were meant to shock audiences into action, but they may have numbed them instead.

Others closer to actual events had similar concerns. Sadly, the warning of the former food minister of Bangladesh during the world food crisis that one million of his compatriots could die within the next six weeks without additional food aid was not very far off the mark, if related to a period of some months.²⁹ After a trip to Bangladesh in January 1975, Guy Stringer, an important figure in Oxfam, wrote of his "terrifying thought [. . .] that what is happening in Bangladesh to-day may be the pattern for other countries of S.[outh] E.[ast] Asia in the 1980s".³⁰

Food gap projections

Most of the warnings I have quoted were public statements with no discernible empirical basis or relation to actual policy. Projections of non-industrialized countries' required grain imports were better founded. The most publicized were in the preparatory documents for the World Food Conference in 1974, which was based on FAO data, and in parallel studies by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. What made these studies influential was their forecasts that by 1985 non-industrialized countries would need to import large amounts of food, for which they would not be

23 R. Dietrich Schwartz, "'Ihre Mark wird stark und stärker, aber für uns bleibt nur Kleingeld': Dritte Welt braucht mehr grüne Entwicklungshilfe – FAO-Schelte für Bonn", *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 29 January 1977, FAO, RG 13, GII, IN 2/1 Press Criticisms, vol. II (brown file).

24 Mesarovic and Pestel 1976, p. 123. According to the study *Global 2000*, p. 97, submitted to the U.S. president, Mesarovic and Pestel predicted 158 million deaths due to hunger until the year 2000.

25 Dyson 1996, p. 17.

26 Gabriele Ventzky, "Magere Hilfe für die Verhungerten", in: *Die Zeit*, 22 November 1974.

27 Jonathan Power, "Barbara rises above it all –", *PAN*, no. 1, 5 November 1974, p. 7, Oxfam Archive, file PAN Newspapers.

28 Quoted in Goldsmith 1985, p. 4.

29 Report by Senator Hubert Humphrey in *Hunger and Diplomacy* 1975, p. 10.

30 Guy Stringer, "A visit to Bangladesh in December, 1974", Oxfam Archive, Box Asia Field Committee, February 1970-October 1976.

able to pay, thus aggravating the food and hunger problems. In fact, the predicted food gap became the yardstick by which to measure these problems. That such a future needed to be preempted became the basis for policies to raise food production, especially that of small producers, in non-industrialized countries. (These policies would, in turn, require other imports to rise, for example, pesticides, which increased fivefold in 1985 compared to 1970–1971.)³¹

The core of the forecasts for the World Food Conference in 1974 (made by a team largely consisting of FAO members and building on FAO data) was that non-industrialized countries would need to import a net quantity of 85 million tons of grain (or 100 million tons gross) in 1985 without being able to pay for most. Therefore, they needed to increase their food production.³² The USDA anticipated a need of probably 52–78 million tons, depending on the scenario, and it calculated the deficit for *capitalist* non-industrialized countries, which was their main political concern.³³ A large share of these imports would go to Asia, with India and Bangladesh alone accounting for one-third.³⁴ Sub-Saharan Africa would need relatively little wheat and rice but 21 million tons of coarse grains in the early 2000s.³⁵ (One unspecified UN study predicted that Sub-Saharan Africa would need to import the fantastic quantity of 203 million tons of cereal grains by 2000, another predicted 50 million tons.³⁶) In 1976, the World Food Council expected that in 1985, India would need grain imports of 16.8 million tons, Bangladesh 5.5 million tons, Indonesia 8.67 million tons, and Tanzania 0.9 million to 1.1 million tons.³⁷ Other studies, for example, by the International Food Policy Research Institute in 1976, confirmed the FAO's and USDA's prognoses.³⁸ A manager in a grain-trading company presented similar results.³⁹

Some experts criticized the assumptions of the FAO's 1974 projections.⁴⁰ And the CIA criticized the USDA's projections as too "optimistic" (that is, the expected

31 Memo by Furtick, 15 July 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/2B, Divisional Contributions, General.

32 UN World Food Conference, Assessment of the World Food Situation – present and future, Rome, 1974, pp. 85–95, FAO, RG 22/WFC Docs. – E/Conf.65/Series.

33 World Food Situation 1974, p. 34; see Diwan 1978, p. 498.

34 "Draft report of the First Meeting of the Consultative Group for Food Policy and Investment in the Developing Countries, July 21–23, 1975", FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. III.

35 World Food Council document WFC/20, 14 April 1976, FAO Library. See comments in Matzke 1974, pp. 29–33.

36 According to Bänziger 1987, p. 97; for the 50 million, see Paulino 1988, p. 35.

37 World Food Council, WFC/34/Add. 1, "Recent Developments in the World Food Situation", 1 June 1977, FAO Library; see also World Food Council/17/Rev.1, 7 June 1976, FAO Library. In other data, Bangladesh was even expected to import 10.05 million tons of grains in 1985: Aziz to Martin, 19 June 1975, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. II.

38 See Secretary Berglund to Congressman Alexander, 11 March 1977, NARA, RG 354, Central Correspondence, Box 3, A. See also Revel and Riboud 1986, p. 5.

39 Rudolf Stöhr, "Entwicklungstendenzen am internationalen Getreidemarkt unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der EWG. Vortrag vor dem österreichischen Mühlen-Kartell am 16. Oktober 1974", copy in author's archive.

40 Kristensen to Aziz, 23 December 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/5.

deficit as too large).⁴¹ The methods were intransparent. FAO had used trend projections based on unspecified factors; the USDA, while using a narrower data set, factored in prices but gave “absolutely no explanation” of its methods. An analyst concluded that both studies “contain immeasurable biases and errors”, “give a wrong impression of scientificity and accuracy”, and “one is not sure of these projections having any particular meanings”.⁴² FAO and USDA had been in close contact over methods and findings, and the ‘World Bank’ was also consulted.⁴³ The OECD had been less cooperative with data because it doubted that forecasts were then possible.⁴⁴ By contrast, FAO’s prognoses were very influential on the debates among general futurists.⁴⁵

The FAO’s projections in 1974 were the latest in a long line that includes forecasts for the Second World Food Congress (1970), the Indicative World Plan for Agricultural Development (1970), the undertaking on International Agricultural Adjustment (early 1970s), and afterwards “Agriculture: Toward 2000” (1981).⁴⁶ Therefore, some FAO officials considered another project, the Perspective Study on World Agricultural Development (PSWAD), which was first scheduled to be completed in 1975 and then in 1978, so senseless that one wrote a memo in which he referred to the study, which cost US\$5 million and tied down many staff members, only as “the monster”.⁴⁷ The USDA had also conducted earlier studies; working to advance grain exporting interests, department staff referred to situations of little demand in the world market as conservative version and those of great demand (which could be food crises) as “optimistic”.⁴⁸ Already in 1967, an OECD report on the global food problem, which included predictions for 1980 and even 2050, argued that intensified farming was the only solution.⁴⁹

A closer look at earlier forecasts shows that neither the prospects nor the figures or recipes in 1974 were new. In 1963, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman reported to the FAO Conference his department’s projections that non-industrialized countries would face a major food gap by 1980 and that world trade

41 See the indignant response by Butz to CIA director Colby, 19 September 1974, NARA, RG 16, General Correspondence, Box 5847, Food 2, Aug-Sept 23, 1974.

42 Diwan 1978, pp. 501–503. For an analysis of the projections, see also Revel and Riboud 1986, pp. 4–29; for the methods used by the USDA, see World Food Situation 1974, pp. 32–34, 37.

43 See Aziz to Tetro, 23 April 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/7 LNOR; Aziz to Tims (IBRD), 22 May 1974, FAO, RG 12/UN-43/4A Documents.

44 See documents of 10 January, 11 February and 6 March 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/6 OECD.

45 See Seefried 2015, pp. 203, 205.

46 A revised version of the latter came out in 1988, see Shaw 2007, pp. 248–249. FAO’s Indicative World Plan had made forecasts to 1975 and 1985: Abbott 1992, p. 56.

47 See the file RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., Subject Files: PSWAD; quote: Temuro, “Thoughts on IAA supplanting PSWAD”, 6 March 1974, FAO, RG 12, ES, UN 44/1. PSWAD was already criticized for being behind schedule in 1970, see the U.S. delegation’s report on the 56th session of the FAO Council in November 1970, NARA, RG 59, SNF, 1970–73, Box 458, file 11/1/1970.

48 USDA, ERS, Anthony Rojko, “Future Aspects for Agricultural Exports”, 15/16 August 1973, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/5 USA.

49 Hongler 2019, pp. 181–183.

needed to be expanded.⁵⁰ In 1966, Freeman told a congressional committee that non-industrialized countries would need to import, but would not be able to pay for, 62 million tons of grain by 1980, so that the USA had to expand their food production.⁵¹ The USDA's Economic Research Service in 1966 even expected a gap of 88 million tons by 1985,⁵² almost exactly the FAO's prediction in 1974. In 1965, FAO also anticipated large imports by non-industrialized countries in 1985.⁵³ Both the FAO and USDA made projections in 1971; the USDA foresaw large imports (in two of three scenarios), the FAO did not.⁵⁴

Despite all efforts to prevent it, food imports actually rose to the magnitude envisioned in 1974 (but, contrary to the forecasts, most were bought on commercial terms). FAO experts concluded in 1982 that non-industrialized countries' imports were exactly in line with the trend predicted earlier.⁵⁵ But by 1980, food imports had risen primarily in so-called 'middle-income' countries, less so in 'low-income' states.⁵⁶ At that point, FAO and USDA predicted a slower growth until 1990 and 2000.⁵⁷ In 1988–1989 and 1989–1990, non-industrialized countries actually imported 117 million and 121 million tons of grain.⁵⁸ In 1995, this fell to 106.4 million tons, 9.8 million tons of which Sub-Saharan Africa imported, and in 2000, the total figure was 88 million tons.⁵⁹ Overall world trade in cereals stagnated from 1980–1981 to 1991–1992 at around 200 million tons. In 2011–2012, it reached 270 million tons.⁶⁰ More or less linear projections could not predict such hold-ups, turns and twists.

Grandiose promises

In stark contrast to such gloomy outlooks were solemn declarations of intent to eradicate world hunger within specific, relatively short time periods. The best known was Henry Kissinger's proclamation at the World Food Conference in 1974 of the "bold objective" "that within a decade no child will go to bed hungry, that no family will fear for its next day's bread".⁶¹ Kissinger's words were included in

50 Wayne Rasmussen and Gladys Baker, ERS, "The Department of Agriculture During the Administration of Lyndon B. Johnson, November 1963-January 1969", vol. I, chapter 4, p. 4, NARA, RG 16, Records of John A. Schnittker, Box 8.

51 Statement of the Secretary of Agriculture, Orville L. Freeman before the House Committee on Agriculture, 23 February 1966, FAO, RG 12, Economic and Social Policy Department FA 8/6, vol. I. Freeman mentioned various forecasts to 1975, 1980 and 1985.

52 Goldberg 1966, p. 85.

53 Sen 1965, pp. 116–119.

54 Diwan 1978, pp. 497–498. For USDA in 1970, cf. Willet 1973, p. 50.

55 Dutia to Leeks, 11 March 1982, FAO, RG 12, UN 44/1, WFC Follow up, vol. III; see Gerlach 2002a, p. 91.

56 See Morrison 1984.

57 FAO 1981, p. 125; Global 2000, 1981, pp. 256–257, 271.

58 World Food Council, WFC/1990/7, 12 April 1990, p. 13, FAO Library.

59 Pandya-Lorch and Pinstrup-Andersen 2000, p. 24; Schwarzburger 2000.

60 See Shaw 2007, p. 171; Gmür 2012.

61 Kissinger's speech, 5 November 1974, NARA, RG 16, USDA General Correspondence, Box 5847, Food 2, Dec 6–31, 1974, 1. Printed in: *Hunger and Diplomacy* 1975, p. 115.

a conference resolution and became in substance FAO policy.⁶² The ILO's World Employment Conference in 1976 envisioned the worldwide satisfaction of basic human needs by 2000.⁶³ In line with that, the World Food Council declared in 1981 that it was "no longer feasible" to eradicate hunger by 1984, and the new target date was 2000.⁶⁴

Already in 1976, some in the FAO had internally called meeting the goal of 1984 a "quasi-impossible task"; the USDA came to the same conclusion in 1977.⁶⁵ One year before Kissinger's pledge, FAO's Director-General Boerma had actually rejected the FAO Council's call for a program to eliminate world hunger within a decade as unrealistic, stating that it was a complex problem that could not be solved through raising food production and feeding and educational programs alone but, since poverty was the primary cause of hunger, required a holistic approach.⁶⁶ This means that some adopted the goal in 1974 knowing full well that it was unrealistic. Boerma's successor Saouma told the press in 1978 that the number of hungry people was rather on the rise and the goal of solving the world hunger problem was attainable, but only after policy changes and "perhaps" only after 1985.⁶⁷ Similarly, but with a wider time frame, 'World Bank' President McNamara had called in 1973 for the eradication of malnutrition by the end of the century but had come to doubt the goal's feasibility by 1978.⁶⁸ In 1995, 'the Bank' rather anticipated a rise in the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2000.⁶⁹ In 1981, the FAO predicted that, if trends continued, the number of malnourished people would grow from 1974–1976 to 1990 and further to 2000 and that the rising trend in calorie intake in 90 non-industrialized countries would level off in the 1990s.⁷⁰

According to a 1993 expert estimate, half of all deaths of children under five were still due to malnutrition.⁷¹ In the 1990s, aims became more modest though not less lofty.⁷² For example, in 1992, the International Conference on Nutrition in Rome, attended by representatives of many national governments and NGOs, pledged to eliminate deaths from famine but only to "reduce substantially"

62 See *Hunger and Diplomacy* 1975, p. 51; FAO/ICP, "Prospects, General Committee", 29 November 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN 43/2.B ICP-General.

63 See Moore Lappé et al. 1980, p. 160.

64 See *Feeding the World's Hungry* 1984, p. 34.

65 Mensah (FAO) to Huyser, Yudelman and others, 3 May 1976, FAO, RG 9, DDC, PR 4/69, vol. VI (May-December 1976); "Recommendations of USDA for Presidential World Hunger Initiative", 27 November 1977, NARA, RG 354, Central Correspondence, Box 3 Circular Letters.

66 L73/36 "Towards a New Strategy for Improving Nutrition", November 1973, FAO, RG 6, reel 537. See also Ruxin 1996, p. 265 on a similar statement at the FAO Conference in November 1973.

67 "Director-General's interview with German journalists", draft, 19 May 1978, FAO, RG 12, FA 13/1.

68 See his speeches to the Board of Governors 24 September 1973 and 25 September 1978, in: *The McNamara Years*, pp. 259–260, 479, 499. For the 'World Bank's' World Development Report in 1978, see Ayres 1983, p. 26. According to Shapley 1993, p. 544, McNamara intended to end poverty within "one generation, that is, seventy years".

69 Binswanger and Landell-Mills 1995, p. 16.

70 FAO 1981, p. xv.

71 Solomons 1999, p. 153.

72 See also Mukherjee 2004, pp. 24–25.

starvation and “chronic hunger”.⁷³ More influential was the declaration of the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996 to reduce the number of hungry people by half by 2015 (although the FAO had warned in a preparatory document that the figures could rise until 2010).⁷⁴ Likewise, the first of the UN Millennium Development Goals of 2000 was to reduce extreme poverty and the proportion of the world’s population suffering from malnutrition by half from 1990 to 2015.⁷⁵ These goals were also not met,⁷⁶ although this time the UN at least made some propagandistic efforts to pursue them after their declaration. In absolute terms, the figures fluctuated around 800 million (with a peak in the late 2000s), and proportionally malnourishment decreased more slowly than predicted. FAO’s Director-General Jacques Diouf said at another meeting on the world food situation in 2008 that the Millennium Goal on halving hunger by 2015 was not attainable and “more realistic was now the year 2150”.⁷⁷

But pronouncements continued. In 2005, Jeffrey Sachs, a former ‘World Bank’ advisor, announced that if the world followed his prescription it would “end extreme poverty by 2025” (extreme poverty was often viewed as congruous with undernutrition).⁷⁸ Echoing Kissinger, Malawi’s President Bingu wa Mutharika asked in his acceptance speech as the chairman of the Assembly of the African Union in February 2010 the members “to share the dream that five years from now no child in Africa should die of hunger and malnutrition. No child should go to bed hungry. I realize that this is an ambitious dream but one that can be realized”.⁷⁹ Sonia Gandhi, the chair of India’s Congress Party, announced in 2013, shortly before elections, a US\$4 billion program to end hunger in India.⁸⁰ And the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals of 2015 again included the objective of eradicating world hunger and malnutrition altogether by 2030, as goal no. 2.⁸¹ This fact raises severe doubts about the Sustainable Development Goals in their entirety. David Beasley, the World Food Programme’s director, objected already in 2017 that this had no chance of success unless the world’s gravest violent conflicts were ended.⁸²

None of these proclamations seems to have been based on scientific studies. They were mere political declarations, usually imposed by politicians at summits or high-profile conferences. The recurring failure illustrates, first, the limits to reforming the world’s capitalist system. Inequality is inherent to capitalism, and it causes mass hunger. As this study indicates, global capitalism cannot solve the world hunger problem. But its proponents do not, and cannot, acknowledge that;

73 Young 1997, pp. 156–157.

74 Schäuble 2000, p. 9; Kracht 1999; for FAO, see Bush 1996, p. 175.

75 Sachs 2005, p. 211; Rist 2008, p. 227 (see *ibid.*, pp. 226–239).

76 See Wysling 2015.

77 Quoted in “Ahmadinedschad auf Welternährungskonferenz” 2008.

78 Sachs 2005, p. 25.

79 Quoted in Juma 2011, p. xiii.

80 Möllhoff 2013; Siegel 2018, p. 223.

81 Sager and Lehmann 2017; Müller 2020, p. 30.

82 “Welternährungsprogramm” 2017.

so they are prone to making new empty promises. Moreover, their regular repetition served to mobilize resources, public opinion and institutional support, actually for a variety of goals. Those making pledges to end world hunger tried to gain legitimacy through it by looking like responsible leaders, but the history of these promises reveals just the contrary. Apparently it was of little concern to them that their plans would turn out as unrealistic.⁸³ These pledges were not plans and usually not operational; no authority directed their implementation, and at best there was some monitoring about the progress.⁸⁴ This may indicate that their real aims were different, tactical and very short term.

Limits to planning

Similar proclamations were made for nations, for example, to abolish poverty in India by 1985–1986 (by the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in 1978) and to end deaths from hunger in Niger (after the Kountché coup in 1974).⁸⁵ It was more common to declare the goal of national food self-sufficiency, for example, by Bangladesh's Planning Commission in 1973 (for self-sufficiency by 1977–1978) and by the country's president in 1979 (by 1985), by Tanzania's government in 1964, and again in 1978 (by 1981, when in reality the country would receive a record amount of food aid), several times by Indonesian authorities (for rice self-sufficiency in 1952 for 1956, in 1960 for 1968, in 1971 for 1974, and in around 1980 for 1985), and in several West African countries (in 1972 within five to ten years).⁸⁶ Mali pronounced such a goal in 1970 and even before.⁸⁷

By contrast, in its 20-year development plan of 1981, the government of Tanzania set social targets: a life expectancy of 60 (from 47) and an infant mortality rate of 50 per 1,000 (from 137 per 1,000). They were missed, by an even wider margin than when Indonesia pursued similar, though less long-term, objectives.⁸⁸

83 Robert McNamara may be an exception.

84 The adoption of sub-targets beginning with the Millennium Development Goals has not changed this.

85 North India Annual Report 1977/78, Oxfam, Asia Field Committee November 1976-January 1980; Weiss 1990, p. 115.

86 Winberg to USDA, 19 November 1973, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 3, Bangladesh 1973; notes on speech by President Ziaur Rahman, WCARRD, Summary Notes (Plenary), 14 July morning, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 12, WCARRD-Summary Notes, July 1979 (see also Bangladesh Ministry of Planning, External Resources Division, "Mid-year Review of Food Situation 1977–78", NARA, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 64, BD Bangladesh 1977 DR); "Summary of the Country Review Paper from Tanzania", 12 May 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 9, Arusha; see also Geier 1992, p. 60 and 147, note 14; Agricultural Attache Jakarta to USDA, 17 November 1971, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 16, ID Indonesia 1971 DR; Mears and Meoljano 1981, pp. 24 and 49; Zahri 1969, p. 165; "Agricultural Development Plans and Policies in Africa", *Agriculture Abroad* 27 (6), December 1972, p. 42; see also Frelin 1985, pp. 68–69 for 14 African countries.

87 Bingen 1985, p. 20; see Hinderink and Sterkenburg 1987, p. 207 (1974).

88 See Kiwara 1999, p. 127 and table 9.1. Bangladesh's government apparently had similar target figures for a ten-year period to 1990: World Bank 1990, p. 44. For Indonesia in the 1970s and 1990s, see Hull and Hull 1992a, p. 431 and for calorie and protein consumption, Palmer 1977c, p. 179.

Such declarations were partly for international consumption, but they also played a role in national politics, such as Indira Gandhi's election campaigns on the theme of food self-sufficiency in India.⁸⁹ Although national pronouncements were more based on planning than those on a global level, few of the former became reality. One counterexample was Indonesia's policy for rice self-sufficiency in the mid-1980s (although the U.S. agricultural attaché in 1978 said that reaching the goal, "(if ever) is many years away").⁹⁰ In a wider sense, these failures demonstrate the inability of political actors to steer socioeconomic processes in non-industrialized capitalist (and socialist) countries.⁹¹

But nearly every government wanted to determine the future. The 1970s were still a period of planning euphoria. National planning – promoted by UN organizations and industrialized nations (see Chapter 4) – was practiced by most non-industrialized nations.⁹² This was also true for governments and other actors unsuspecting of communist leanings (see Chapter 4). Western European countries, the EEC, and the UN were especially engaged in planning in the 1960s.⁹³ Only much later were some planning commissions disbanded, like India's in 2014, after 64 years.⁹⁴

National plans were often unfulfilled because they were too ambitious. This was the case for all the targets of Bangladesh's first five-year development plan.⁹⁵ It has also been claimed that structural deficiencies impeded the success of Bangladesh's development planning, particularly in the agricultural sector⁹⁶ (although part of the personnel was highly qualified and had experiences from within the Pakistani planning authorities). Indonesia's government's five-year development plans were usually wrong, too, but sometimes targets were missed, sometimes exceeded, depending on oil proceeds.⁹⁷ Plans were not only predictions but also instruments of political steering, and as such they often failed, especially concerning matters of food and hunger.

Sometimes long-term goals were formulated as well. Tanzania's second five-year development plan in 1969 quoted President Julius Nyerere's goal of a "transformation of Tanzania into an industrialized urban society", which would take many decades if not several generations.⁹⁸ Tanganyika/Tanzania adopted 20-year

89 Leslie Gelb, "On the Eve of the World Food Conference", in *Give us* 1975, p. 273.

90 Fraser to USDA, 19 April 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 79, ID-Indonesia 1978. For a correct forecast that Indonesia might reach self-sufficiency in rice by 1985 but fall back into importing large amounts by 1990, see Prabowo 1983, p. 275.

91 This is not to say that the steering of socioeconomic processes in capitalist industrialized countries is possible.

92 See also "Review and appraisal of the objectives and policies of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade", 6 December 1973, in *Spröte* 1978, p. 171.

93 See Flechtheim n.y. (1969), pp. 186–192.

94 Schoettli 2014.

95 Bangladesh Planning Commission, "The Two-Year Plan, 1978–1980", March 1978, NARA, RG 166, Ag. Att. and Couns. Reports, Box 73, BD-Bangladesh 1978.

96 Clay 1984, pp. 33–41.

97 Hill 2000, p. 97.

98 Quoted in Harding et al. 1981, p. 93.

perspective plans in 1961 and 1981; Pakistan in 1965; Indonesia 25-year plans in 1969 and 1994; and Mali had a long-term strategy to 2000 long ahead.⁹⁹ And in 1998, Tanzania adopted the National Poverty Eradication Strategy for the period until 2025; in 1999, the Planning Commission formulated a Development Vision to 2025, when Tanzania was to become a middle-income country.¹⁰⁰

Large companies also practiced planning, and an analysis from the 1970s credited some as the first institutions to develop centralized global plans.¹⁰¹ However, one high-ranking manager expressed doubts about multinational companies' ability for planning their activities in non-industrialized countries because of the firms' timidity and conservatism.¹⁰²

Africa's future

Visions of Africa's future in particular have oscillated between dark forebodings and boundless technocratic optimism. Africa became a projection screen for various ideas of many non-Africans. Predictions of its future reveal a great deal of helplessness even when their authors are driven by sentiments of omnipotence. Moreover, Africa has seemed both crucial and a challenge to development professionals because of what they have considered its decline. In the public's – and sometimes professionals' – incorrect view, Africa has become the core of the world hunger and poverty problems.

It was not always so. In the mid-1960s, the FAO expected Africa to be self-sufficient in food by 1985, its population would meet all calorie requirements, mechanization would raise agricultural productivity, and child mortality would fall drastically; only sufficient protein consumption was in doubt.¹⁰³ (None of this came true.) In 1971, even a critical scholar and activist like René Dumont considered it possible that African food consumption in 2000 would approach the European level of 1970.¹⁰⁴ The report of the Second World Food Congress hardly mentioned Africa.¹⁰⁵ This was still the expectation, when a U.S. newspaper speculated in 1975 that the center of the world food problem would move from South and Southeast Asia to Latin America.¹⁰⁶ The FAO's Indicative World Plan for Agriculture anticipated

99 See Sendaro 1988, p. 15; Mushi 1982, p. 17 says that Tanzania's first 20-year plan was from 1964; Elkington 1976, p. 60; Chalmers and Hadiz 1997, pp. 32–33; Fukuchi and Sato 2000, p. 409; Lecaillon and Morrisson 1986, p. 49.

100 See Fritz et al. 2015, p. 179; Coulson 2013, p. 13.

101 Barnet and Müller 1977, pp. 13–14.

102 André van Dam (CPC's Planning Director for Latin America), "Can corporate planning invent the future of the Third World?", paper presented at the Third World Conference of Corporate Planners, Brussels, 16–19 September 1973, FAO, RG 9, ICP, IP 22/8, CPC, vol. II.

103 See Sen 1965, p. 118 (FAO's Director-General), and Sai 1965, pp. 393–394.

104 Dumont 1971, p. 22.

105 See Report of the Second World Food Congress 1970. See also note Meseck, "13. FAO-Konferenz, Bericht 13. Sitzung Technical Committee on Fisheries 12.-17.11.1965", 9 December 1965, BAK B 116/20180.

106 "Time Runs out for World Food", Milwaukee Sentinel, 5 April 1975, FAO, RG 15, Reg. Files, FA 6.7 Tetro (1975).

in 1970 that Africa would only import small quantities of food in 1985 (in reality, the amount expected for 1985 was already exceeded in 1971).¹⁰⁷

However, the UN's assessment in 1974, prior to the World Food Conference, predicted that Africa would produce only 45 percent of the food it would need in 1985.¹⁰⁸ A study for the U.S. President in 1980 forecasted a substantial decline in calorie consumption in Sub-Saharan Africa's "developing" countries in 2000.¹⁰⁹ Far more relevant, because it was like a guideline, was FAO's 1981 study "Agriculture: Toward 2000" which anticipated that the levels of fertilizer consumption and irrigation in Sub-Saharan Africa would remain extremely low in 2000, even under optimistic assumptions.¹¹⁰ In other words, FAO had no plans, and perhaps no aspirations, for intensification. CILSS in the Sahel did plan to greatly expand the irrigated area by 2000 in the name of food self-sufficiency,¹¹¹ though it failed to meet its target. Still, Africa's future looked bleak to most actors. One 'World Bank' study in 1988 predicted that by 2000, Tanzania's failing institutions would make the country incapable of distributing any food aid.¹¹²

The most radical prophecy for Africa's countryside came from the world-system theorist Immanuel Wallerstein in 1976 and combined extreme gloom and profound optimism. Wallerstein foresaw a long depression for the capitalist world's economy which would cause Africa's "truly peripheral areas" to "bear the brunt of death from famine and major transformations of remaining populations from rural areas to bidonvilles [shantytowns]". Subsistence farming in Africa would completely collapse, "clearing the land of men". But the "emptying of land areas" would "provide the space for an immense mechanization of African primary production" and pave the way for an epic economic resurgence founded on exports by 1990. After an unprecedented continental famine, great productivity – this was Wallerstein's vision.¹¹³

Some African politicians portrayed their countries' horizons as differing from other world regions. Tanzania's president Nyerere purportedly remarked: "Some countries try to reach the moon: we try to reach the village".¹¹⁴ But he also said, "We must run while others walk", preaching accelerated 'development'.¹¹⁵ This too represented African exceptionalism.

107 Letter by R. Colley (OECD), 4 December 1974, FAO, RG 12, Commodities Division, FA 7/1, vol. II.

108 UN World Food Conference, Assessment of the World Food Situation – present and future, Rome, 1974, p. 89, FAO, RG 22/WFC Docs. – E/Conf.65/Series. A more optimistic, non-expert prediction was in the "Leontieff Report, The Future of the World Economy" [1976], FAO, RG 12, Dir. Ec. Div., Subject Files, PSWAD.

109 Global 2000, 1981, p. 585.

110 FAO 1981, pp. 63, 67.

111 See Diemer and van der Laan 1987, p. 19; Giri 1983, p. 80.

112 See Mellor and Pandya-Lorch 1991, p. 549.

113 Wallerstein 1976, p. 49.

114 Quoted in Ruxin 1996, p. 312.

115 Hyden 1979, p. 5.

Short-term insecurity

If plans often failed, adverse scenarios could not be escaped, unrealistic warnings flourished and long-term predictions turned out to be wrong, what about short-term forecasts? Jamie Pietruska has argued in her fundamental study that daily prognoses of the weather, short-term predictions about market prices and harvests, as well as occultists' foretellings, evolved in the USA in a "crisis of certainty" in the 1870s and 1880s – an uncertainty that came with the emergence of industrial society and modern capitalism.¹¹⁶ By now, such forecasting is taken to be relatively reliable, real progress in humankind's efforts to know the future.

However, in the early 1970s, there was much anxiety about the weather, which was often unpleasantly surprising in some areas of the world and made crop forecasts difficult and changeable. "[N]ever before have we been so dependent on the success of a single crop", said the agronomist Reynold Dahl in February 1974, and Robert Tetro wrote to the FAO of the "critical nature of the next months. Any shortfall of a major crop remains rather unthinkable!"¹¹⁷ The extent of fear is demonstrated by the fact that in order to calm commodities markets and/or the public, the USDA published its U.S. harvest forecast for 1974 in October 1973, which was unusually early.¹¹⁸ This probably did not improve its accuracy, which may have led to new anguishes. In fact, an analysis of the USDA's harvest forecasts for major wheat producing countries from 1966 to 1975 concluded that they were of low quality, came late or never. A weak defense by the department's Economic Research Service cited the atypical, hardly predictable crop variations in that period,¹¹⁹ which is the point here. Under such conditions, the new U.S. satellite surveillance, much discussed in the press, bore the promise of allowing for better crop forecasts, but there is little evidence that this improved their accuracy, though some considered it another dangerous instrument of international U.S. government and corporate control.¹²⁰

To use satellites was also under discussion for famine early warning systems¹²¹ because of serious failures in 1972–1973. The FAO's Early Warning System for Food Shortages, established in 1968, reported abnormal conditions accurately from early 1973 on, but failures to analyze the data and put them together to a broader picture led to few and slowly emerging actual measures.¹²² In 1972, the FAO was also testing a Medium Term Food Outlook program, but its director suggested

116 Pietruska 2017, esp. pp. 5–6, 12–14.

117 Mike Leary and Bill Collins, "And Now, A Bread Crisis", Philadelphia Inquirer, 17 February 1974, copy in Ford Library, Paul C. Leach Files, Box 9, World Food, Nov 1973–April 1974; Tetro to Aziz, 1 April 1974, FAO, RG 12, UN-43/7 LNOR.

118 Lester Brown, "The Need for a World Food Reserve", Wall Street Journal, 10 October 1973, FAO, RG 15, LUNO FA-4/1.

119 Fred Warren, "Forecast Errors of USDA Wheat estimates for seven foreign countries, 1966–1975" and comments by Kenneth Farrell, 5 January 1977, NARA, RG 354, Correspondence, Box 5, H.

120 George 1978, pp. 63–65; Kissinger speech, Lusaka, 27 April 1976, Ford Library, Michael Raoul-Duval papers, Box 16.

121 See Rodgers (IBM) to Simons (UNDP), 21 October 1974, FAO, RG 9, Misc., DDI/WFC.

122 FAO, RG 12, Policy Analysis Division, FA 4/15, vol. I (yellow file), II, III, IV and V; Gerlach 2005, p. 577.

stopping it, of all times, in August 1972, weeks after the U.S.-Soviet grain deal that triggered the world food crisis.¹²³ The FAO reformed the Early Warning System under international pressure in 1973–1974.¹²⁴ There were also suggestions for a system to gather information on the supply and demand of pesticides, in another attempt to control the future.¹²⁵ Later, early warning units proliferated, but they did not necessarily prevent famine. In the 1990s, the FAO, the World Food Programme, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the NGO Save the Children, the South African Development Community and the Club du Sahel were all running early warning systems in the Sahel.¹²⁶

The failure of early warning systems in the 1970s was, of course, also about the inability to see the coming of the world food crisis in the first place. This, too, was criticized as analysis failure.¹²⁷ Even the high-ranking USDA officials who had in part crafted the crisis were surprised by their own ‘success’, measured in the rise of the value of U.S. grain exports.¹²⁸

Market actors had their own difficulties to anticipate the even short-term future. In Bangladesh, grain traders are said to have overestimated negative factors, like crop failures and import reductions, and their “price forecasting errors” in 1974 led them to hoard grain excessively, which was a major contributing factor to one of the deadliest famines in recent history.¹²⁹ In contrast, in the USA in mid-September 1972 (after the Soviet grain deal was known) traders in grain futures gravely underestimated price increases for wheat and soybeans (but not corn) within a year.¹³⁰ There was much speculation in oats, corn and wheat but not sorghum or barley. (Futures turnover in the USA and Britain combined for the former was 34 times, 12 times and 5 times the tonnage of international trade in those commodities in 1973, respectively.)¹³¹ Overall, the 1970s saw a breakthrough of futures trading in the USA, with many ordinary wealthy citizens participating.¹³² But as a contemporary observer noted, who missed long-term perspectives among many actors involved, “even the ‘futures’ market has a horizon of only one year”.¹³³ Nurul

123 Not realizing that a global crisis had begun, she pointed to the system’s understaffing, its irrelevance and the low quality of its data. See Binder to Leeks, 17 August 1972, FAO, RG 12, Commodities and Trade Division, FA 4/17; for the program’s patchy coverage Muir to Dutia, 8 May 1972, *ibid.* See also Gerlach 2005, p. 577.

124 See Gerlach 2005, pp. 577–578 and the file FAO, RG 12, Commodities and Trade Division, FA 4/15, vol. II.

125 Note Boerma, “Emergency Measures in Regard to the Supply of Fertilizers and Pesticides”, July 1974, AfZ, NL Umbricht.

126 Von Braun et al. 1999, p. 128.

127 See Wells’ report, 1 April 1974, as in note 12/151.

128 See Gerlach 2005, pp. 564–565.

129 See Chapter 6 and Ravallion 1985, esp. p. 28. Quddus and Becker 2000, p. 170 even seem to regret that there was no futures market in Bangladesh in the 1970s.

130 Luttrell 1973, p. 4.

131 Labys 1978, p. 540.

132 Morgan 1980, p. 239, note. For information on this point, I am grateful to Daniel Gammenthaler.

133 McLin 1976, p. 9.

Islam, once a member of Bangladesh's planning commission, formulated it more radically: "Markets do not provide future perspectives".¹³⁴

The capitalist markets illustrated the dramatic turn of events and consequent uncertainty about the future in the 1970s. Such unpredictability may be in the nature of a crisis. Crop forecasts; famine early-warning systems; futures trading; and even the short-term forecasts of politicians, bureaucrats, experts and businessmen were all on shaky ground and could no longer, as intended, relieve insecurity. Moreover, the larger picture was often unclear. Reality turned out to be too complex for forecasts.

Nature undermines the future

Serious doubts about basic assumptions in long-term planning arose in the 1970s. And some questioned the foundations of human existence. The decade's insecurity re-awakened age-old fears that the climate was changing in ways that could harm food production and spell doom for many people.

The World Meteorological Organization seemed to suggest that the climate was becoming unstable and extreme weather more frequent.¹³⁵ Most of today's researchers would agree. But after some years with lower temperatures, the prospect of global cooling gained broad publicity at the time. Although a recent study finds that global cooling was a marginal issue among scientists in the 1970s,¹³⁶ elsewhere it had some traction,¹³⁷ and it seemed important enough to the CIA in 1974 to devote part of a study to it, which soon leaked out. It stated: "In a cooler and therefore hungrier world, the US' near-monopoly position as food exporter would have an enormous, if not easily definable, impact on international relations. It could give the US a measure of power it never had before [. . .]". "In bad years [. . .] Washington would acquire virtual life and death power over the fate of the multitude of the needy". Were the cooling significant, the fantasy continued, it would lessen agricultural production in the USSR and the People's Republic of China, which "could have an enormous impact [. . .] on the world balance of power".¹³⁸

Another more sober CIA study that year spoke of theories of global cooling but argued that most climatologists did not believe that there was such a trend.¹³⁹

134 Islam 2005b, pp. 369–370.

135 FAO officials questioned these trends. UN World Food Conference, Assessment of the World Food Situation – present and future, Rome, 1974, pp. 35–36, FAO, RG 22/WFC Docs. – E/Conf.65/ Series.

136 See Peterson et al. 2008 (thanks to Dominic Shepherd who pointed me to this research). But see several references to global cooling in Glantz 1976a. Garcia 1981, pp. 221, 246 and Smagorinsky 1981, pp. 267, 269 did (like Peterson et al.) not see agreement among scholars.

137 For example, see Lesser Blumberg 1981, p. 29.

138 CIA, "Potential Implications of Trends in World Population, Food and Climate", August 1974 (For Official Use Only), NARA, RG 16, USDA General Correspondence, Box 5847, Food 2, Aug 1–September 23, 1974 (quotes p. 39, 40 and 4 of the study, see also p. 33). See also North American Congress 1976, p. 30.

139 CIA, Office of Research and Development, "A Study of Climatological Research as it Pertains to Intelligence Problems", August 1974 (unclassified), esp. pp. 7, 21–25.

Several U.S. government agencies sponsored a study of climate change in 1978 that estimated the probability of significant cooling in the Northern hemisphere by 2000 at 10 percent.¹⁴⁰ But several participants in an important conference, “The World Food and Energy Crises”, in New York state in 1974 believed in global cooling or other climate trends detrimental to food production, and the USDA’s 1974 forecast for the world food situation until 1985 stated, referring to the Interdepartmental Panel for Atmospheric Sciences, that since temperatures were higher than in previous centuries a “return of the earth to cooler conditions is a realistic expectation over the long run”.¹⁴¹ Over the very long run, this may be a truism, but current forecasts for the 21st century are quite different.

Though there was considerable disagreement, many climatologists thought that the climate was changing somehow.¹⁴² There were worries that the monsoon in Southeast Asia would be moving southward.¹⁴³ Some observers saw a connection between a trend toward cooling and desertification because they assumed that certain weather systems over the North Atlantic were moving south, which led to a drier climate in the West African Sahel. This assumption was also briefly discussed by the Rome Forum, a group of eminent experts at the World Food Conference.¹⁴⁴ Throughout the UN, including in the FAO and the Economic Commission for Africa, officials believed that the Sahara was expanding, a concern that culminated in the 1977 UN Conference on Desertification.¹⁴⁵ Oxfam observers took from a 1973 scholarly conference in London that the Sahel became drier, after more favorable conditions of the past two decades, and rains were “unlikely to increase again for anything up to 200 years”.¹⁴⁶ Another researcher called the effects “catastrophic and irreversible”.¹⁴⁷ However, many researchers now believe that the Sahara did not expand, and, though the weather in the Sahel was drier in the 1970s and 1980s, including a prolonged drought, the climate there did not change in that period, and more humid weather returned in the 1990s resulting in extended plant coverage.¹⁴⁸

140 See Barker et al. 1981, p. 56.

141 The World Food Situation 1974, p. 73. For the conference, see Gardner 1974, p. 58. Among the participants were high-ranking UN officials, government officials, scholars and public intellectuals.

142 See Harold Schmock Jr., “Climate Changes Endanger World’s Food Output” in: Food and Population 1975, pp. 12–14. This was a New York Times article about a conference of climatologists in Bonn.

143 See Rochebrune et al. 1975, pp. 28–29; USDA, ERS, World Food Situation, pp. 72–74.

144 See Jonathan Power, “Barbara rises above it all”, PAN, no. 1, 5 November 1974, p. 7; Mueller 1975, p. 105 with reference to an article in *Fortune* magazine; Esseks 1975, p. 53.

145 At the conference, even Bangladesh claimed to undergo substantial desertification. See Biswas 1978, especially pp. 248, 253; interview with Adebajo Adedeji, 7 March 2001, p. 83, United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007.

146 Africa Committee, Drought in West Africa and Ethiopia, 27 September 1973, Oxfam, Box Africa Field Committee, February 1970–November 1973.

147 Stiles 1981, p. 372.

148 See Behnke and Mortimer 2016, esp. pp. 1 (quote), 4; Wang and Gillies 2011; see already Horowitz 1990, p. 10 note 10 as one of the earliest expressions of doubt about the desertification thesis. There is a broad scientific literature on the topic. See also notes 10/30–31.

It was also in the early 1970s that climatologists learned that el niño was a global, rather than a regional, phenomenon. The el niño event in 1972 was the strongest in decades.¹⁴⁹

Correspondingly to climate issues, opinions also differed as to whether the world food crisis, which is now commonly dated to 1972–1975, would be a brief spell of food shortages or whether it heralded a new age of scarcity to which the world had to adjust. In order to find out, U.S. National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, commissioned a study in 1973 that concluded the crisis was a short-term aberration.¹⁵⁰ However, Oris Wells, the FAO's former Deputy Director-General, and Michel Fribourg, the chairman of Continental Grain, the world's leading grain-trading company, believed that a new era of high grain prices and worldwide food difficulties had begun.¹⁵¹ The Rome Forum and an article in *Science* in December 1975 agreed.¹⁵² But the agricultural economist Willard Cochrane, writing for the U.S.-based National Planning Association in 1974, believed that it was impossible to say.¹⁵³ Historians will not be surprised to read that it was difficult for contemporaries so close in time to events to determine if they constituted a turning point in history. What this uncertainty and concern do illustrate is a fundamental sense of disorientation and unease.

The year 1972, when the world food crisis started, was also the year when the famous study *Limits to Growth* was published. This international bestseller, which gave a boost to environmentalism, argued on the basis of simple computer simulations conducted at MIT that the world's finite resources and pollution problems required an end to the ideology of unlimited economic growth. Otherwise, and if population growth was not strongly reduced, there would be a global economic and social breakdown some decades ahead; concerning food, around the year 2025. Others expressed similar views at the time, for example, during the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. Arguably, this helped to change fundamentally visions of the future of the capitalist world because it debunked the notion of never-ending progress.¹⁵⁴ How, then, would the future look? What was left of it?

149 Davis 2001, pp. 239–276. See also Caviedes 2001, p. 10.

150 See Kissinger letter, “National Security Study Memorandum 187”, 5 September 1973 and attachments, and “International Cooperation in Agriculture: National Security Study Memorandum 187”, December 1973, NARA, Nixon papers, SF, AG Box 2, Ex AG, September–December 1974 (e.g. 1973).

151 See Oris Wells, “Improving World Food Situation Outlook, Information and Analysis” [sic], Phase II report, 1 April 1974 and a printed speech by Michel Fribourg before company collaborators, “Reflections on the World Food Situation”, 7 February 1974, both in NARA, RG 16, General Correspondence, Box 5848, Food 2, January–May 1974, 2. See also Talbot 1977, pp. xi–xii.

152 See Declaration of the Rome Forum, November 1974, in: Engels et al. 1975, p. 79. The article is mentioned in Johnson 1983, pp. 10–11.

153 Cochrane 1974, p. 8.

154 Meadows 1972 see also Wagar 1991, pp. 67–68; Noack 1996, p. 93. For the making, reception and shortcomings of *Limits to Growth*, see Moll 1991 and Seefried 2015, pp. 255–292.

The very notion of ‘development’, which almost all relevant players have carried on using almost unchallenged from the early 1970s until today,¹⁵⁵ was and is the only remaining discourse – perhaps except for the belief in technology – under the disguise of which the idea of progress has continued its life in bourgeois societies.¹⁵⁶ The notion assumes that all societies go through similar socioeconomic and political processes (modernization theory, though discredited, was, and is, thus very much alive), which implies that the future can be predicted. There is no doubt that ‘development’ is a powerful discourse. Nevertheless, it is an open question in how far individuals like peasants, sharecroppers and landless workers believed in ‘development’ as a perspective and appropriated it.¹⁵⁷

Population growth in the 1970s seemed to be another natural menace. Demographic projections, usually based on solid and broad data and a long historical perspective, are often quite reliable. Instead of uncertainty, in the early 1970s, the problem rather appeared to be that trends were all too clear. The decade’s horror scenarios about population growth and future starvation are – in a way – understandable, for growth rates in the 1960s were the highest in the 20th century. Some extrapolations thus slightly overestimated the world’s future population, but others were quite accurate. Population forecasts for 2000 ran from 6 to 8 billion, and the real figure was close to 6.1 billion. At the turn of the millennium, Indonesia had around 211 million people; the official projection in the late 1970s was 250 million.¹⁵⁸ Of course, thinking about population growth should be based on social rather than biological factors, but this was often not the case in the 1970s. And it seemed that, as with climate, the almost inescapable “population bomb”¹⁵⁹ would undermine all efforts and plans.

Despite this overemphasis on natural factors, ecological concerns carried little weight in contemporary debates about the world food and hunger problems. Objecting to the lack of foresight at the World Food Conference, one agronomist and environmentalist said, “What happens beyond the year 2000 was only dimly visualized”, pointing to the likely environmental impact of all the chemical inputs the conference advocated.¹⁶⁰

155 The assertion that the development narrative has lost credibility seems to be limited to a few intellectuals from capitalist industrial countries of North America and Western Europe like James Ferguson, but has little weight in the PRC, South Korea, Singapore as well as many non-industrialized countries. See also Weinstein 2008, p. 17.

156 For industrial capitalist countries, this applies especially to the omnivalent term ‘sustainable development’.

157 When in contact with officials or academic researchers, of course, such people would often adapt to the situation by using the language of ‘development’.

158 For UN population projections (“medium variant” 6.13 billion), see Bhagwati 1972, p. 26; see also U.S. National Security Council, National Security Study Memorandum 200, “Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests”, 10 December 1974, www.druckversion.studien.von.zeitfragen.net/NSSM%20200%20Executive%Survey.htm (accessed 20 November 2002) (6–8 billion, median 6.4 billion); Robert Tetro, “World Food Prospects and Problems”, spring 1974, FAO, RG 15, Reg. Files, FA 6.7 Tetro 1974 (7.5 billion). In the 1920s to 1950s, most population forecasts were too low: Wagar 1991, p. 53. For Indonesia, see Hainsworth 1979, p. 39.

159 This was the title of Ehrlich 1971 (first published in 1968).

160 Thomas 1975, p. 88.

Future and power

Numbers, numbers. Evidently, quantification was important for the historical actors that have figured in this chapter. For example, it has been said that Robert McNamara focused on “quantitative lending targets” as solution to development problems.¹⁶¹ In our time, it is normal to use numbers to make political problems manageable, to corner them, so to speak, and then measure success. What is perhaps less common is the low degree of success that I have shown in this chapter.

Actors used numbers to take control of the future. But the effort was futile. Politicians, functionaries, experts and managers did not hold sway over the future. They could not manage historical processes. Historians have argued that rulers and major powers have often tried to occupy the future and determine it by prescribing a discourse for talking about it.¹⁶² In the 1970s, Alva Myrdal held that powerful stakeholders at the time tried to “colonize the future” and thereby narrowed the options for reshaping reality by eliminating alternatives.¹⁶³ What this chapter indicates is that they were not that successful with the former, but they may have succeeded with the latter.

Both had to do with the technical nature of most of the proposed solutions for food and hunger problems. Though this chapter confirms the view in the literature that predictions became technical in character after the 1960s, it also shows what the consequences of that development were. The concentration of plans on food self-sufficiency and import gaps implied a focus on economic technicalities, ignored the fact that satisfying national market demand did not preclude millions of poor people going hungry, and it meant not to envision social change. Technical visions were intended to rule out social utopia. Just as in general the “overwhelming majority of leading figures in the futures community can be called technoliberals”, particularly those working for governments and UN agencies,¹⁶⁴ the same goes for historical agents of ‘development’. Studies like “Limits to Growth” also refused to anticipate any social, economic, political (and technological) change.¹⁶⁵ The technocratic view concerning the world food and hunger problems had come a long way. The influential nutritionist Alan Berg declared in 1969 that it was possible to “eradicate major nutritional deficiencies, just as smallpox and malaria have been overcome”.¹⁶⁶ And at the First World Food Congress in 1963, U.S. president John F. Kennedy famously pronounced: “We have the means, we have the capacity to eliminate hunger from the face of the earth in our lifetime. We only need the will”,¹⁶⁷ which framed hunger as a technical problem. Only thus could its solution appear so simple.

161 Kraske 1996, p. 194.

162 Noack 1996, pp. 77, 80–81.

163 Hölscher 1999, p. 227.

164 Wagar 1991, p. 37.

165 See Meadows 1972; Moll 1991, pp. 108, 116–119.

166 Alan Berg, “Priority of Nutrition in National Development”, lecture at MIT, 16 September 1969, FAO, RG 9/V (Misc.), Protein – general.

167 Quoted in Boerma 1977, p. 164.

Little wonder then that the project of eradicating hunger failed, for hunger was primarily a social, not a technical, problem. The fact that politicians and functionaries insisted on continually announcing that obviously unrealistic goal indicates that they insisted on a narrative of progress, which became doubtful in the 1970s. Doubts about progress could also raise questions about national planning.

This chapter is about political, bureaucratic, academic and business elites, which is a clear limitation. Much less is known about the outlook of rural people. Despite all of the policy shortcomings, rural society did change, though it was often unplanned or occurred in ways other than were planned. And some people on the ground, like Indonesian women in the Javanese village of Busuran, did feel empowered by the changes because they saw more options than before for their life planning, or even chances for having a life planning.¹⁶⁸ But probably not all of these plans worked out as they had hoped.

One fundamental point remains to be made here. As Laura Ann Twagira argues, people in rural Mali did not want to depend on foreign food aid because it was “unpredictable”.¹⁶⁹ This was also true for any external ‘aid’ more broadly: because the donors were driven by their domestic politics, thought that they knew everything better and tied ‘aid’ to conditions, one could and should not rely on them.

168 See Gerke 1992, pp. 137–189.

169 Twagira 2021, p. 200.

13 An “effective utilization of women”

Development policies and projects were often, implicitly or explicitly, made for men and ignored women. The case studies have already shown some effects of ‘development’ on women as well as women’s roles in socioeconomic changes in the countryside of the countries studied. This chapter adds some general conclusions about the worldview behind the evolving development approaches trying to address rural women, which seemed even more difficult to ‘reach’ and ‘integrate’ than male peasants and embodied planners’ inability to control socioeconomic processes and to eliminate hunger more than anything else.

Early developmentalists viewed women as particularly backward, primitive and vulnerable.¹ But at least since Ester Boserup’s influential 1970 book, *Women’s Role in Economic Development*, it was common wisdom that women in the non-industrialized world worked more hours than men in general and, in many countries, also in agriculture. Developmentalists held that the latter was especially the case in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, Boserup’s data actually indicated that this was not true in many African countries and even less in parts of Asia. Men in Asia did 25–30 hours of agricultural work per week; in Africa, it was only 15 hours.² A later study showed that men and women in Bangladesh worked equally long, including household work, but women in Java and Tanzania carried more of the burden.³ But the details are important. According to a 1975 study of Africa, women spent more time than men hoeing and weeding, carrying the harvest home from the fields, storing and processing food, and bringing water; men cleared land, turned the soil, and pruned trees; men and women worked approximately the same time harvesting, marketing their produce and raising animals.⁴

If women worked so much in farming, then development policies had to involve them more than they did in the early 1970s, which was only marginally. At that time, talk about women in the development community was often relegated to stereotypic topics such as home economics, health and nutrition, but it did hardly

1 Parpart 1995, pp. 227–228.

2 Boserup 1970, pp. 21, 25–26. See, for example, FAO, WCARRD, “Review and analysis of agrarian reform and rural development in the developing countries since the 1960s” (1979), FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 32, RU 7/46.33 Annex, p. 88 of the document.

3 Buvinić and Mehra 1990, p. 294.

4 See Snyder and Tadesse 1995, p. 57; Swindell 1985, pp. 16–19.

consider women as agricultural producers and economic actors. Some call this the welfare approach to women.⁵

One debate at the time was whether or not women mostly performed unpaid labor whereas men took on tasks when they became remunerative. Ann Whitehead criticized the view that most women's work was unpaid for hypothesizing "a separate subsistence sector, and its feminine nature" and underestimating the role of women in the monetized sector, which actually led to deep social differences among women.⁶ For Whitehead, it was also a myth that there was a separate female farming sector, as many others maintained.⁷ However, the view that women's unpaid, or minimally paid, labor had provided much of the material basis of 'modernization' gained currency.⁸ Whitehead, too, regarded wives' labor as unfree, which, she argued, development programs reinforced.⁹ The basis of all these considerations was to question economists' understanding of the household as a monolithic unit in favor of a conflict model.¹⁰

Some also explained child malnutrition with the role of women. According to one expert, mothers in Africa and Latin America had heavy workloads (unlike those in Bangladesh and the Philippines) but they were often better fed,¹¹ although not necessarily their children. More generally, the rise of child malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa was explained in terms of the deteriorating social position of women, but child malnutrition rates were even worse in South Asia because of females' low social standing.¹² Thus, if women were relieved of some of their household work and provided "minimal capital outlays" for improving food production and income generation, they would produce more food and families and children in particular would be better nourished.¹³ Other strategies to improve child nutrition tended to stress women's role as mothers, perceived as traditional.¹⁴ These views took women to be crucial to solving the hunger problem.¹⁵

Because "[p]oor rural women are affected more than poor rural men because of explicit gender bias in land allocation and input and credit delivery service",¹⁶ the former were the last frontier and the ultimate challenge of development policies.

5 Snyder and Tadesse 1995, p. 9; for home economics in FAO, see Spring n.d. (2013), p. 2; for UNESCO, see Ashby 1981, pp. 153–154.

6 See the positions in Ahmed 1985, p. 3; Whitehead 1990, pp. 55–56; Whitehead 1990b, p. 433. The latter thought is also in the Parthasarathy draft, agenda item III.4, "Integration of Women in Development", 13 November 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 1, Agenda and Comments I.

7 Whitehead 1990b, pp. 430–431.

8 Escobar 1995, p. 173.

9 Whitehead 1990, pp. 61–62.

10 See Kabeer 2003, pp. 95–135, and the introduction in Wolf 1992.

11 Islam 1989, p. 160.

12 Smith and Haddad 2000, p. 97.

13 This is how Kandiyoti 1992, p. 518 describes widespread assumptions in policy papers.

14 Prinz 2021, pp. 297–301.

15 But despite all hardship and sorrow, women have tended to weather famine better than men, which scholars explain in part through their greater physical and psychological adaptability. See Arnold 1988, pp. 86–91.

16 Jazairy et al. 1992, p. 298.

Elise Boulding criticized that female subsistence farmers were treated as “the periphery of the peripheries” or the “fifth world”.¹⁷ Some scholars have argued that the new development approach considered women, in effect, as a *natural* resource, similar to a “last colony”.¹⁸ Florence McCarthy expressed it this way: “Women became a ‘target group’ [. . .] because they remain a largely untapped resource, not yet fully exploited in the non-benign development process”.¹⁹

Women as a resource and policies to ‘integrate’ them

The research literature identifies a number of different approaches to development policies toward women pursued after 1970. Among the approaches were human-resource development, anti-poverty, efficiency, equity and human rights, and empowerment.²⁰ The first three are relevant to this study. But the categorization is questionable. In fact, they all had a common framework and differed only in their points of emphasis.²¹

The tenor of the human-resource development, anti-poverty and efficiency approaches was that women were a resource to be tapped or developed in expanding a country’s economy. This orientation reflected an instrumental understanding of the female half of humankind, and the three approaches had little concern with female aspirations, interests or needs. The aim was an “effective utilization of women”, as a USAID policy brief expressed it in 1974. The agency pledged to work “to integrate women in the national economies of foreign countries, thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort”.²² The phrase “effective utilization of women” was taken from a directive by the agencies’ director Daniel Parker who added: “Women are a vital human resource in the improvement of the quality of life in the developing world”.²³ A bit less bluntly, an FAO document argued: “The underutilization of the potential of women, who constitute about half of the population, is a serious obstacle to social and economic development”.²⁴ A thin line separated this attitude from the older view of women as ‘spoilors of development’. And the idea that women (especially rural ones) ought to be integrated in the economy valued only monetarized forms of labor or activities.

17 Quoted in Lesser Blumberg 1981, p. 31.

18 See von Werlhof et al. 1983, p. 9; the quote is from the book’s title.

19 Quoted in White 1992, p. 19.

20 Snyder and Tadesse 1995, pp. 9–14. Moser 1991, pp. 95, 106 distinguished the welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment approaches. Young 1993, pp. 18–19, put 1960s’ development policies under headline “Mothers and housewives” and the 1970s under “Producers and providers”.

21 See, for example, Chowdhury 1995a, pp. 32–38, who uses the same typology as Moser, but sees the “efficiency” approach, which tried to integrate women into general development, erroneously as having “emerged in the early 1980s” (p. 33).

22 AID, Office of Public Relations (!), “Percy Amendment Becomes Official AID Policy”, 16 September 1974, Ford Library, Patricia Lindh and Jeanne Holm files, Box 45, World Food Conference (1).

23 AID, Policy Determination, “Integration of Women in National Economies”, Ford Library, Patricia Lindh and Jeanne Holm files, Box 45, World Food Conference (1).

24 Parthasarathy draft, agenda item III.4, “Integration of Women in Development”, 13 November 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 1, Agenda and Comments I.

The claim that they were previously economically excluded was for the most part fictional.²⁵

Already in 1972, members of the Economic Commission for Africa published an article titled “Women: The Neglected Human Resource for African Development”,²⁶ which laid out the course that it and its newly founded African Training and Research Center for Women followed through much of the 1970s.²⁷ In its (much publicized but scarcely implemented) Lagos Plan of Action in 1980, the Organisation of African Unity stated, “women were the critical factor for accelerating economic development”, and their work should become more productive.²⁸ The influence of such thoughts persisted for another two decades, so that the ‘World Bank’ wanted to “invest in women” in the late 1980s, and in 1992, the IFAD’s aim was “improving women’s productivity”.²⁹

The FAO was slow to join in.³⁰ Its interest in the UN’s International Women’s Year of 1975 was limited.³¹ At that year’s World Conference on Women, in Mexico, “development” was a major theme.³² Some in the FAO did call for more studies of the ‘problem’ of rural women, recognizing that “[r]ural women have been neglected, even statistically speaking”.³³ By 1975, some in the FAO had begun to take women’s contributions to agricultural production seriously and to consider their access to agricultural extension services, training, credit, marketing, intermediate technology and negative consequences of land reform for their land rights. But FAO’s emphasis was still nutrition and home economics; an important document about female “integration” in agricultural development advised that “rural women are still best reached through the family because this is where they are found”.³⁴

FAO’s supervisory body had similar deficiencies. As the experienced Canadian delegate Frank Sheffrin reported in 1975: “The plight of the silent majority of one thousand million rural women living in drudgery in the developing countries received the full attention of an FAO Conference for the first time”.³⁵

25 See Simmons 1997, pp. 246–248.

26 “Women” 1972.

27 See Snyder and Tadesse 1995, esp. pp. 55–56.

28 Snyder and Tadesse 1995, pp. 162–163 (quote); OAU 1980, p. 89.

29 First quote in Escobar 1995, p. 178; second quote: Jazairy et al. 1992, p. 275.

30 A valuable contribution about FAO’s policies toward women is Spring n.d. (2013).

31 Judging from the file FAO, RG 12, Rural Inst. and Services Div., RU 7/44.

32 “World Plan of Action of the World Conference of the International Women’s Year (Mexico City, June 19–July 2, 1975)” in Tinker et al. 1975, pp. 188, 190, 200.

33 FAO Conference, 18th session, 8–27 November 1975, “The Role of Women in Rural Development”, RG 12, Rural Inst. and Services Div., RU 1/9.

34 Joseph circular, “Integration of Women in Agriculture and Rural Development”, 24 April 1975, RG 12, Rural Inst. and Services Div., RU 1/9. See also FAO Conference, 18th session, 8–27 November 1975, “The Role of Women in Rural Development” and the report of that conference (para 145), both in the same file.

35 Frank Sheffrin, “Thirty Years of FAO: A Report on the 18th session of the FAO Conference”, *Agriculture Abroad* 31, 1976, p. 25.

Only after facing some criticism for its reluctance, the FAO became a leading advocate of rural women in the course of preparing for the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) in 1979. WCARRD underscored women’s land rights, political organizing, education, employment, the double burden, etc.³⁶ Women authors became more often cited as references in FAO papers, and subjects began to include women’s access to land, credit, employment and income, information, education and training, agricultural inputs and other technology, health services, nutrition and policymaking.³⁷ This means that it became more common to regard women as peasants or farmers. The first page of the FAO’s 1980 guidelines mentioned the “struggle to achieve equality between the sexes” and later criticized output-oriented agricultural development policies as “unfair” to women because most resources went to men.³⁸ Besides its influence on the FAO, the WCARRD’s impact is debatable.³⁹ A follow-up report found that women still had unequal access to land and credit, and one analyst stated in 2013 that only 9 percent of all “agricultural aid committed to projects related to women and gender equality”.⁴⁰

The form in which these ideas were pressed were so-called Women in Development (WID) programs.⁴¹ In Boserup’s tradition, WID was not opposed to ‘modernization’ but wanted women to get more of its benefits, equal access to information, employment, public services and ‘aid’.⁴² According to critics, it was intended to advance capitalism and its expansion in the non-industrialized world and, as Naila Kabeer argued, informed by the “model of the self-interested individual” at the core of the liberal worldview.⁴³ WID favored projects involving only women, especially at first, but they were not very successful. It then aimed at “incorporating women into mainstream development activities”. In general, the intention was to promote “subsistence production” and ultimately “greater self-sufficiency”,⁴⁴ and “increasing women’s productivity”.⁴⁵

36 See FAO, “Activities for Rural Women”, ca. May 1981, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 17, RU 7/46.1 Follow-up General, vol. XI; Nehemiah to Santa Cruz, 6 September 1978, ditto, Box 1, Agenda and Comments I; Parthasarathy draft, agenda item III.4, “Integration of Women in Development”, 13 November 1978, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 1, Agenda and Comments I. See also Spring n.d. (2013), p. 3.

37 Compare FAO, “La función de la mujer en el desarrollo rural”, 1975, to Maria to Nehemiah, 24 April 1978, both in RG 12, WCARRD, Box 12, Women. See FAO’s report on WCARRD, July 1979, RG 12, WCARRD, RU 7/46.1 Annex. A similar line was in IFAD’s publication Jazairy et al. 1992, pp. 279, 292.

38 FAO, “Guidelines for the Integration of Women in Rural Development”, May 1980 (28 pp.), FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 16, RU 7/46.1, Follow-Up General, vol. VI.

39 Agarwal 1994, p. 5 finds it low.

40 The Impact 1988, pp. 74–75. For the ongoing lack of credit, see also Snyder and Tadesse 1995, pp. 91, 142. Quote: Spring n.d. (2013), p. 17.

41 See Escobar 1995, pp. 171–192; Meyerowitz 2021, pp. 97–139; for Canada, see Morrison 1998, pp. 238–243.

42 Pearson 2005, pp. 160, 172.

43 Chowdhury 1995a, p. 35; Kabeer 2003, p. 13 (quote), 20.

44 Kandiyoti 1992, p. 522. See Lewis 1988, pp. 186, 188–189 (first quote p. 189).

45 Lewis 1988, p. 184.

According to feminist critics, “WID projects may be seen as attempts at tighter control and more efficient monitoring of women’s activities”.⁴⁶ Adele Mueller argued that WID served to make the problem that women posed for “development” manageable.⁴⁷ One author said simply, “I believe that Women in Development (WID) programmes [. . .] are intended to keep the women in the countryside”.⁴⁸ But since most development projects involved such small numbers, if their aims were as these critics charge, they could not have succeeded to keep women under control.

In the 1980s and 1990s, disappointment with WID and the growing trend to see women’s problems as entangled with general social problems led to calls for a broader view. WID’s successor was the gender and development (GAD) model,⁴⁹ which was arguably conceived to remedy WID’s marginalization of women.⁵⁰ To some degree, this change was initiated from the “global south”.⁵¹ But the difference between GAD and WID was unclear to some. One analyst noted the “difficulty in operationalizing GAD projects”.⁵²

Few female functionaries

One of the causes of male chauvinism in defining the role of women in development was the lack of women in the relevant institutions. “The first people needing to be developed are the developers themselves”, read an FAO publication from 1975 devoted to this subject.⁵³ Men had traditionally dominated agronomy and agricultural economics, but other disciplines were not much different; just look at this book’s bibliography. “The low percentage of women in higher posts of FAO”, wrote a former functionary in 1992, “is a reflection of male predominance in the field it covers”.⁵⁴ In earlier times, typical attitudes toward rural African women were those of male “European traders, colonial administrators and missionaries”.⁵⁵

The FAO employed few female professionals. The 14 members of its task force for the World Food Conference were all men.⁵⁶ In an effort to end this “backwardness”, which was probably prompted by a UN program in 1974 endorsed by the body’s Economic and Social Commission, Director-General Addeke Boerma announced in 1975 that the FAO was terminating its discriminatory “policies and practices” and recruiting more women.⁵⁷ At the time, women were a mere 6.3 percent

46 Kandiyoti 1992, p. 522.

47 See Escobar 1995, p. 112.

48 Mbilinyi 1990, p. 123. See also Kandiyoti 1992, p. 522.

49 See Young 1993, pp. 134–144.

50 See Crewe and Harrison 1998, p. 56.

51 This is the argument of Meyerowitz 2021, p. 173.

52 Rathgeber 1995, p. 219. Pearson 2005, p. 160 commented simply: “WID has been re clothed GAD”.

53 Quoted in a statement by Boerma to the Aid Seminar on Women in Development, Washington D.C., 28 October 1975, FAO, RG 12, Rural Institutions and Services Division, RU 1/9.

54 Abbott 1992, pp. 61–62.

55 Snyder and Tadesse 1995, p. 44.

56 FAO, director-general’s bulletin, 15 January 1974, FAO, RG 22/2.

57 Statement by Boerma to the Aid Seminar on Women in Development, Washington D.C. 28 October 1975, FAO, RG 12, Rural Institutions and Services Division, RU 1/9. For ECOSOC, see the circular, “Integration of Women in Agriculture and Rural Development”, 24 April 1975, same file.

of the organization’s professional staff – only 2.9 percent of the professionals in its Regional Offices and engaged in fieldwork – and there were just two women among the 253 people in the highest bureaucratic ranks (D-1 and up). But the majority of the assistance personnel was female.⁵⁸ (Things may have been different in the Food and Nutrition Division.⁵⁹) Now FAO declared that women would work in its programs and projects at all stages.⁶⁰ However, the picture hardly changed in the 1980s and early 1990s.⁶¹ The situation was the same in the UN’s much smaller Economic Commission for Africa, in which less than 10 percent of the professionals were women in 1973 and 1980 and less than 20 percent in 1992. A woman first held a higher position (D-2) in 1992.⁶² In 1983, one of the 20 most senior staff at the ‘World Bank’ was female.⁶³

It was similar elsewhere. In the USA, for example, the presidential Commission on World Trade included only men in 1970, despite some criticism.⁶⁴ In the administrations of non-industrialized countries, Tanzania and Uganda at least had programs by the end of the 1980s to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions, and Mali, Ethiopia and Kenya later joined in the effort.⁶⁵ In the NGO sector, “Oxfam’s first female field representative” (actually, an assistant field representative) arrived in Addis Ababa in July 1975.⁶⁶ In Bangladesh, BRAC, the world’s largest NGO, employed more than 57,000 people in December 1995. 18 percent of full-time employees, but 96 percent of the part-timers, were women, who, thus, made up the majority in what was a male-dominated organization,⁶⁷ as were most others in rural development.

Developmental institution building

The drive for more female participation in rural development brought some new institutional structures, especially in small WID units, with it.

The Swedish International Development Agency had pursued women’s projects from the 1960s. Based on the Percy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 and feminist and NGO pressure, the USAID pioneered the WID approach by creating a WID office in 1974. The Ford Foundation began to fund many WID

58 Women’s Group FAO, “Proportion of Men and Women in junior and senior grades” and FAO answer to JIU questionnaire: women in the UN system [1976], FAO, RG 12, Rural Institutions and Services Division, RU 1/9.

59 See Kabeer 2003, p. 3.

60 Undated document (ca. 1974), FAO, RG 9, DDC, UN 12/1, vol. VIII; see also Frank Shefrin, “Thirty Years of FAO: A Report on the 18th session of the FAO Conference”, *Agriculture Abroad* 31, 1976, p. 25.

61 Marchisio and di Biase 1986, p. 210; Crewe and Harrison 1998, p. 65.

62 Snyder and Tadesse 1995, p. 204.

63 Hayter and Watson 1985, pp. 73–74.

64 Letters by Timons, 20 and 30 July 1970, NARA, Nixon papers, FG 263, Box 3, GEN FG 263.

65 Snyder and Tadesse 1995, p. 171.

66 Oxfam Field Committee for Africa, Field secretary’s report (1975), Oxfam, Box Africa Field Committee, January 1974–October 1976.

67 Abed with Chowdhury 1997, p. 46.

projects in 1972.⁶⁸ A Dutch government program existed since 1980, and WID experts were assigned to many Dutch embassies, including those in Tanzania, Indonesia and the Western Sahel, after 1984.⁶⁹ The ‘World Bank’ created the position of WID advisor in 1975, and in 1987, it established its WID division and began to post WID coordinators in its regional offices.⁷⁰ The UN Development Program (UNDP) first had little interest in issues pertaining to rural women; it did not set up a WID division until 1986.⁷¹ The FAO established an interdivisional working group for women in agriculture in 1976. Taking “inventory” of the integration of women’s issues at FAO in 1977, the working group concluded, “much remains to be done”.⁷² The FAO reorganized the group “to include members on the policy level” in 1981. It renamed its Home Economics Service the ‘Women’s Agricultural Production and Rural Development Service’ in 1983; in 1989, the organization announced a Plan of Action on Women in Development; and it began to train its staff in gender analysis in the 1990s.⁷³ The African Development Bank instituted a WID policy unit in 1987, and by 1992, its lending procedure included a screening for gender issues.⁷⁴

Gender and Development units were less common than WID offices. The Canadian International Development Agency was one of the few government agencies to adopt the GAD approach, creating a unit in 1991 (Oxfam had already done so in 1985), and the ‘World Bank’ set up its Gender Analysis and Policy Group in 1995.⁷⁵

But the influence of these structures was limited, as feminist researchers showed at length in the 1990s. Development agencies usually did not take into account the impact of their programs and projects on women and designed very few specifically and successfully for women.⁷⁶ According to data gathered from 1989 to 1991, less than 1 percent of the FAO’s programs incorporated strategies to reach women; only 15 percent of the IBRD’s financial operations had the potential to significantly impact women’s lives; and 10 percent of the USAID’s agricultural projects included a component for women.⁷⁷ The latter’s WID unit had four employees in 1979 and received only minimal funding at least until 1985.⁷⁸ Initially, the USAID’s

68 Rathgeber 1995, pp. 209–210; Kabeer 2003, p. 35; Lewis 1988, p. 181; Escobar 1995, p. 178; AID, Office of Public Relations, “Percy Amendment Becomes Official AID Policy, 16 September 1974, Ford Library, Patricia Lindh and Jeanne Holm files, Box 45, World Food Conference (1). See also Meyerowitz 2021, pp. 108–112.

69 Baud et al. 1992, pp. 91–92.

70 Chowdhury 1995a, p. 31. Meyerowitz 2021, pp. 125–126, argues that WID efforts did not become substantial in the ‘World Bank’ before the late 1980s.

71 Rathgeber 1995, p. 209.

72 Hahn to Perez de Vega, 27 September 1977, RG 12, FAO, Rural Inst. and Services Div., RU 1/9; FAO, “Activities for Rural Women”, ca. May 1981, FAO, RG 12, WCARRD, Box 17, RU 7/46.1 Follow-up General, vol. XI.

73 Spring n.d. 2013, pp. 2, 4, 8–11.

74 English and Mule 1996, p. 162.

75 Chowdhury 1995a, p. 38; Rathgeber 1995, p. 211; Wallace with March 1991, p. ix; Steam 2007, p. 98.

76 For example, see Pearson 2005, pp. 168–171.

77 Snyder and Tadesse 1995, p. 90.

78 Young 1993, p. 41; Kabeer 2003, pp. 35–36; Lewis 1988, p. 188.

New Directions program of 1976 led to a number of projects ‘targeting’ women, but most did not (though this changed later). Thus, it provided little resources to women.⁷⁹

Many of the ‘World Bank’s’ projects from 1989 to 1991 had WID elements, but their operational effects were limited.⁸⁰ Only some of the African Development Bank’s proposals for projects underwent screening for gender issues, and by 1993 its isolated WID unit had only four staff members.⁸¹ Forty percent of a sample of UNDP projects in 1985–1986 mentioned women and only regarding their traditional activities, not income generation.⁸² An evaluation of many of the European Community’s development projects intended to benefit women revealed that they failed to accomplish that.⁸³ Around 1990, male development administrators in Bangladesh rejected the WID approach, because they believed that women were unproductive.⁸⁴ The British charity Intermediate Technology, involved in rural development projects, made no forecasts of the impact of their agricultural input projects on women until 1990 and then did so rarely at least until 1997.⁸⁵ By contrast, Oxfam’s Gender and Development Unit had a positive influence on the organization’s work, at least according to one of its publications.⁸⁶ Only some large NGOs such as BRAC and Grameen Bank were serious about addressing women.

In 1981, Tanzania adopted the Women Development Plan, 1981–1985. And by the 1980s, five-year development plans in India, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Thailand mentioned how women might influence socio-economic programs or be influenced by them. However, in 1988, the FAO noted: “hardly any country has succeeded in integrating a comprehensive national strategy for women in development with the framework of its national plan”.⁸⁷

Policy effects

These efforts often amounted to what Maria Mies has called the “well-known recipe: Add gender and stir!”⁸⁸ And the policies had contradictory effects, some giving benefits to women, and others that imposed Eurocentric ideas about gender, keeping men in the fields and women at home or established such an order in the first place.⁸⁹ So, some, for example, Derrick Jelliffe (in 1968), called for the

79 Talbot 1977, p. 284; Lewis 1988, pp. 186, 189, 197.

80 Hagtvedt Vik 2008, p. 358.

81 English and Mule 1996, p. 162.

82 Goetz 1991, p. 140.

83 Parpart 1995, p. 230.

84 Agarwal 1994, p. 485.

85 Crewe and Harrison 1998, p. 62.

86 See Mehta 1991.

87 *The Impact* 1988, pp. 5 and 70 (quote). For Tanzania, see Donner-Reichle 1988, p. 80.

88 Mies 1996, p. 4.

89 See Postel 1985. For a Gambian example where women, cut off their traditional access to communal land by male commercial farming, nonetheless improved their diets through finding other jobs, see Islam 1989, p. 166.

“dedomestication of women”.⁹⁰ Later, the argument that women needed land rights can be regarded as having reinforced another gendered division of labor, for it confined women to agriculture, while men took on more remunerative work.⁹¹

The introduction of commercial crops and new inputs often increased rural women’s workloads but reduced their control of the family’s income, or projects failed because women resisted the additional work they entailed.⁹² Many analysts concluded that agricultural ‘modernization’ undermined the livelihood of women in particular and their earning capacity, marginalizing them economically or pushing them out of agriculture. According to another view, rural commercialization altered the roles of women, forced them to seek wage labor and resulted in the decline of clan or neighborhood groups’ activities.⁹³ In a paper submitted to the OECD in 1983, Devaki Jain reviewed 143 project impact assessments and found that, regardless of their funding source or location, the “impact of these projects had almost always been negative on poor women”.⁹⁴

It has been argued that the failure of the WID approach, which ignored social and gender inequalities, contributed to a general decline of the socioeconomic position of women in non-industrialized countries from the 1970s to the 1990s.⁹⁵ Gender equity programs were supposed to favor women in order to redress the fact that “women beneficiaries have lost ground to men in the development process”.⁹⁶ “Assistance to rural women often appears as part of a series of stopgap measures to tackle some of the most visible outcomes of underdevelopment, such as hunger and malnutrition”, Deniz Kandiyoti wrote, but “lasting benefits” seemed, in her view, “highly unlikely” unless inequality was tackled through the redistribution of land and appropriate pricing and credit policies.⁹⁷

In any case, from the dominant development perspective of ‘modernizing small-scale agriculture’ and economically integrating the rural poor in order to solve the world hunger problem, women were especially marginal, that is, in particular need of integration but hard to reach. The efforts that from this perspective were necessary demanded great sacrifices from poor food producers in general and from women in particular. Concepts like Women in Development neatly fit policies for the capitalist integration of the countryside.

90 Quoted in Ruxin 1996, p. 233.

91 Englert 2004, p. 53; Whitehead 1990b.

92 Palmer 1977, p. 107; see also Kumar 1988, p. 146.

93 Dixon 1981, pp. 272–273; Lewis 1981b, pp. 3, 10; Swindell 1985, p. 2.

94 Interview with Devaki Jain, 12 March 2002, p. 38, United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007.

95 Steam 2007, pp. 92, 97.

96 Moser 1991, p. 99.

97 Kandiyoti 1992, p. 522.

14 The bigger picture

This book is about the history of policies to end world hunger through intensifying the agricultural production of small producers in non-industrialized countries. These policies failed to end mass hunger. They helped to reduce the number of famines; were unsuccessful to intensify farming except in some zones; contributed little to industrializing ‘target’ countries; deepened social inequality; caused hardship for social losers and winners; strengthened bureaucracies; stabilized capitalism; largely failed to generate business for transnational corporations (incapable of penetrating the countryside of non-industrial countries); contributed to the integration of peasant families into national and global economies; and they were unsuccessful in cementing white imperialist dominance.¹

These effects are not necessarily in contradiction to each other. If capitalism was strengthened, a rise in inequality is unsurprising because capitalism is based on it, and the persistence of hunger is no surprise. The failure of multinationals’ imperialism is consonant with processes of capital accumulation that did not (or not yet) follow the model of English industrialization, and in accord with which relatively few families lost all of their land; most diversified their income, many by starting microbusinesses; and clear-cut proletarianization was limited and in part relocated abroad. Without the emergence of a large proletariat, given that peasants followed individualized family survival strategies, there was no challenge to capitalism. Thus, ‘developmental’ ideology helped to preserve capitalism.² As migration patterns show, non-industrialized societies enmeshed themselves in their continental economies and south-south cooperation rather than with North America and Western Europe, with Asia emerging as the economic center of gravity.³ And families

1 Other authors have, to some degree, reached similar conclusions. Lipton with Longhurst 1989 argue that what they call “modern varieties” of grain had little “poverty impact” (p. 5) and that through their use the “severity of hunger hardly changed” (p. 10). Later they add: “Certainly, MVs have polarized income and power” (p. 304) and hold that “feeding new resources into old power structures” led to this problematic outcome (p. 324).

2 Mannan 2015, esp. pp. 11, 36, 287–288 stresses the importance of NGOs spreading a developmental outlook as well as ‘Western’ values. However, Becker 2019, p. 1 cautions that, although many Tanzanians talk about “mandeleo” (development), “actual attempts at fostering development had been ephemeral and/or unpopular for decades”.

3 The global ‘south’, in this understanding, reaches as far north as Harbin.

anxious to hang on to their land often rejected technological change because it would have required taking on menacing debts for investments.

Historians like to think about temporality. By placing development policies and their socioeconomic implications in the 1970s and 1980s within longer-term processes, this chapter addresses questions about the specific qualities and significance of this book's topic in relation to long-range socio-economic trends. I first make some observations about a protracted depression of food consumption in 1940–1980 and offer a reevaluation of social developments in the 1980s. Then I compare the 1970s world food crisis to similar waves of famines in the past 200 years. The conclusions lead to some general considerations about the continuities and discontinuities in development policies and the specific version of capitalism that unfolded in many Asian and African countries in the past half-century.

A long baisse: 1940–1980

The events of the 1970s can be regarded as part of a longer crisis of poverty and hunger. The indications are that after 1940 staple food consumption fell in important countries like Indonesia, India and what became Bangladesh from levels not again reached until 1975 or 1980.⁴ In Java, rice production per capita began to decline soon after 1910, reaching its low point in the 1960s and then recovering; the availability of staples overall plummeted after 1940 and bounced back around 1970.⁵ Perhaps people's retreat into self-supply in the Dutch East Indies began already in the 1930s. In the 1950s Clifford Geertz mistook the specific outcome of the global economic crisis and World War II for a traditional, inward-directed "agricultural involution".⁶ In 1976, a Club of Rome report stated that the "availability of food per capita worldwide has not increased since 1936 and actually decreased in the last decade".⁷ Similarly, a report prepared for the Asian Development Bank in 1975 stated: "The available evidence suggests that in 1975 – a good year – the DMCs' [developing member countries] average calorie intake was no higher than in 1934–8".⁸

This slump may have lasted longer in India than Indonesia, for some scholars present evidence that real wages in Bengal were higher in 1850–1910 than in the 1970s, and Indians' average food consumption fell by one quarter from 1913 to 1947 but others claim that incomes stagnated.⁹ According to Raj Patel, foodgrain

4 Van der Eng 2000, pp. 595–598, 616; Palmer 1977b, pp. 206–208. For the development of real income 1923–1980, see Booth and McCawley 1981c, p. 2. For data on India and what became Bangladesh in 1946 and 1978–1980, see Grigg 1986, pp. 20, 43. Cf. Booth 1998, p. 133 for the constant high percentage of food of average consumption expenditures in Indonesia.

5 Booth 1988, p. 34; see also Belshaw 1965, p. 76.

6 Svensson 1991, pp. 169–172; see Geertz 1968.

7 Mesarovic and Pestel 1976, p. 115.

8 "Recommendations from the Asian Development Bank Consultative Committee on A Strategy for Investment in Support of Agricultural and Rural Development in Asia", 6 December 1975, p. 4 note 1 of the document, FAO, RG 15, RAFF, Rural Development.

9 Arens and van Beurden 1977, p. 102; Patnaik 1990, p. 82; Blyn 1966, pp. 29, 102, 121, 243, 247, 337; Datta 1994, p. 67; Andrew Jenkins, "Bangladesh: Problems and possibilities", n.d. (1981), Oxfam,

output per person in India in the late 1990s was no higher than it had been in 1927–1932, and foodgrain availability had fallen.¹⁰ Other regions were also affected. Per capita food availability in French Senegal dropped by 40 percent from 1920 to 1959.¹¹

According to data from the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, the trend was global. In countries with low average consumption, pre-World War II levels of per capita calorie availability were reached again only in the 1960s. World food production per capita entered a trough after the mid to late 1930s and did not surpass the earlier level until the 1960s.¹² Around 1960, the FAO concluded, “[P]er capita food consumption levels in Asia and Latin America were still below pre-World War II levels”.¹³ According to another source, the problem was mostly confined to South Asia, the Far East and Africa.¹⁴ Data on poverty compiled by ILO showed stagnation in some countries of South and Southeast Asia from the 1960s to the 1970s.¹⁵

What would a long *baisse* in food consumption from 1940 to 1980 indicate? For one, it is an indication that great problems harked back to another global wave of famines in and around World War II and that the social devastation of that war was much greater in the colonies than is recognized. The war resulted in profound social crises and its consequences kept individuals and families impoverished for decades, and not only where the fighting had raged. And it loomed in the memories of key actors in the 1970s, linking two global waves of famines, as I show later. But the long *baisse* also raises questions about the notorious 1980s.

A reevaluation of the 1980s

A long depression in food consumption in large parts of the world from about 1940 to about 1980 would put the 1980s in a new light. The decade is often called a period of economic stagnation and impoverishment, and a “lost decade” for ‘development’.¹⁶ For example, per capita GDP in Latin America fell¹⁷ as did public and private, domestic and international investment in non-industrialized countries.¹⁸ ‘World Bank’ publications report an accelerating rise in life expectancy

Country reviews; Lawrence Lifschultz, “A state of siege”, in: Far Eastern Economic Review, 30 August 1974 (copy), Oxfam, Box Bangladesh – Food Shortage (etc.), AG/2/1–5, file Bangladesh general I 1974. The latter view is in Alamgir 1978, pp. 45, 49–50, 55–56, 63, 65.

10 Patel 2007, p. 128.

11 Franke and Chasin 1980, p. 74.

12 Grundfragen 1972, pp. 145–146.

13 Staples 2006, pp. 105–106; see also Moïse Mensah, “Address [. . .] at the Rotary Club Luncheon, Accra, 27 October 1969: African Agriculture and the Second Development Decade”, FAO, RG 15, Reg. Office for Africa, Reg. Repr. Speeches (Mensah) (1969–1974).

14 Otto Kene, “Hunger in der Welt: Die Situation im Jahre 1964”, September 1964, BA, B116/20218.

15 Griffin 1987, p. 7.

16 Ihne and Wilhelm 2006, p. 11; Thorbecke 2006, p. 15. One could also point to parallels in the Soviet Union.

17 De Janvry and Sadoulet 1993, p. 144.

18 Harrigan and Mosley 1992, p. 161.

and a drop in infant mortality in non-industrialized countries, a peak in the success of efforts to reduce poverty in India and resurgence in per capita income in Bangladesh,¹⁹ but such claims are doubtful because ‘the Bank’s’ studies tend to be unduly self-congratulatory.

But data from other sources on food consumption and some of this study’s findings confirm that some poor populations, particularly in Asia, saw gains in their living standards in the 1980s.²⁰ This is in contrast to data from the 1970s according to which among 44 non-industrialized countries with an average food supply below nutritional requirements, in only 14 did supply increase, and in none sufficiently.²¹ And it is also clear that where consumption rose in the 1980s the increase was not sufficient for many people.

This book has re-emphasized that the 1970s were a decade of hunger, social conflict and political upheaval; of leftist leanings in parts of the intelligentsia; and of development policies that focused on the state. With the latter, the neoliberal ‘development’ concepts of the 1980s were also obsessed. It was ‘reforming’ the state that served as their main lever for bringing about economic effects, and the state remained the center of policy attention in the 1990s’ orientation toward so-called ‘good governance’. Concerning developmentalists’ focus on the state, too, the 1980s are positioned in a longer continuum. Whatever purpose they had, neoliberal policies in the 1980s did not (yet) reduce many ‘donor’ countries’ ODA and, thus, arguably did not lessen the foreign dependence of non-industrialized countries, but the mounting debts resulting from those policies hampered non-industrialized states’ operations.

The arguments that scholars have made about calendar decades have often obscured the history of ‘development’, reproduced the objectives that UN organizations set at the start of decades, and confused plans with results in studying an endeavor notorious for failing to achieve its goals.²² Besides, it is implausible that policy changed with the calendar. Decades are abstractions in need of deconstruction.

The 1980s belonged to a B-phase (a period of instability, stagnation or recession) of a long economic wave, or Kondratiev cycle, that lasted about from 1973 to 1992. It was this stagnation that caused first disorientation and then the political breakthrough of neoliberalism. In 1970–1982, as the international grain trade continued its spectacular expansion (see Chapter 2), world trade in general was slowing, growing just slightly more than the world economy.²³ And in the 1980s, the world grain trade, too, all but stagnated, a sign of relative economic disconnect between industrial and non-industrialized countries. European and North

19 See Kakwani et al. 1993, pp. 136, 150–152; Kakwani and Subbarao 1993, pp. 436, 455, 460; Hosain 1995, p. 251.

20 Famines have also been portrayed as being on the retreat, and becoming marginal affairs, after the 1980s. See O’Grada 2007, p. 3. The claim in Escobar 1995, p. 213 that “the food availability to poor people in the Third World has fallen by about 30 percent” after 1982 is baseless.

21 Islam 1983, p. 197.

22 For example, Ihne and Wilhelm 2006, pp. 9–13.

23 James 1997, p. 17.

American capital was diverted from non-industrialized countries to industrialized ones, the USA in particular, despite the deindustrialization in some economic sectors. One question that this book raises indirectly is whether this disinvestment and economic disconnecting was detrimental to social evolution in non-industrialized countries.²⁴ But my study does not justify neoliberalism, which, in terms of changing policies toward food production in the countries of my case studies, did not have terribly much impact in the 1980s. The influence of neoliberal policies was bigger in the 1990s, a period of relative stagnation in, for example, Indonesia and Tanzania.

Five global waves of famines from the 1870s to today

This book began with the world food crisis of 1972–1975 and the famines it included. Such global waves of famines, accompanied by hikes in international grain prices, have occurred over the last 150 years, in 1876–1879; 1888/1896–1901; 1915–1919; 1941–1947; 1972–1975; and, arguably, 2007–2010.²⁵ They merit some thought to put things in perspective.

There are thousands of books about famines but few about these waves. What is missing in particular are diachronic analyses extending over more than one or two waves.²⁶ C. Peter Timmer observes that “world food crises” are cyclical, occurring regularly about every 30 years, and Derek Heady and Shenggen Fan see a “strong possibility that food crises are an inherent aspect of the world food system”, so that they will continue to repeat.²⁷ But except for a recent essay of mine, this seems to be the first attempt of a synthesis in respect to all of these waves of famines.²⁸ In this section, I briefly outline their patterns of occurrence, their causes, the countermeasures that political actors have taken and offer a brief analysis distinguishing two types of global hunger crises. In doing so, it is important to keep the complex roots of famine in mind, including food availability, entitlement and functioning of markets, and government policies.

Such waves of famines were made possible by the emergence of a worldwide grain trade system in the 1860s and 1870s in the context of accelerating industrialization and technical improvements of steamships.²⁹ Soon afterwards, two global hunger crises, in 1876–1879 and 1888/1896–1901, claimed a total of at least 50 million lives. British-India, China, and (in the 1890s) the Belgian Congo

24 This is in contrast to many liberals who see countries’ marginalization in world trade as a big problem, for example Collier 2008.

25 Concerning the uniqueness of the world food crisis of 1972–1975, this section offers a different accentuation than in Gerlach 2005, pp. 582–583.

26 There are some works from during or shortly after the last three events (1941–1947, 1972–1975, 2007–2010), which contemporaries perceived as global, but very few dealing with two waves together, and none with more. For example, see Horton 2009 on the 1970s and 2000s, pointing to almost identical curves of grain prices; Mittal 2009a; Heady and Fan 2010, pp. 81–91.

27 Timmer 2010, p. 1; Heady and Fan 2010, p. xvi.

28 See Gerlach 2020. This section is a revised and updated version of that publication.

29 See Morgan 1980.

were hardest hit, but Brazil, Russia, the Spanish-Philippines, Java in the Dutch East Indies, Ethiopia, British-Egypt, parts of southern and eastern Africa and the Pacific also affected. According to Mike Davis, the integration of these territories into the world economy had weakened societies' ability to satisfy their own food needs and made them vulnerable to external economic shocks, climate change and environmental degradation. The great purchasing power of Europe' industrializing countries resulted in grain exports even from famine areas. Colonial exploitation and independent states' dependence on imperial powers aggravated this effect and disabled traditional protective practices. In some cases, Davis argues, war and counterinsurgency impoverished peasants and pastoralists.³⁰ At the same time, grain imports triggered agricultural crises in industrializing Europe; Kondratiev based his theory of long economic waves on these events.³¹

Another wave of famines killed 15–20 million people in 1941–1947 in the context of the Second World War – many far away from the frontlines. Worst affected in absolute terms were British-India, the Chinese province of Henan, the occupied and unoccupied parts of the Soviet Union, northern Vietnam, Java and, in relative terms, also Burundi, East Timor and Greece. But famines also struck, among others, Poland; Germany; Austria; the Netherlands; Japan; the French colonies of Niger, Algeria and Tunisia; the British colonies of Nigeria, Kenya and Tanganyika; and Palau. Most of the European victims were urbanites, but elsewhere they were usually rural dwellers. Among those who starved to death were four million prisoners of war (especially those held by the Germans, Soviets, and Japanese), hundreds of thousands of Jews, forced laborers, and disabled people. Most of the victims died in occupied or colonial territories or came from them. Among the wave's causes were a decline in agricultural production (due to the dearth of fertilizer, fuel, vehicles and draught animals resulting from the wartime redistribution of raw materials) and rationing systems based on racist hierarchies. The direct destruction of food played almost no role, and its seizure by colonial and occupation forces played only a small one. But naval blockades, the destruction of means of transportation, the imposition of new borders and the boom in war-related materials disrupted or changed economic links, which led to economic imbalances, crises, inflation, and the impoverishment of some groups. All colonial powers in Africa intensified forced labor. Together with the recruitment of men for the military and war economies, this hurt agricultural production, increased the urban demand for food, and many ruralites starved because of the resulting labor and food shortages. The war, and especially enforced migration, destabilized societies. Refugees were especially vulnerable. Meanwhile, profiteers from Java to Greece accumulated assets and land at the expense of others left impoverished and hungry.³²

At least five million people in Europe and Western Asia starved for similar reasons in 1915–1919 because of the First World War. Hundreds of thousands of

30 See Davis 2001.

31 Kondratieff 1926; Kondratieff 1928.

32 See Collingham 2012; Gerlach 2019; Ó Grada 2019. For British-Kenya, see also Spencer 1980; for South, East and South-East Asia, see Kratoska 1998; Johnston n.y.; Knight n.y.

civilians died of hunger in Russia, Germany, Austria, Belgium and Greece, primarily in the cities.³³ Already then shortages of fertilizers, manure, horses and workers caused food production to shrink, and many farmers hoarded their produce. British naval blockades in the North Sea and Mediterranean affected the food supply in Central Europe, but also the Ottoman Empire, where more than one million died of hunger, including soldiers; civilians (in Lebanon and Syria); city dwellers; refugees; and forcibly resettled populations, in particular, of Armenian, Greek and Kurdish backgrounds, robbed of their possessions and denied food.³⁴ Hundreds of thousands prisoners of war starved to death, especially in Russian, Romanian, Ottoman, Bulgarian, and Italian captivity.³⁵ Food prices spiked in all of the affected countries. This was also true in Persia, the worst hit country. Up to nine million people perished as a consequence of occupation by the British and Russians, who requisitioned food or bought it in mass, imposed enormous tributes, and restricted foreign trade. Drought, cholera, and the Spanish flu probably played smaller roles.³⁶ These actions resembled the European powers' racist exploitation of their African colonies in the second half of the war. To counter an insurgency in Mali, the French colonial administration blocked the distribution of food, which, together with influenza and the death of livestock from disease, killed many in the north of the country. Fighting, the destruction of farms by British and German troops, mass recruitment, the seizure of food and the disruption of internal trade added to drought in Tanganyika and Belgian Rwanda to cause widespread starvation.³⁷ Another major famine occurred in Ethiopia in 1916.³⁸ The wave included a serious famine in Northeastern Brazil, but because there was none in China and British-India was hardly affected³⁹ the geographical reach of this wave was shorter than in others and it is debatable whether it was global. If one includes the starvation caused by the Russian Civil War (1919–1922), it claimed at least ten million lives.

Like between the waves during the world wars, there are parallels between the 1972–1975 world food crisis and the 2007–2010 global food price crisis. Both came unexpectedly in peacetime. In both, prices for internationally traded grain skyrocketed and stocks were low at the end of a long boom and the beginning of economic crisis when commodity and energy prices were at high levels and the U.S. dollar depreciated.⁴⁰ The boom had fueled consumption – especially meat consumption –, both times grain production had increased slowly in the preceding period, and strong *el niño* and/or *la niña* events were cited as partial causes.⁴¹ In

33 Richardson 2015 is illustrative.

34 See Gerlach 2002b, pp. 381–391.

35 See Kramer 2010.

36 Gholi Majd 2003.

37 See Gado 1993, pp. 43–44; Maddox 1990; Iliffe 1979, pp. 269–270; Paice 2007, pp. 288, 394; Lugan 1976.

38 Shepherd 1975, p. xii.

39 For Brazil, see Marengo et al. 2016, p. 6; for India, see Harnetty 2001, esp. p. 557; Srivastava 2014, pp. 322–330; Ram 1990a, pp. 160–169.

40 See also Horton 2009; for the U.S. dollar, see Clapp 2009a, p. 47.

41 See Clapp and Cohen 2009a; Heady and Fan 2010.

both, the increasing prices of staples led to social unrest that toppled some governments. But 2007–2010 saw no major restructuring of the international grain market and no acute hunger crises except in Northeastern Africa. Arguably, then, the 2007–2010 crisis was not another global wave of famines, although the FAO estimated the increase in the number of the malnourished at 100 million people.

All of the global waves clearly caused more victims in Asia than other continents in absolute figures, but in relation to the size of their populations Africa and Europe were also hit hard. At least three waves engulfed China, India, Ethiopia, Tanganyika, Brazil and Russia/the Soviet Union. The areas of what is now Bangladesh and Mali were also repeatedly affected.

As I mentioned, global waves of famine have occurred since the emergence of a global grain-trading system.⁴² The two distinguishable types – at wartimes and (largely) peace times – have many things in common. For one, resource flows in general, and grain flows in particular, were usually redirected, the consequences of which were worse in affected countries than those of rising international grain prices. In 1972–1975, the redirection consisted in new large grain imports by socialist and non-industrialized countries, together with a sudden rise in the earnings of oil-exporting states; in the 1870s and 1890s, exports of grain and products like cotton from colonies and countries under imperialist domination; in 1941–1947 and, to a lesser degree, 1915–1919, tendencies toward autarky, restrictions of overseas trade, and the intensified exploitation of the food sector and other resources of occupied and colonial territories in the context of economic warfare. Analysts explain the 2007–2010 crisis with a trend of growing more crops for export and biofuels at the cost of food production,⁴³ which Lester Brown has called an “epic confrontation between the world’s 800 million motorists and its 2 billion poor people”.⁴⁴

If the crisis in the 1870s was about establishing a worldwide grain-trading system, the one in the 1970s involved its reconfiguration (see Chapter 2). Those in the 1910s and 1940s pertained to abrupt but temporary reconfigurations of the international grain trade, though in the 1940s, the USA became by far the largest exporter.

These waves did not simply happen. As I have argued, the 1970s world food crisis was to a degree crafted by the U.S. government and by other exporting nations with less influence. The same can be said – in different contexts – about the waves in the 1910s (by Britain) and the 1940s (by Britain, Germany, Japan and the USA).

It is striking that global hunger crises often coincided with major turns in the world economy from boom to stagnation periods that constitute its so-called ‘long waves’ or Kondratiev cycles. If one includes 2007–2010, then there was a global food crisis at *every* such transition at the end of a long boom or A-phase (1849–1873, 1892–1914/18, 1948–1973, and 1992–2008). Each time, the A-phase ended with high commodity prices, feverish speculation and high levels of consumption,

42 For example, it is unclear whether one can speak of a global wave as result of the eruption of Mount Tambora in 1815–1817. I thank Francine Bosson for sharing her insights into this with me.

43 See the contributions in Clapp and Cohen 2009a.

44 Quote in Weis 2009a, p. 154.

and the period of crisis and stagnation began with overproduction. General economic developments influenced food production, but also social processes: increasing social differentiation that accompanied the boom continued in the beginning of crisis and stagnation before it was reversed. Only the 1941–1947 crisis occurred clearly during the transition from economic crisis to boom.⁴⁵ But in most cases, global waves of famine are bred by boom times because of the inequality they generate and, possibly, the inflationary pressures they produce. The correlation between global hunger crises and *el niño* or *la niña* events is weaker, although they did play some role in the 1870s, 1890s, 1970s and late 2000s.⁴⁶

Since hunger is a major political issue, famines threaten rulers' legitimacy. Global hunger crises exacerbated social conflicts that led to political strife, and not only during the world wars. Revolutions took place during World War I in Russia, Germany and elsewhere. At the end of World War II, Eastern Europe turned to communism; the communists gained ground in China in 1946–1947; many civil wars and wars of independence broke out, for example, in Greece, Vietnam and Indonesia; and India gained its independence. In 1975, leftist officers introduced communist rule in Ethiopia. In each of these incidents, hunger was a political argument. In addition, southern Africa experienced a breakdown in the local livestock economy in the 1890s that weakened the anti-colonial forces, and much political upheaval accompanied the 2007–2010 crisis.⁴⁷

The fact that there were fewer deaths in the last two waves than in the others (3 million in 1972–1975 and perhaps 200,000 in 2007–2010) has often been explained by improved technical countermeasures. Another important factor was the ebb (though not total disappearance) of colonialism and foreign occupation, which played such a fateful role in 1876–1879, 1888–1901, 1915–1919, and 1941–1947 because they facilitated a fiercer exploitation of labor at the end of a long boom when wages normally tend to be at an elevated level.

It is of special interest to this study that the political responses to global famine waves showed little variation in their liberal-capitalistic approach. These responses include short-term measures like food aid (often delayed), setting up limited food reserves and employment programs, often as food-for-work. Economic measures aim at increasing production to raise rural dwellers' income through more products or earnings in non-agricultural production and trade and paid work. According to Parker Shipton, a deeper involvement of the rural population in market relations, after they get impoverished, is a main cause of famine, but more such involvement is also characteristic of its "known remedies". Moreover, famines themselves force people into further market relations (through seeking wage labor, credit, mortgaging land and begging), which deepens social polarization.⁴⁸ Differently put, the countermeasures in hunger crises exacerbate them, reproducing the conditions on

45 This is also debatable for the years 1888–1892. The years 1941 to 1945, of course, saw strong short-term sectoral economic booms.

46 For the 1870s and 1890s, see Davis 2001.

47 See Messer 2009. I owe thanks to Domink Schaller in this context.

48 Shipton 1990 (quote p. 354).

the basis of which famines occur. Rural food-for-work programs bring about temporary proletarianization, and, as I have explained, the infrastructure they create like roads and irrigation facilities tends to benefit the wealthy. And agricultural intensification programs through investment in fertilizers, irrigation and machinery – a response to the crises of the 1940s, 1970s and 2000s – primarily reached big and middle farmers, whose inputs were often subsidized, and ruined many of the small peasants and sharecroppers who could only participate through debts they could not repay.⁴⁹ Thus, one reason why global hunger crises recur are the measures taken against them, and not only in the 1970s. Put differently, for some international and local actors alike, such food crises were opportunities to alienate people of their land and reinforce or extend relations of wage labor.

Hidden links, rooted in the lives of influential political agents, connected different global waves of famines. Addeke Boerma, FAO's Director-General from 1967 to 1975, had held various positions in the Dutch food and agricultural administration between 1940 and 1946, a period that included the 1944–1945 famine, consecutively under national, German and British hegemony. Boerma's predecessor at the FAO Binay Ranjan Sen (1956–1967) had held various posts in Bengal in British India in 1941–1943 and was Director-General of the Food Administration in 1943–1946 and, so, during the Great Bengal Famine of 1943–1944.⁵⁰ Akhtar Hameed Khan, the mastermind of the Comilla model of cooperatives, was likewise a government officer in Bengal in famine areas in 1943–1944 and 1951.⁵¹ Amartya Sen, who closely studied famines in the early 1970s in developing his entitlement theory, included a chapter on the Great Bengal Famine of 1943–1944, which he watched in horror as the ten-year-old child of an unaffected wealthy family.⁵² And Robert McNamara, president of the 'World Bank', witnessed some aftereffects of that famine as an officer in the U.S. Army in British India organizing military supplies for China in 1944.⁵³ All of these men were observers, not survivors, of famines, but their consciousness of one famine wave was part of what drove them during the next one.

Just a brief policy phase?

According to Walden Bello, "The foreign-aid backed state-directed effort to stabilize the countryside and increase the productivity of the poor largely failed, and came to an end in the early 1980s".⁵⁴ Of course, different currents were competing in development policies, and some were not aiming at poverty alleviation. Writing

49 For the years after 2007, see IEG 2014; für the years after 1945, see Ribi Forclaz 2019. Of course, in industrialized countries, many agricultural subsidies also disproportionately benefit big farmers.

50 Phillips 1981, pp. 38–39; UN Press Release, FAO/1176, 19 April 1962, PA AA B 30, vol. 230; biographical sketch of Sen, October 1963, PA AA IIIA2, Nr. 12.

51 Franda 1982b, p. 1.

52 Interview with Amartya Sen, 20 January 2003, p. 14, in: United Nations Intellectual History Project 2007; Sen 2021, pp. 137–146.

53 Kraske 1996, p. 164.

54 Bello 2009, p. 30. See also Rieff 2015, pp. 104–105.

about one policy trend in the 1990s, Eric Thorbecke noted: “As the Cambridge School boldly put it, impoverishment of the masses is necessary for the accumulation of a surplus over present consumption”.⁵⁵

However, as the quote in the beginning of this book shows, the FAO in 2009 sought to combat hunger and poverty by increasing food production by raising small producers’ productivity. In Chapter 12, on predicting, I showed that poverty-alleviation and solving the world hunger problem have remained core development aims of governments and of international organizations since the 1970s. After the 1984–1985 food crises and the devastating consequences of the structural adjustments it had demanded, the ‘World Bank’ returned to a food security approach in Africa, or at least said it had, by 1986.⁵⁶ Anti-poverty policies did neither end in the 1980s nor 1990s, although practice may have differed from rhetoric.⁵⁷ Africa also saw major initiatives for food security in the 2000s and 2010s.⁵⁸ But such strategies were lacking in success even where funding was incredibly concentrated. In the 21st century, the UN’s 14 Millennium Villages, one of which was in Tanzania, reportedly received US\$600 million in development funding, including for the core aim of food production. This flagship project translated to between \$101 and \$127 per person annually, which were paid for a decade. But, though the project was successful in terms of health care and education, its agricultural achievement was controversial at best.⁵⁹

Some historians argue that the adoption of intensive farming methods was a leading development paradigm only until sometime in the 1990s.⁶⁰ Because of new objectives, like promoting bourgeois democracy, protecting the environment, combating AIDS and drug trafficking, and political crisis prevention, chronic hunger then received less attention and foreign ‘aid’ less funding.⁶¹ Also, vague commitments to poverty alleviation did not necessarily mean that there were substantial efforts.⁶² This limits the value of a recent linguistic study showing that “food” still frequently occurs in core ‘World Bank’ documents.⁶³

I would turn this argument around: In the development business, discursive fashions change fairly frequently and sharply, but changes in spending priorities are gradual, and though once-central concepts are superseded, they retain some of their hold, at least implicitly. Almost every fashion persists as a layer of development policies later on. Thus, ‘aid’ for infrastructure continued to be well funded after the purported death of modernization theory, and rural poverty alleviation measures

55 Thorbecke 2006, p. 29.

56 De Waal 1997, p. 52.

57 Meyerowitz 2021, p. 227; Islam 2005, p. 433; Rugumamu 1997, p. xi.

58 Tribe 2019a, p. 233; African Centre for Biodiversity 2016, p. 6.

59 Münstermann 2019.

60 Martin 2009 (until 1990, according to Norman Borlaug); Harwood 2015, p. 49 (until the 1990s); Rieff 2015, p. xi (until the late 1990s). Dyson 1996, p. 59 suggests that the world’s per capita cereal production reached a peak in 1984. See also Clapp and Cohen 2009b, p. 3 for investment in agriculture.

61 Nijman 1998, pp. 33, 35.

62 See Kirk 2010, pp. 63, 78, 85, 153 about ‘World Bank’ activities in India.

63 Rieff 2015, p. 136.

continued to draw funds when that goal was no longer verbally emphasized. As a result of the compromises that this requires within organizations, ‘development aid’ does not have much of a focus either geographically or in terms of ‘target’ sectors.⁶⁴

A special form of capitalism

Arguably, the small peasant approach to agricultural intensification was industrialized nations’ instrumentalization of non-industrialized countries in the formers’ attempt to evade a longer economic downturn or stagnation. Thus, one could say it was a manifestation of neo-colonialism. The industrial nations sought to change the world in accord with their vision of a centralized system of world capitalism that would serve their interests. ‘Modern’, efficient small producers of staple foods would generate the capital necessary for development, that is, industrialization. The small peasant approach was supposed to develop a capitalist order with a broad rural basis of ownership strongly linked to their national economies (primarily by providing produce and capital) and the world economy (primarily by buying technical inputs). With relatively little dispossession, proletarianization and displacement, this would have been a specific form of integration in capitalist relations.

However, industrialized states and their societies lacked the needed agency and power. They were not omnipotent. Current imperialism is as dysfunctional a system as old colonialism was, though in different ways. Certain industrialized states were powerful enough to cause great damage, like crafting the world food crisis and contributing to about one million deaths in Bangladesh with a grain export embargo (see Chapters 2 and 3). But imperialist countries’ machineries were dysfunctional to preserve global ‘white’ dominance. This study has demonstrated this for two different sorts of structures, ‘aid’ organizations and transnational corporations. Risk-averse and concentrating on short-term profit, big business had neither the capacity, mentality, nor organizational means to penetrate, and, so, spread capital to, the countryside in non-industrialized countries (see Chapter 6). The same was true for all of the forms of international capital, including state-controlled capital and international financial institutions.

Nor were these apparatuses capable of solving the world hunger problem. Always production-oriented and food-availability-oriented, that is, always following the ideology of liberal capitalism, they addressed a world food problem, confusing it with the hunger issue. Their failure to alleviate poverty goes back to nearly all levels of their endeavor: analysis, design, policy, organizational structure, and implementation, internationally, nationally and locally. In order to show this, this book needed to describe the global level and national case studies. In essence, development agencies tried to solve a social problem with technical means. If this was a case of social engineering, its emphasis was on engineering. This is confirmed by agents’ visions of the future (see Chapter 12).

64 For Switzerland, see Naef 2016.

This book is also a study of the functioning of capitalism. The plan to expand food production through efficient small producers constituted a model of capital accumulation different from the European one based on large farms and the displacement of masses of the rural poor. For the most part, the plan did not work. What evolved instead, as I have sketched, was capitalism without industrialization (or largely without it). This is about societies where rural people were not simply subsistence farmers and can no longer expect traditional mutual assistance; where exchanges have become monetized, there is some division of labor and many sell their labor; where income-generating activities have become diversified but many families hold on to their land. Social differentiation existed but was limited; household production retained some role, and there was no complete proletarianization; and capital was not accumulated through staple food production but through sectors like rural trade and transportation, whose profits were higher.⁶⁵

These phenomena have often been described, but it may be useful to consider how to assess them. About capitalism, Wallerstein wrote, “by the late twentieth century, it had reached most of its inner geographical frontiers as well”, that is, in addition to its external ones.⁶⁶ Perhaps that is true, but only if one understands capitalism as less homogenous and centralized than Wallerstein did. On the other hand, I would agree in a way with Stephen Bunker who wrote that “world-system, dependency, and more orthodox Marxist analysts have all exaggerated the potential of capitalism as mode of production and exchange” (and I would extend the argument to many liberals and conservatives), but I do not accept, as Bunker does, that there is a separate peasant mode of production.⁶⁷ Rather, there seem to be different, loosely connected spheres within capitalism. Some have argued “that there is something distinctive about agricultural production which makes the complete penetration of the sector by technologically rational capital unlikely”, namely, its slow turnover of capital, seasonal nature and high risk,⁶⁸ which was why big companies preferred contractual links over direct investment. Lenin made the argument that “capitalism penetrates into agriculture particularly slowly” already in 1899.⁶⁹ But if capitalism had another form in the non-industrialized countries of Asia and Africa, one distinct from its Pan-European version, it was no less brutal and no more appealing.

Capitalism without industrialization also raises questions on a more individual level. In some countries and some historical situations there are phases that require sacrifice. One generation may work tirelessly and invest, rather than consume, the fruits of their efforts to secure a better future for its children, which leaves them

65 Bernstein 1981, pp. 17–18; Galli 1981b, p. 219. Much of this was informal business and thus not fully reflected in GDP figures based on official data – my impression is that much capital was also accumulated through the construction of private residential buildings in the countryside. It is a limitation of this study that I haven’t included this in the analysis.

66 Wallerstein 1982, p. 23.

67 See Bunker 1991, p. 4. Representative of the peasant mode of production thesis is Hyden 1980, pp. 9–37.

68 Wallace 1985, p. 500. See also Harper 2007a.

69 Quoted in Pincus 1996, p. 38.

sick or dying early from mental and physical stress. But what if such sacrifices were in vain? What if both those who refused to assume the risks involved in making major investments in their farming methods and most of those who did take on those risks lived in persisting misery?

On the other hand, the countries on which this study has focused did not share the pattern of continual impoverishment of Central Europe from the 15th to the mid-19th century, from the emergence of capitalism until early industrialization, as described by Wilhelm Abel:

The income of the masses declined, [their] food changed and became poorer, agricultural production was geared toward products capable of extracting the greatest number of calories from the soil. Land became scarce, and tenancy fees [. . .] were rising.⁷⁰

Of course, this too was not a linear process. Still, instead of such a more or less steady downward trend in food consumption, scholars studying important countries in Asia, for example, have noted ups and downs in the longer run, though at a generally low level.⁷¹ This is in line with my findings, including some ups in recent decades, though not everywhere. What socioeconomic developments will ensue is uncertain.

70 Abel 1974, p. 397; see also Buszello 2019.

71 See Van der Eng 2000; Booth 1998; Blyn 1966.

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