

**PhD**

**Food Insecurity: The prospects for Food  
Sovereignty in contemporary East Africa.**

**Michelle Springfield**

Royal Holloway University of London  
Department of Politics and International Relations

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that all of the work presented in this thesis is my own

.....

Michelle Mary Catherine Springfield

*This work is dedicated to the memory of my father Aidan McCormack who showed me the way*

GLOSSARY .....	5
ABSTRACT .....	7
INTRODUCTION .....	8
Defining the terms. ....	11
Key Questions and Methods. ....	17
Sources.....	18
Structure of thesis .....	22
Findings of thesis.....	25
CHAPTER 1 – Identifying the Problem: Definitions, Data and Prevalence.....	28
1. The problem.....	28
How many are food insecure?.....	31
2. The effects .....	34
How the famine vulnerable are counted.....	36
Mal-nutrition/undernutrition .....	40
3. Where does food insecurity occur most? .....	42
Categories of inequality .....	44
4 Kenya and Ethiopia as examples of food insecure countries. ....	47
Concluding comments .....	54
CHAPTER 2 - The Global Food System .....	56
1. Defining the Global Food System.....	57
Some theories of the global food system.....	60
2. The origins of the global food system.....	64
3. The relationship between the global food system and food insecurity.....	66
The GFS and exports from Africa. ....	73
4. Changes in export crop agriculture in Kenya.....	77
Export crops in Ethiopia. ....	79
Concluding Comments.....	80
CHAPTER 3 – Food Sovereignty-The Idea .....	82
1. Definition.....	84
2. Origins of Food Sovereignty as a social and political movement. ....	92
The driving forces .....	93
Evolutionary phases of Food Sovereignty.....	94
The politics of representation as the rationale for Food Sovereignty.....	99
3. The scope for institutional reform (the levers).....	100
Land reform from above.....	101
The empirical case for land reform from below .....	102
Food Sovereignty in an African context through trade reforms. ....	105
Concluding comments .....	110
CHAPTER 4 – Liberal Economic Theories and Structural Adjustment.....	112
1. Micro-economic perspectives .....	114
Early Economic Theories .....	114
The entitlement approach .....	117
Limits of the entitlement approach.....	122
Economic benefits of food insecurity.....	125
2. Macro-economic theories .....	126
Economic development and the Millennium Development Goals .....	130
Top-down approach .....	132
3. Structural adjustment and increased vulnerability .....	137
Kenya as an example.....	140
Structural adjustment in Ethiopia.....	142
Concluding comments .....	144
CHAPTER 5 – From Food Aid towards Food Sovereignty .....	146
1. Defining food aid.....	147
Types of food aid .....	148
Food aid from developing countries.....	151
The key players in food aid .....	152
2. A brief history of food aid .....	155
Who benefits? Some motivations behind food aid.....	158
Political self-interest (or the Kissinger doctrine).....	160

The changing food aid regime.....	164
3. How food aid increases vulnerability to famine.....	165
The move from dependency to independence.....	171
From disincentives to incentives.....	174
4. From food aid to Food Sovereignty.....	176
Concluding comments.....	180
CHAPTER 6 – The Political Context of Food Insecurity.....	182
1. Democratic protection from famine.....	184
Development of the ideal: the State as provider.....	187
The malevolent State.....	190
The modern African context: rolling back the state.....	192
Civil society.....	199
2. The role of government in Kenya.....	200
Regional disparities.....	205
Government attempts to reverse the impact of SA.....	208
3. The role of government in Ethiopia.....	209
Conflict.....	210
Concluding comments.....	216
CHAPTER 7 – Food Sovereignty in Kenya and Ethiopia: The Issue of Land.....	218
1. Land tenure.....	219
The Ethiopian example.....	221
The Kenyan example.....	224
The Malawi model.....	228
2. Land grabs.....	231
3. Land use: The food versus fuel debate.....	241
Concluding comments.....	246
CONCLUSION OF THESIS.....	248
Summary of the thesis.....	248
The key findings.....	254
Areas for further research.....	257
APPENDICES.....	260
Appendix 1.....	260
Appendix 2.....	261
Appendix 3.....	262
Appendix 4.....	263
Appendix 5.....	264
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	265
Websites and Online Sources.....	289

## GLOSSARY

AAH	Action Against Hunger
ADM	Archer-Daniels Midland
AFRODAD	African Forum and Network on Debt and Development
ARAP	Accelerated Rain-fed Arable Production
BWI	Bretton Woods Institutions
CARE	Christian Action Research and Education
CFA	Comprehensive Framework for Action
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CSO	Civil Society Organisation.
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund (UN)
DFID	Department for International Development
DRP	Drought Relief Programme
EU	European Union
FAC	Food Aid Convention
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations
FEWS NET	Famine Early warning Systems Network
FIAS	Foreign Investment Advisory service
FSA	Farm Service Agency
FTN	Food Trade and Nutrition Coalition
GCC	Global Commodity Chains
GFS	Global Food System
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs
GNP	Gross National Product
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries.
IASSTD	The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology
IATP	Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFR	International Food Regime Theory
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISFP	Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (FAO)
IPC	International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty.
LBW	Low Birth Weight
MDG	Millennium Development Goals

MNC	Multi-National Corporations
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PCFP	Per capita Food production
PL480	Public Law 480
PVO	Private Voluntary Organisation (US)
REST	Response Emergency Stress Team
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SA	Structural Adjustment
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SOFI	State of Food Insecurity In the World
SPFS	Special Programme for Food Security
TNC	Trans-National Corporations
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
TRIPS	Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights
UDHR	United Nations Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNITA	The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WST	World Systems Theory
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

## **ABSTRACT**

### ***Food Insecurity: The prospects for Food Sovereignty in contemporary East Africa.***

This thesis examines the enduring problem of food insecurity in Africa, with a particular focus on Ethiopia and Kenya. It considers food insecurity both in acute terms - the occurrence of famine and chronic terms - famine vulnerability. More specifically it provides a new interpretation of the causes of food insecurity in East Africa, with respect to some of the causal factors and viable solutions. It does so by locating the occurrence of famine, and countries vulnerability to it, in the context of the global food system. The global food system is, as yet, an under-examined factor in contemporary famine analysis, particularly in East Africa and this thesis aims to explore it more comprehensively than hitherto. This thesis also makes a substantive contribution to understanding the concept of Food Sovereignty in an African context. Food Sovereignty deserves to be a more significant part of contemporary narratives that at present dominate the political and social dilemmas about food insecurity. However there are serious obstacles such as political relationships, land tenure and the industrial system of agriculture that hinder the development of Food Sovereignty as a viable option. Natural disasters, demographic pressures and ill conceived economic policies are an ongoing part of the story but in essence food insecurity is ultimately political. This thesis concludes that Food Sovereignty should be explored as a political solution to a political problem.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the enduring problem of food insecurity in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in the East African countries of Ethiopia and Kenya. It considers food insecurity both in acute terms i.e. the occurrence of famine and chronic terms i.e. famine vulnerability. More specifically it provides a new interpretation of food insecurity in East Africa with respect to causal factors and viable solutions. It does so by locating the occurrence of, and vulnerability to, famine in the context of the global food system (GFS). This thesis examines why the GFS has been overlooked as a causal factor in the past and is likely to become a greater factor of food insecurity in the future. This thesis also makes a substantive contribution to understanding the concept of Food Sovereignty in an African context. Food Sovereignty has not been applied seriously to Africa in the past so the time is right to explore the viability of Food Sovereignty as a permanent solution to both acute and chronic food insecurity in the future.

### *Context of thesis*

In terms of regional analysis this thesis concentrates on Africa, not because it is the only continent where food insecurity persists, it clearly is not, but because it is arguably where the persistence of famine and famine vulnerability is most overtly political. In other words political factors are more relevant than economic, geographic, climatic or demographic ones.<sup>1</sup> According to the Global Hunger Index, developed by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), eight of the twelve countries with the highest levels of hunger were in Sub-Saharan Africa (IFPRI 2011). Recent IMF data (2011) shows that nine of the ten poorest countries in the world, measured by GDP, are in Africa. All have weak or failed governments, most have a colonial history and most have experienced conflict.<sup>2</sup> Very little, however, is said about the global food system and Africa's position within it. For this reason, this thesis explores the negative impact of the global food system and the possibilities of Food Sovereignty in an East African context. The global food system refers to the

---

<sup>1</sup> Food insecurity in terms of chronic hunger in South Asia, for example, is attributed to chronic poverty but the region is considered to be largely famine free due to political safeguards. There are countries in Africa, however, where political marginalisation, conflict and ill conceived agricultural policies have resulted in periods of acute hunger i.e. famine.

<sup>2</sup> In descending order the nine countries are: Zimbabwe; Democratic republic of the Congo; Liberia; Burundi; Somalia; Niger; Eritrea; Sierra Leone; Central African Republic.



increasing integration of the world economy with regard to agricultural production and the decreasing capacity of people and governments to have control over it; Food Sovereignty is understood as a collective right to control the food supply.<sup>3</sup>

The apparent ineradicability of famine in parts of East Africa raises many important questions. Africa is a continent endowed with plentiful natural resources and yet parts of this continent continue to suffer adversely and disproportionately from vulnerability to famine. Africa is also situated within a global context of unprecedented plenty, technical know-how and a discourse of fundamental human rights in international law and yet famine, and the threat of it, persist. Furthermore, Africa, in general, and East Africa in particular has been the focus of development projects for decades and attracted billions of dollars in aid. In a UK context the focus on Africa accelerated during the Blair era culminating in a 'Year for Africa' in 2005 during which Tony Blair's commission for Africa was launched (Gallagher 2011, Porteous 2008). Despite this focus, however, political actors and policy makers have failed to eradicate famine vulnerability in any permanent sense. It is in this context that the concept of Food Sovereignty becomes relevant, not least because it has had little influence on African politics and it is important to understand why this should be.

This thesis starts from the premise that famine and famine vulnerability in Africa are complex issues with both national and international causes. This complexity, however, is understood in terms of the political economy of the region. This means that African food insecurity is conceptualised, primarily, with regard to power relationships. This approach is distinct from previous approaches, which have theorised famine at the individual level through notions of 'entitlements' (Sen 1981), or in terms of unsustainable population growth (Brown 1995; Hardin 1977, 1993), or have situated famine solely within the context of conflict (de Waal 1989, 1990, 2006). These relationships are considered at a local and national level in the context of government responsibility to their own people and at an international level in terms of the inequity of power relationships between economically dominant and economically dependant countries. Specifically, this thesis examines the power relationships that dominate the global food system (GFS) and offers a challenge to the political basis and social implications of the modern production and distribution of food. Such a

---

<sup>3</sup> See section below on defining the terms for an elaboration.

challenge demands a serious exploration of alternatives to the free market, and its inherent inequities, as the primary basis of the modern food system. This challenge is made, explicitly, within the context of examining Food Sovereignty as a coordinated reorientation of the global food system.

It is difficult, if not meaningless, to talk about African food insecurity as a whole. The diversity of the food situation across the continent precludes this. However, official organisations, such as the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), state that Sub-Saharan Africa has, in general, become less food secure in recent decades (IFPRI 2006; Oxfam 2005; SOFI 2011).<sup>4</sup> The countries of East Africa examined in this thesis are selected on the basis that there is a demonstrable causal relationship between the development of the GFS and a worsening of their food security over recent decades. In addition the rising incidence of large-scale land acquisition or 'land-grabbing' by foreign governments or agencies is an issue of growing concern with regards to food insecurity in this region.

The importance of political factors in explaining vulnerability to famine has long been recognised. As noted by David Arnold,

Food was one of the principle sinews of power. Its importance was felt at all levels of society, both by those who suffered directly for want of basic sustenance and those whose authority, security and profit were threatened by the indirect consequence of dearth and mass starvation (Arnold 1988: 3).

That food has always been used locally or regionally for political ends is not in question, but it is fair to say that two things are different in the approach of this work. First, while it recognises that the degree of inequality between those who do not have enough to eat and those who do has never been so great (Collier 2007; Pogge 2003), this has yet to be linked more directly to the global food system.<sup>5</sup> This is the primary aim of this work. Second, while there is agreement from across the political spectrum that such gross inequalities could disappear, or at the very least diminish considerably in scope, Food Sovereignty has not been seriously explored as a solution. This thesis

---

<sup>4</sup> The IFPRI 2011 Global Hunger Index does show an improvement in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1990, but, importantly, the data does not take into account the recent food crises in the horn of Africa during 2011.

<sup>5</sup> It should be qualified, of course, that food inequality is partly a function of the over-consumption of the 'food rich' so inequality, per se, may not be reduced simply by increasing food production.

is concerned, therefore, with how to ensure a basic level of nutrition beneath which no one should have to live and this issue will be considered explicitly through the concepts of the global food system (GFS) and Food Sovereignty.

### **Defining the terms.**

To minimise confusion and ambiguity it would be helpful at this stage to define the key terms in this thesis such as food insecurity, famine, famine vulnerability, the GFS and Food Sovereignty.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Food insecurity*

Food insecurity is defined by the FAO as ‘people who live with hunger and fear of starvation’ (SOFI 2003). Food insecurity therefore refers to more than just officially recognised or quantified famine but also to conditions that increase vulnerability to famine. Food insecurity can be thought of as the opposite of food security. Food security is a technical term that has increased in use over recent decades primarily as a result of the growth in international agricultural trade. The concept of food security has changed significantly over time and these changes have been reflected in national and international trade and agricultural policies.<sup>7</sup> In the post-war era so-called ‘developed’ nations pursued what have been referred to as ‘agricultural productivist frameworks’, which prioritised national self-sufficiency, against a background of wartime supply disruption (Lee 2007). But this perception (and pursuit) of food security as food self-sufficiency has been eclipsed with the development of more highly integrated and international food supply chains.<sup>8</sup> In nation states that are home to high levels of under-nutrition and hunger, food security strategies are also being shaped by trade considerations. Food security has been defined in at least 200 ways (Smith, Pointing & Maxwell 1992), which in terms of trying to establish clarity of meaning renders it rather unhelpful.

The term is also frequently differentiated by reference to scale, from the food security of households to regional, national and global food security. Likewise, food insecurity can be differentiated in the same way. The scope of food security is also differentiated. It may involve a pre-occupation with aggregate imports and exports or be implicated

---

<sup>6</sup> For example terms such as ‘famine’, ‘hunger’, ‘starvation’, ‘malnutrition’ and ‘under-nutrition’ are often used interchangeably when they are, in fact, conceptually and analytically different.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 2

in the maintenance of rural livelihoods. Food security, considered at the level of the household, necessarily incorporates a wide-range of factors including demographics, land, production, consumption, reproduction, entitlements, kinship and customs. Thus the household as a unit of analysis and intervention connects food security to a complex network of social activity.

### *Famine*

Famine is a troublesome word and has often been defined in a fairly narrow sense, typically, for example, as ‘severe shortage of food, as through crop failure or overpopulation; acute shortage of anything; violent hunger’ (Collins 2004) or ‘virulent manifestations of intense starvation causing substantial loss of life’ (Kumar 1990: 173). It has been shown, however, that famines have occurred in the *absence* of food shortages (Sen 1981) and indeed loss of life may not be directly attributed to starvation (de Waal 1989). Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) offer a more statistically precise definition of famine, by stating that it occurs in a situation where more than 5 people in 10,000 are dying every day because of lack of food (Whiting 2005). However this perception of famine as a discrete event triggered by food shortages and resulting in mass starvation has been increasingly challenged over the last two decades. Works by Devereux (1993, 2000, 2007); de Waal (1989, 2006); and Sen (1981, 2001), for example, have clearly shown that mass starvation is only one, albeit the most horrendous, outcome of the famine process. Other consequences of famine include economic destitution, fertility decline, distress or involuntary migration, breakdown of communities and exposure to new diseases. In other words, it may not be starvation per se that kills during famines but other associated consequences. In this thesis the presence of any or all of these factors increase, what will be referred to as, vulnerability to famine. This thesis rejects the general depiction of famine, in modern Western discourse, as a short-term disaster or ‘something simple, huge and apocalyptic’ (de Waal 1989: 3). Rather, famine is understood as a process which allows for a distinction between famine and famine mortality. From this perspective famine is understood as a disruption to a way of life, including hunger, destitution and loss of assets. It sometimes, but not always, involves death and this is of major importance in any attempts at preventing its occurrence. In de Waal’s analytical framework there are famines and famines that kill (de Waal 1989). This broader interpretation of famine is most appropriate in this thesis because of the centrality of

the GFS and the way it will be linked, causally, to both acute famine and increased vulnerability to famine in East Africa. At a general level the terms chronic food insecurity and famine vulnerability will be used interchangeably in this thesis although it is important to note the subtle differences between them. For example, chronic food insecurity may be a result of absolute poverty and no other factors, whereas famine vulnerability may result from specific agricultural policies or malevolent government practices. In other words certain groups may be intentionally targeted to create conditions of famine vulnerability, which may lead to acute famine.<sup>9</sup> Equally, it is now well understood that the occurrence of famine, particularly those that adversely affect livestock, can increase vulnerability to famine in following years. This may occur even though rain or crop production has returned to normal, or better than normal, levels.<sup>10</sup>

It is agreed that as long as we continue to view famine as synonymous with starving to death we are unlikely to eradicate it. However, if we conceive famine as ‘an extended economic and political process’ (Keen 1994b: 7) we can at least begin to develop effective preventative measures. Though accepting that there are environmental factors such as drought, land degradation and areas of unsustainable population density, these are not absolute requirements for famine to occur.<sup>11</sup>

Henceforth, the term famine will be used to refer to a social phenomenon in which access to food in a given population falls below a minimum level necessary to provide members of that society with sufficient nutrition for a prolonged period of time. Its occurrence leads to a significant increase in the likelihood of death from starvation or hunger related diseases or other diseases relating directly to the famine process. Thus it is not only those famine events that result directly or immediately in the deaths of thousands or millions that are of concern in this thesis.<sup>12</sup> The relentless, ongoing suffering and disruption to livelihoods and entire communities, caused by chronic food insecurity is of equal concern. This is more than just semantic wrangling because it has been shown that the lack of an agreed definition of ‘famine’ has had serious

---

<sup>9</sup> There is an abundance of literature on this theme, see for example, Duffield 1991; Keen 1994, 2000; de Waal 1989; 2006.

<sup>10</sup> See Jamal Osman. ‘Famine in Somalia.’ Guardian Focus podcast, guardian.co.uk, 18 August 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Somalia and the Sudan, for example, show that fertile regions that are not densely populated may be particularly vulnerable to famine because of the political inequalities between certain groups.

<sup>12</sup> Twentieth century famines in China and the Soviet Union for example, involved mortality rates in the millions whereas most recent famines affect numbers in the thousands. See Chapter 1.

implications for national and international responses in the past. As noted by Howe and Devereux (Devereux (ed) 2007: 28), ‘Operationally, lack of consensus on a definition has contributed to late intervention and inequitable distribution of resources among areas of need’.<sup>13</sup>

In other words defining famine has political significance. This thesis seeks to fill in some of the gaps in famine literature and will argue that the notion of famine is more encompassing than often recognised. The process of famine includes situations when people are unable to take measures that would prevent a famine, defined throughout this thesis as famine vulnerability. For those who are dying from acute or chronic malnutrition, and related diseases, the debate about whether or not there have been sufficient deaths to justify the label of famine is, of course, deeply ambiguous and unhelpful.

### *The Global Food System*

For the purposes of this thesis, the GFS is critically understood in keeping with the International Food Regime Theories (Albritton 2009; Friedmann & McMichael 1989; George 1991, 1996; Gibbon 2007, Patel 2007).<sup>14</sup> The work of Karl Marx has provided the theoretical base for much of the literature on the GFS and inspired many of the key critical writers on this subject. It can be noted, however, that one need not be a Marxist to agree with the key normative assumptions of his political and economic theory and the way it relates to contemporary food insecurity.<sup>15</sup> The GFS refers to the increasing integration of the world economy with regard to agricultural production and the decreasing capacity of national governments, or their people, to pursue policies that do not best serve the interests of international capital. For example, in East Africa, there has been considerable transfer of land ownership and growth of corporate and foreign direct investment in agriculture for export.<sup>16</sup> Most countries around the globe are closely linked through economic, political, technological and cultural relationships, and increasingly, the environment. Actions taken in one country have measurable repercussions for others. In terms of avoidable morbidity and mortality this interconnection is perhaps nowhere more fundamentally relevant than in the

---

<sup>13</sup> The authors cite the disproportionate amount of aid to Bosnia 1992-1995 and Kosovo 1998 as an illustration of this claim (2007: 29).

<sup>14</sup> See Chapter 2 on the GFS.

<sup>15</sup> See Burns (1981) for an accessible reading of Marx’s analysis of capitalism.

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 7.

provision of food. Interactions between national food supplies, in different parts of the world, are taking place with increasing frequency but with more intense and often unintended consequences. Policies aimed at boosting economies through increased market integration in Africa, particularly in agriculture, have left many countries such as Kenya more vulnerable to food insecurity than ever before. Land deal proposals in Ethiopia, where millions of people remain dependent on food aid offer another tangible example (Horne 2011).<sup>17</sup>

From a radical perspective the significance of the global food system lies in its contribution to the extension of capitalist relations within the world economy.<sup>18</sup> It does this by moving more and more of the world's population further away from direct production of, and access to, food thus creating ever more inequitable food markets. The commodification of food is crucial to those who view the global food system as further extending the 'capitalist industrialisation project' (Friedmann 1982; George 1991,1996). When something is 'commodified' it becomes the property of only those who can afford to buy it. Whilst this may be acceptable for many goods and services it is extremely problematic in terms of adequate food. This thesis will consider this development specifically with regard to a measurable increase in famine vulnerability in Ethiopia and Kenya. The notion of the global food system is central to the overall argument of this thesis in that the persistence of famine needs to be situated in the international context, since it is, to a very large degree, an outcome of international structures and relationships. There is a fairly new development within the GFS, which has seen some national governments leasing vast tracts of land to foreign governments for the production of food for their respective countries (FIAN 2010). The prospect of increasing foreign investment in agricultural land in East Africa, so called 'land grabbing'<sup>19</sup>, and the effect this will have on some of the world's most food insecure people forms an important part of the debate on the GFS and the concept of Food Sovereignty in this thesis.

### *Food Sovereignty*

Food Sovereignty is understood in this thesis as a radical political concept offering a

---

<sup>17</sup> See Chapters 6 and 7 for a detailed discussion on these two countries.

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter 2

<sup>19</sup> The most common definition of 'land grabbing' refers to large-scale land acquisition, be it purchase or lease, for agricultural production by foreign investors. This phenomenon will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 7.

political solution to a political problem. It is an extension of the right to food in that it demands democratic autonomy for people with respect to food, in a way that the right to food does not. Third parties could guarantee the right to food, for example, without any input or control by those whose food needs are not being met. This can, and indeed has, resulted in total dependency on food aid for some food vulnerable communities.<sup>20</sup> Food Sovereignty, by contrast, involves the right to consume and produce food and a range of other sub-rights, including land rights, so it is a much more complex and ambitious idea than the simple right to food. It can be conceived of as a ‘collective’ right to Food Sovereignty as opposed to an ‘individual’ right to food.<sup>21</sup> La Via Campesina (translated literally as ‘the peasant way’) is an international alliance of peasant organisations, family farmers and workers, indigenous people, landless peasants and rural women and youth. This movement has developed an alternative proposal for restructuring food production and consumption at the local, national and global level, and has become the main global organisation promoting the framework of Food Sovereignty.<sup>22</sup> Unlike the top down approach, associated with the failed attempts of international institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, the concept of Food Sovereignty proposes that every country and people have the right to establish their own policies with regard to their food and agriculture system, providing these policies do not harm developing countries.<sup>23</sup> Food Sovereignty is understood throughout this thesis, in accordance with the seven principles developed by La Via Campesina.<sup>24</sup> By rejecting the unsuccessful strategy of a generalised, internationalised response to food insecurity, this thesis argues in favour of local political accountability and the pursuit of Food Sovereignty. Food Sovereignty is a more demanding, and more political concept than the traditional concepts of the right to food or food security, which have often reduced the issue of famine to a social welfare problem. It is more powerful because it includes rights relating to both the production and consumption of food, gender equality, and crucially, the emphasis on

---

<sup>20</sup> Ethiopia, for example, is the largest recipient of the World Bank’s global food crises response programme (GFRP). Last year 12 million Ethiopians out of a population just under 90 million are estimated to have received food aid (Oakland Institute 2010).

<sup>21</sup> Arguably the ‘collective’ nature of Food Sovereignty makes it more problematic, to define and maintain, than an ‘individual’ right’ and this can be conceived of as a very real obstacle. See Chapter 7.

<sup>22</sup> [www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org)

<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 3

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix 3 for a summary of the seven key principles of Food Sovereignty.



land-rights. Land tenure has often been overlooked in past approaches to food security, particularly food aid, and is a relevant factor in both episodes of acute famine and chronic hunger. International organisations and agencies clearly have a role to play in the democratisation of local food systems, but it should be one of supporting the right of all to have greater control over access to food and protection of their fundamental right to do so. At present, Food Sovereignty can be understood as a political construct which demands a transition from ‘what is’ to ‘what ought to be’ in the global food system. In considering Food Sovereignty as a political project, and its relevance to East Africa, this thesis explores the sort of politics, and kinds of agencies and alliances that are required to bring about the necessary changes to achieve this transition.

### **Key Questions and Methods.**

Two key questions are central to this thesis. First, in what ways does the global food system, as it is currently constituted, increase food insecurity in parts of Africa? Second, in what ways might reorganising aspects of the global food system reduce vulnerability to famine in East Africa, with Food Sovereignty as a guiding principle? These questions generate a number of lines of enquiry and possible arguments, three of which will preoccupy this thesis:

- A1. The failure to think about vulnerability to famine in Africa as a consequence of the GFS handicaps attempts to reduce that vulnerability.
- A2. Food Sovereignty is an appropriate solution to famine and vulnerability to famine where famine is caused by systemic features of the GFS.
- A3. There are clear obstacles to the adaptation and development of Food Sovereignty in an East African context taking account of differences in economic structure, political culture, land tenure and institutions of government.

In order to answer the central questions asked in this thesis, two things need to be understood and acknowledged in the approach it adopts. First, contemporary famines in East Africa are too complex to be explained by a single factor. Their occurrence in Sudan, Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia, for example, do not share one single root cause. It will be shown that the underlying causes are essentially political rather than simply market failures or environmental factors. Second, there is a clear need to establish a separation between trigger factors, such as drought, over-grazing or over-population,

and vulnerability factors linked to structures and processes such as the GFS, weak or corrupt government, civil conflict and neo-liberal economic policies. It is these vulnerability factors that are of central importance in this discussion both in how they relate to causation but more importantly how they can be reduced by the adoption of Food Sovereignty as a guiding and enshrined principle. Vulnerability can be understood at many different levels with regard to famine; it maybe political, economic, governmental, geographical, social, gendered and so forth, further emphasising the complexity of the topic and the need for clarity in approach. In more simplistic terms the debate is still often polarised between viewing famine as an ‘Act of God’, i.e. triggered by a natural event or alternatively an ‘Act of Man’, i.e. the tragic consequences of human activities. For example, virtually all media coverage of the current (2011) East African food crises emphasises drought over and above any other causal factor. This thesis, however, is more interested in ‘Acts of Man’ and places famine on a continuum along with poverty and other political and social deprivations. The importance of this distinction, of course, is that from this perspective famine is perceived as preventable through political and economic intervention. A common thread throughout all the chapters in this thesis is that that the main causes of food insecurity fall into two groups: those that are more related to national policymaking and those more related to rules and policymaking at the international level. This distinction is not always easy to make since, as will be demonstrated, so much of national policy making is now heavily influenced by international framework conditions. However the differentiation is a useful methodological tool to facilitate a more precise understanding of the issues particularly in terms of establishing the relevant responsibility of different actors.

### *Sources*

This thesis relies primarily on secondary sources and work published over several decades by many academics in the field.<sup>25</sup> Particular analysts from competing and contrasting positions have informed and helped develop the perspective presented in this work. Works by Friedmann & McMichael (1989), Gibbon (2007), McMichael

---

<sup>25</sup> In the pages that follow, my intellectual debt to Alex de Waal (1989, 2000, 2006), Susan George (1991, 1994, 1996), Amartya Sen (1981, 2000), Jeffrey Sachs (2005), William Easterly (2006), Joseph Stiglitz (2006), Paul Collier (2007), and Thandika Mkandawire (1998) amongst many others, will become apparent.

(2008, 2009) and Patel (2009) have helped develop the framework of analysis of the global food system. The understanding of the framework and development of the Food Sovereignty model, expressed here, owes much to the work of Windfuhr and Jonsén (2005), Rosset (2006, 2009, et al 2011) and FIAN-International. An abundance of research conducted by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) over the last two decades, has also greatly informed this thesis. This includes research on early famine theories and work on the ‘new variant famines’. The evolution of social ‘safety nets’ to one of ‘social protection’ by Steven Devereux and colleagues has been especially informative (Devereux 1993, 2000, 2007); Devereux (ed) 2007; Devereux et al 2006; Devereux & White 2010). Although none of these authors engage explicitly with the concept of Food Sovereignty their work has been instrumental in the way the importance and potential of this concept has been developed and advocated by the author of this thesis.

Much of the current data are drawn from research published by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), which is the principal organisation responsible for calculating figures on global nutrition and hunger. It is, in theory, a neutral forum where all nations meet as equals to negotiate agreements and debate policy. There has been public criticism of the FAO for at least thirty years especially from those opposed to its perceived ‘neo-liberal’ agenda of promoting Western style intensive farming and the export of cash crops. Indeed many NGOs have urged the FAO to do more to protect the ‘right to food’ of the poor rather than protecting the profits and intellectual property rights of companies involved in agribusiness.<sup>26</sup> Its statistical division (FAOSTAT) produces an online, multilingual database with records from more than 210 countries, covering statistics on areas including agriculture, nutrition, food aid, land use and populations. In addition, The State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) published annually by the FAO is a report on the progress and setbacks in efforts to reach the goals, set by the World Food Summit (WFS) in 1996, to halve the number of chronically hungry people in the world by the year 2015. The most current version available at the time of writing is SOFI 2011, which in addition to the earlier SOFI reports, is quoted throughout this

---

<sup>26</sup> This is a key criticism of those involved in the Food Sovereignty movement and is enshrined within the seven principles advanced by La Via Campesina. See Appendix 3.

work.

The World Food Programme (WFP), the world's largest humanitarian agency, is another important source of data on famine and food insecurity. The official position of the WFP is to strive to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, but its ultimate goal is to eliminate the need for food aid itself. The role of food aid both within the current GFS and within the concept of Food Sovereignty is highly controversial and will be explored in due course.<sup>27</sup> Data from official governmental agencies such as the Department for International Development (DFID) in the UK and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the US are also widely referred to. A considerable amount of research undertaken by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has been used in this thesis. The IFPRI is one of fifteen food and environmental organisations supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). There are two aspects of the IFPRI emphasis that are particularly pertinent to this thesis. First, the focus is on identifying and analysing alternative international, national and local policies for improving food security in low-income countries and contributing to the strengthening of people and institutions within these countries. Second, it is committed to providing international food policy as a global public good thus providing knowledge relevant to decision makers both inside and outside the countries where research is undertaken. Both these aspects fit very well within a framework of Food Sovereignty.

Other useful sources of data are the many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) active in the field, such as the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED); UK Food Group which includes Action Aid, Oxfam and Save the Children Fund (STC); Action against Hunger (AAH); War on Want; and Médecins sans Frontières (MSF). Whilst the UN and its various agencies provide reliable figures for multi- and bi-lateral donations, and programmes spending on food issues, NGOs tend to provide more localised and specific data and knowledge. FIAN (FoodFirst Information and Action Network), for example, has provided much of the country specific data used in this work. FIAN is an international human rights organisation that has advocated for the realisation of the right to food for more than 20 years. FIAN follows a case based human rights approach by documenting and

---

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter 5.

analysing concrete violations of the right to food. Since its foundation, FIAN has documented more than 400 individual cases of violations.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, in terms of the global picture of food, the international agencies are often the most revealing, but for individual famines and famine vulnerabilities it is very often the NGOs and their field workers on the ground that are able to provide the most accurate and unbiased accounts. In terms of recent publications on Food Sovereignty and the growing phenomenon of 'land-grabs' this thesis has greatly benefited from the research and analysis generated by the Oakland Institute (OI). The Oakland Institute is a research and educational institute whose mission is to bring dynamic new voices into policy debates to promote public participation and fair debate on critical economic and social policy issues.<sup>29</sup>

For the purpose of measuring the level of democracy experienced in the famine prone countries discussed, this thesis has used the 'Freedom in the World Survey' 2006, 2009 and 2011 published by Freedom House<sup>30</sup> and data from the Polity IV research project.<sup>31</sup> The 'Freedom in the World Survey' is an annual evaluation of the freedom of individuals around the world; the 2011 version consists of numerical ratings for 194 states and 14 select territories. The survey measures individual freedoms according to two key categories, political rights and civil liberties which between them encapsulate what are considered the fundamental rights and freedoms laid down by the 1948 UDHR. The survey does not rate government performance as such, but rather the demonstrable rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals. Importantly, the survey recognises that freedoms can be affected by more than just state action, and so includes the effects of insurgents or other armed groups, which is very often an important factor in terms of food security.<sup>32</sup> Thus the survey ratings are able to reflect, to a high degree, the interplay of a variety of actors including both governmental and non-governmental. This depth of analysis is especially important with regard to the close relationship between famine and government accountability at both a national

---

<sup>28</sup> For more information see [www.fian.org](http://www.fian.org)

<sup>29</sup> For more information see [www.oaklandinstitute.org](http://www.oaklandinstitute.org)

<sup>30</sup> For full report see <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

<sup>31</sup> The Polity Project has evolved since the 1970s and has become a widely used source of cross-national, longitudinal data on the authority characteristics of modern polities. It is most widely used for its assessments of the degree of democracy and autocracy in the political structures of nation states. The current data releases in the public domain cover the time period 1800-2002.

<sup>32</sup> The current food crisis in Somalia (August 2011) for example is compounded by civil conflict. See [www.unnews.org](http://www.unnews.org) Accessed 05/08/11

and an international level.

Finally and perhaps most importantly in terms of originality, this work has been informed by many personal testaments from rural farmers and food activists living in the Third World.<sup>33</sup> Throughout 2010/2011 numerous workshops, seminars and meetings have been held in the UK to promote and develop the Food Sovereignty framework. These have provided opportunities to share with, and build on, the experiences and experiments of those most adversely affected by the current global food system. The author of this thesis has endeavoured to include some research that demonstrates the complementarity and uniqueness of the different evaluation criteria and indicators used by both farmers in the field and scientists in the laboratory.

### *Structure of thesis*

This thesis is divided into seven substantive chapters, which address the central research questions. These include identifying the problem and understanding the causes of recent African famine; establishing responsibility for the occurrence of and failure to prevent famine; and investigating the possibilities of Food Sovereignty as a long-term political solution to food insecurity. The logic of the argument developed in this work is that Food Sovereignty would, to a great extent, eliminate many of the causal factors that increase vulnerability to famine and reduce the failures to prevent famine, which have existed in the past.

Chapter 1 outlines the ongoing problem of famine and famine vulnerability in general. It explains the significance of famine definitions, and how these relate to appropriate responses. This chapter also addresses some methodological issues such as the problematic use of many of the terms to describe regional inequalities. These range from 'first', 'second' and 'third' worlds to 'developed' 'developing' and 'underdeveloped' countries. These terms are deeply contested and many writers in the field now refer to the global 'North' and 'South' to illustrate global disparities. This chapter also aims to clarify the differences between episodes of acute famine and life-long food insecurity. Although both concepts represent aspects of food insecurity there are different conceptual frameworks of analyses and different indicators. This chapter ends with a brief section on the countries of Ethiopia and Kenya and explains why they were chosen as suitable countries of comparison.

---

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 1 for a defence of the terms used to categorise regional global inequalities in this work.

The following two chapters introduce the two key components that are central to the originality of the argument developed throughout this thesis, the global food system and the concept of Food Sovereignty. Chapter 2 explains the global food system and how and why it evolved. It demonstrates that the global food system has increased vulnerability to both acute famine and vulnerability to famine in parts of Africa, but has been neglected in theorising famine in the past. The countries of Ethiopia and Kenya provide evidence to substantiate this claim. Chapter 3 introduces Food Sovereignty as a political project and examines its origins as a ‘new social movement’. It is an evolving concept and one that calls for placing greater emphasis on local initiatives that empower those vulnerable to famine. It is illustrative of a civil society response to food insecurity and though its origins are in Latin America its potential is gaining global recognition. Food Sovereignty as a political concept and the potential for its application in an East African context will be revisited in Chapter 7 of the thesis.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus, specifically, on causal aspects of food insecurity in an East African context. Demographic theory, in terms of ‘overpopulation’ or ‘too many mouths to feed’, was routinely offered as an explanation for both acute famine and chronic food insecurity in the past but it is not considered in depth in this thesis.<sup>34</sup> Few, if any, academics seriously consider over-population as the major cause of famine in a current context. Though there may be rural areas that have become unable to sustain local populations the root causes are inevitability due to political and/or economic policies. The theories of causation that are discussed in this thesis are selected because they fit more closely with an analysis of the political determinants of famine.

Chapter 4 examines liberal economic approaches to famine analysis. This is an interesting and challenging perspective inasmuch as free market economics have been perceived as both the cause of and the solution to, both chronic food insecurity and acute famine. The first section of the chapter looks at micro economic famine analysis, with particular attention paid to the contribution of Amartya Sen. This first section also acknowledges and brings up to date the literature on the economic benefits of famine (Keen 1994a, Devereux 2007). Successful famine prevention policies need to consider that the occurrence of famine creates winners as well as

---

<sup>34</sup> See for example, Brown 1996,2001,2003; Malthus 1993.

losers. Part 2 of this chapter moves on to a discussion on macro-economic theory and how this relates to issues of famine vulnerability as understood within an economic development framework. The last section of the chapter examines the negative impact of structural adjustment programmes (SA) and the role of International Financial Institutions in their implementation in Kenya and Ethiopia. This section considers how the economic principles of neo-liberalism can not only reduce democracy, especially the criteria of accountability (Pogge 2003; Wallerstein 1993), but also undermine it (Chandler 2005; Easterly 2006).

Chapter 5 is a critical assessment of the role played by aid and the politics of food aid as a response to food insecurity. This chapter continues the political debate on food insecurity in an external context. It does so by considering how the 'internationalisation of welfare', particularly in terms of food provision, has further reduced national governments' responsibility and accountability to their people. It makes explicit the link between the evolution of food aid as a form of compensation for liberal-economic reforms and the inequalities that arise from conditionalities attached to the adoption of free market principles. This chapter clarifies the distinction between the disadvantages of current aid policies and the possibilities for a reformed and more effective food aid regime. An over-reliance on aid in the past may well help explain why the GFS has been overlooked as a causal factor of famine vulnerability. It will be shown that the problem of permanent food deficits resulting in the permanence of food aid to famine prone countries is a by-product of the current global food system. The current food crisis in East Africa (2011) demonstrates only too clearly the inherent weaknesses and inequities of such a system.

Chapter 6 examines the more radical political perspective, which emphasises the relationship between famine and power in both a national and international context. The central theme of this chapter is that African states that are not responsive to their peoples bear some of the responsibility for food insecurity. The role of the State is considered in a past and present context, with particular attention paid to the role of the Kenyan and Ethiopian governments. The role of the Kenyan government is considered, primarily, in a post-structural adjustment context and the reduction of democratic control over food policy. Conversely, the Ethiopian government is examined through its use of food as a political weapon. This chapter includes the more recent approaches to famines, often referred to as 'complex emergencies', which



link war and famine as a result of purposeful starvation (de Waal 2006; Duffield 2001; Keen 1994a). So although famine, as a result of conflict, will obviously have demographic, economic and political components, it is essentially perceived as having a function in war rather than simply being a result of other, more obvious factors. Although this framework of analysis is particularly useful in understanding certain famines,<sup>35</sup> its weakness lies in the fact that it cannot explain recent African famines that have occurred in peacetime, such as in Malawi for example (Devereux (ed) 2007). It does however offer an opportunity to examine the mismanagement, and therefore accountability, of particular African governments to their populations. The Ethiopian famines during the 1980's provide a relevant example for this angle of enquiry.

What these chapters on causation make clear is that famines are usually the result of very concrete social, political and economic factors with a national and an international dimension. The most obvious implication, therefore, is that these are all factors that can be identified and minimised and a framework of Food Sovereignty could act as a guiding principle.

Chapter 7 focuses on Food Sovereignty as a political project of growing importance and relevance through the issue of land. Agrarian reform, which is the second of the seven principles of Food Sovereignty, is a key factor. Although the hypothesis is that Food Sovereignty would have a beneficial effect across the whole continent of Africa, the focus is on how Food Sovereignty would reduce both famine and vulnerability to famine in parts of Ethiopia and Kenya. The phenomenon of 'land grabbing', in both its past and present forms, is highly relevant to the analysis in this chapter. The concept of Food Sovereignty demands the development of mechanisms for holding to account those institutions or individuals who are responsible for the continuation of food insecurity and famine vulnerability. This includes national governments, international finance institutions, powerful corporations and private foreign investors. This chapter explores the ways that those actors can be considered responsible by concentrating on the issues of land tenure, land grabs and land use.

### **Findings of thesis**

It is often assumed, if only implicitly, that little can be done to eradicate periodic episodes of famine and famine vulnerability. Indeed it is also presumed that the

---

<sup>35</sup> Famine in the Sudan during the 1980s for example, see de Waal 1989.

problem of vulnerability to famine may get worse in the long run, especially as populations in parts of the Third World continue to increase (Kaplan 2003).<sup>36</sup> It is also clear that the development of bio-fuels is likely to put further pressure on the amount of land available for human food production (Eide 2008; SOFI 2011).<sup>37</sup> Thus tacit pessimism often dominates international responses to the latest hunger crises. Indeed it has been argued, that this perceived inability to remedy chronic food insecurity can itself lead to a fatalistic attitude and this discourages any serious attempt to rectify the miseries that afflict so many lives (Pogge 2003; Sen 2001).

What is evident from current research is that there is still disagreement about what causes vulnerability to famine, and intense disagreement about what needs to be done to correct it. This thesis explains the role and inter-relationships of certain political, economic and environmental factors, but demonstrates that the global food system, as it is currently constituted, is often the principle factor in famine vulnerable countries. Food Sovereignty could offer an effective and long-term solution to those who continue to live with famine and fear of it. Famine is a subject that transcends established units of analysis, and this thesis will demonstrate that analysis from an international level is as important as the national, societal or individual level analyses of the past.

This thesis makes the case for the development of an alternative model of agriculture, both in general and in an African-specific context. Famine is rarely just a result of lack of economic development, lack of democracy, human-rights abuses, ill-conceived economic policies, corrupt African governments or over-reliance on international aid. It is usually a combination of some or all of these things in a modern context. Contemporary famines and famine vulnerability are a complex result of historical legacy, geographical location, distribution of power and political ideology. The complexity of modern food insecurity suggests that it is time to reframe models of famine analysis as a global issue requiring a variety of global solutions. This thesis concludes that, despite some very real obstacles, a serious and concerted effort to reshape the global food system, with Food Sovereignty as a guiding principle will go a long way towards reducing the occurrence of famine, specifically in an East African

---

<sup>36</sup> Also see SOFI 2009 at <http://www.fao.org/>

<sup>37</sup> Also see [www.ifpri.org](http://www.ifpri.org) for recent research papers on biofuels and food security issues.

context. The following chapters are an exploration of some of the past, present and future attempts to address this problem.

## **CHAPTER 1 – IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM: DEFINITIONS, DATA AND PREVALENCE.**

‘Starvation is no more ‘natural’ than suffocation; the former is no more a shortage of food than the latter is a shortage of air’ (Edkins 2007: 52).

This opening chapter introduces the problem of contemporary famine and food insecurity and makes clear from the outset that the ways in which these concepts are defined has political significance. Part 1 begins with emphasising the importance of definitions and conceptual differences in this discussion. What is food insecurity? How is it different to famine? How have famines been conceptualised? How many are affected? Part 2 then considers the consequences of food insecurity, how people are affected and how these effects can be quantified and measured, highlighting the inconsistencies that exist in the way the hungry are counted. The understanding that famines mean more than death through starvation is crucial to the argument developed throughout this thesis. Part 3 considers the prevalence of food insecurity in general, where it occurs most and how those regions are understood and represented in the literature. Part 4 then explains in more detail why the countries of Kenya and Ethiopia have been selected in this thesis as food insecure countries. The four key points of comparison are their populations and ethnic mix, their political context, their food insecurity context and their patterns of landownership.

### **1. The problem**

Many of the terms used in this debate are ambiguous and the way that food insecurity is defined, conceptualised and quantified is often a reflection of the prevailing policy environment. This is particularly relevant in an East African context because, as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, the food situation has changed significantly over recent decades. The relevance lies in the way that conceptualisation helps direct the most suitable responses to particular famines and highlights mistakes that can be made when famine is not fully understood. The importance, for example, of how famine is first defined, either as an event or a process, has been critical to the subsequent analysis and generation of theories (Devereux 1993).

This point is well illustrated in the work of Amrita Rangasami (1985) where it is

demonstrated that famine and starvation are not results of sudden and drastic collapses of purchasing power or food supply. There is a process, which starts some time before a famine that has already rendered some groups more vulnerable than others. This recognition of famine as a process resonates with the way famine is understood in this thesis and affords the political context of food insecurity a greater potency. From this perspective famine is interpreted as a dynamic process that ends in starvation. It is a biological process with a socio-economic dimension and one with three clearly marked phases. The phases correspond with the biological changes and worsening health of the affected community, and socio-economically, by transfer of assets from victim to beneficiary.<sup>38</sup> The socio-economic process is completed with the loss of all the victims' assets including his ability to labour: in other words, all their entitlements (Sen 1981).

By analysing famine as a process, we can identify two related problems in terms of typical responses. Firstly, the state does not often intervene until the third and irreversible phase is reached (i.e. starvation) and secondly, popular perceptions of famine only relate to the terminal phase and not the whole process. As a result, donors continue to fail to intervene until the crisis reaches catastrophic proportions.<sup>39</sup> Consequently theories of famine as a rapid onset have a limited validity, and work by Sen (1981) which is based on the elevation of mortality, has been viewed by many analysts as inadequate (Fine 2010). As stated, this thesis advocates a broader understanding of famine, more generally referred to throughout this work as food insecurity. It is argued that famines, certainly in the past, have been defined too partially and that starvation can and does occur, even during 'normal times' (Rangasami 1985). This broader understanding will be justified by demonstrating the central role of the global food system in contemporary food insecurity<sup>40</sup> and by exploring the potential for an alternative agricultural framework of Food Sovereignty.<sup>41</sup>

#### *Famine typology.*

Generally speaking, literature in the field differentiates between four basic types of

---

<sup>38</sup> An economic aspect of famine closely associated with the work of Keen (1994a)

<sup>39</sup> The current situation in East Africa (2011), particularly in Somalia illustrates this point.

<sup>40</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 3.

famine. These famines typologies have different key causal elements essentially affecting different groups of people. Borrowing from de Waal (2000) famines have tended to be categorised as 1. Pastoral; 2. Agrarian / Smallholder; 3. Class based / Occupational; 4. Wartime.

The first type, pastoral, mainly affects herders, can be relatively short term and caused by drought that depletes pasture and availability of water. The longer-term cause is permanent disintegration of land and severe restriction on nomadic lifestyles as has occurred in Northern Kenya, Somalia and Southern Ethiopia in recent decades. In this situation coping strategies are as important as the distribution of aid; for example, state assistance in guaranteeing price of livestock and supply of credit or a neighbouring country's willingness to allow pastoralists to graze animals within their borders.

Type two, agrarian, has frequently been described as the 'paradigmatic African famine' (de Waal 2000: 8). These are often drought related but equally the result of land expulsion and exploitation. Though initially localised, they can result in distress migration (or forced migration, as opposed to voluntary economic migration), which renders newly inhabited areas unable to cope through a kind of domino effect that may have a slow onset. Again, as will be discussed in later chapters, food aid is not the only suitable response; labour-based projects are also important and land preservation policies and political reforms even more so. The countries of Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan offer recent examples of this type of famine

The third type, class or occupational based famines may be considered the paradigmatic Asian famine. These rapid onset famines often affect whole classes of people; farm labourers, fishermen or artisans, for example, are rendered destitute due to a collapse in demand for their labour. In these situations local coping strategies are less suitable and state intervention is needed such as grain price controls and employment guarantee schemes. The Irish famines of the 1840's fit within this famine framework, as they affected those dependent on a single crop, i.e. the potato (O'Grada 1999) and so would the 1943 Bengal famine, which mainly affected labourers in rural districts (Sen 1981). It is worth noting that State intervention, in terms of employment guarantee systems, is an ongoing feature of India's anti-famine policies. The Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme (MEGS), for example, has been operational since the 1960s and it institutionalises the right to food by guaranteeing

employment to whoever needs it, when they need it (Dreze & Sen 1990).

The fourth and last category of famine, according to this typology, is that caused by war, which can result in rapid catastrophic collapse as happened in Rwanda in the 1990s or may take years to develop such as in Ethiopia, Eritrea or Southern Sudan. Belligerents may prevent all relief strategies and victims may be highly visible or purposely kept hidden. The Ethiopian famines in the 1980's are considered a classic example of this type of famine.

According to de Waal (2006), and substantiated by the FAO findings for SOFI 2004, virtually all modern day famines, are caused, at least in part, by conflict. Indeed in 2004 the top six 'hunger hotspots' in Africa were identified as 'war-torn' (SOFI 2004) and Devereux placed conflict as a causal factor in 21 out of 32 of the major famines during the twentieth century (Devereux 2000: 6). However, more recent research which has identified 'new variant famines', challenges this assertion (Devereux (ed) 2007). The food crises in Malawi in 2001, for example, and the current situation in parts of Kenya (2011) have arisen in the absence of conflict but the increased vulnerability can be located within a political and economic context in peacetime. Thus although the causal role of conflict is acknowledged,<sup>42</sup> the departure for this thesis is the focus on the functioning of the global food system as a causal factor in contemporary famine and food insecurity. It is interesting to note that the global food system does not feature at all in the standard famine typology mentioned above. In fact the international context of famine is completely overlooked, except with regards to the role of conflict. The global food system is, as yet, an under examined factor in contemporary famine analysis, particularly in East Africa and this thesis aims to fill in some of the gaps.

#### *How many are food insecure?*

In order to understand the depth of the problem and measure the success of policies aimed at relieving it, we can look at numerous data sets collected over recent decades.<sup>43</sup> It was estimated that there were 852 million undernourished people in the period 2000-2002 (SOFI 2004). Of these, 815 million were in developing countries,

---

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter 6.

<sup>43</sup> See Appendix 1 and 2.

28 million in so-called ‘countries in transition’<sup>44</sup> and 9 million in the industrialised countries.<sup>45</sup> The number of undernourished people in developing countries decreased by only 9 million in the 10 years that followed the World Food Summit baseline period of 1990-1992. Indeed, during the second half of the decade the number of chronically hungry in these countries actually increased by 4 million per year, in effect cancelling out two thirds of the reduction of 27 million that had been achieved during the previous 5 years.<sup>46</sup> Regular reviews of the status of hunger and malnutrition are provided in United Nations reports presented by the Millennium Project. To recommend how to implement the first MDG on poverty and hunger and, specifically, to halve the number of hungry and malnourished people by 2015, a group of experts was set up by the UN Secretary General.<sup>47</sup> This ‘Hunger Task Force’ developed a typology of the hungry worldwide to help differentiate between types of households and the most vulnerable groups (see Appendix 1). Current estimates are that more than 75% of the world’s poorest people live in rural areas and depend mainly or partly on agriculture for their livelihoods. Half the world’s hungry people are smallholder farmers who live off a limited area of land, without adequate access to productive resources.

According to the latest SOFI statistics available at the time of writing (SOFI 2011) the number of undernourished people in the world remains unacceptably high at close to one billion in 2010 despite an expected decline, which is the first in 15 years. This decline is largely attributable to a more favourable economic environment in 2010, particularly in some developing countries, and the fall in both international and domestic food prices since the peak in 2008. The FAO estimates that a total of 925 million people are undernourished in 2010 compared with 1.023 billion in 2009.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> This includes countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Baltic States and other eastern European countries.

<sup>45</sup> Defined by the FAO as the status of persons, whose food intake regularly provides less than their minimum energy requirements. The average minimum energy requirement per person is about 1800 kcal per day. The exact requirement is determined by a person’s age, body size, activity level and physiological conditions such as illness, infection, pregnancy and lactation. See [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

<sup>46</sup> This reversal in trends is mainly attributed to changes in China and India with both making significant progress in the early 1990s but progress in China slowed down and in India, reversed, during the second part of the decade. These changes however masked improvements in other parts of the developing world such as Latin America and the Caribbean.

<sup>47</sup> This first report was published in New York in April 2003. See: [http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi\\_goals.asp](http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp)

<sup>48</sup> See Appendix 2.



Most of the decrease was in Asia, with 80 million fewer hungry, but progress was also made in Sub-Saharan Africa, where it is estimated that 12 million fewer people are going hungry. However, the number of hungry people is higher in 2010 than before the food and economic crises of 2008–09.<sup>49</sup> The FAO figure of 925 million means one in seven people do not get enough food to be healthy and lead an active life. Hunger and malnutrition are the number one risk to health worldwide — greater than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined.<sup>50</sup>

Research for the World Development Report (WDR 2008) shows that calories available for consumption in the developing economies have increased, in general, with consumers having greater quantities of food and greater diversity of products due to both trade and domestic food production. What is obvious, however, is that these gains are largely due to improvements in Asia, especially China and India, and to a lesser degree Latin America; Sub-Saharan Africa has largely deteriorated over the same period (WDR 2008). In view of the fact that the above gains have been attributed to trade and domestic production, arguably the same factors can explain Sub-Saharan Africa's decline.<sup>51</sup> That is to say that the decline in food security in Africa is because of trade (trade within an inequitable GFS that is of greater benefit to the developed nations) and domestic production (the failure or reduction of agricultural development for local consumption). The food situation in Africa, in general, has deteriorated rapidly since the early 1970s and this observation is highly relevant to the central role afforded to the global food system in this thesis. According to the FAO, only the Côte d'Ivoire and Tanzania experienced a higher per capita food production (PCFP) in 1989-91 than in 1961-1965. Countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria and the Sudan all experienced significant declines.<sup>52</sup> It will be demonstrated that there is a causal link between the global food system and the economic liberal policies that support it and the increase in food insecurity, particularly in East Africa.

To provide an historical perspective we could take for example the following figures from Dando (1980: xii). The worldwide deaths from famine were 2 million in the 17th

---

<sup>49</sup> See <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/en/> Accessed 12/04/11

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.wfp.org/hunger> Accessed 14/04/11

<sup>51</sup> From here on Sub-Saharan Africa may also be referred to simply as 'Africa'.

<sup>52</sup> More recently, however, Ghana has been viewed, somewhat uniquely, as a success story. See Trentmann (2006)

century, 10 million in the 18th century and 25 million in the nineteenth century compared with more than 70 million in the 20th century. Current estimates for the first decade of the 21st century are as many as 8 million deaths from hunger per year (SOFI 2007).<sup>53</sup> This number, however, also refers to ‘hunger related’ deaths, which includes associated disease rather than starvation alone thus emphasising the need to be clear about definitions in discussions of famine. Data concerning famine are no different to any other kind of data and estimates of the level and incidence of famine and food insecurity vary considerably, as does the methodology employed in the collection and analysis of such data.

## 2. The effects

Poor people in general, the world over, have limited diets often lacking access to high quality proteins (eggs, dairy produce, fish) and vitamins essential to human development. Chronically hungry people are physically less developed and mentally less alert than people who have enough to eat. Famine vulnerable populations are often chronically hungry, even in the absence of acute famine, which is the current situation in both Kenya and Ethiopia.<sup>54</sup> Severe chronic malnutrition leads to two common problems associated with impaired growth caused by a lack of both proteins and calories: Marasmus, particularly related to brain development and Kwashiorkor, caused by a deficiency in certain amino acids found in protein.<sup>55</sup> Along with lack of proteins and calories, lack of certain vitamins leads to other health and development complications.<sup>56</sup> The effects of chronic malnutrition, in any community, are myriad particularly with regard to children. Decades ago, research by Field and Levinson demonstrated that early malnutrition not only leads to physical limitations but also affects learning and behaviour. Inadequate nutrition during the period of rapid brain growth in children may be manifested in neurological damage. Perhaps more importantly, malnutrition and its accompanying apathy and listlessness may limit the

---

<sup>53</sup> It is important to ask how these figures compare in terms of the proportion of populations affected; how reliable these figures are; and how much the obvious increase can be attributed to both a rising global population and more accurate data collection and analysis over the last four centuries. Issues such as these are addressed in this chapter in a discussion on the difficulties and challenges of methodology in famine research.

<sup>54</sup> The Ethiopian famines in recent decades will be discussed in Chapter 6.

<sup>55</sup> See Warnock (1993: 2) for a clear and concise account of the role played by various essential nutrients in human growth and development.

<sup>56</sup> Lack of vitamin A can lead to blindness, vitamin D rickets, vitamin C scurvy, lack of niacin causes pellagra, a nervous and digestive disease, vitamin B-1 causes beri beri and lack of iron causes anaemia.

child's social and emotional interaction with his family and environment (Field & Levinson 1974).

Nutritionists have demonstrated that damage caused through malnutrition in the early stages of life is irreversible and have identified the self-perpetuating nature of underdevelopment due to infantile malnutrition. The problem was emphasised in SOFI 2004:

From the moment of birth the scales are tipped against them. Low birth weight (LBW) babies face increased risk of dying in infancy, of stunted physical and cognitive growth during childhood, of reduced working capacity and earnings as adults and, if female of giving birth to LBW babies themselves (SOFI 2004: 8).

According to this report almost one third of all children in the developing world are stunted with heights that fall sufficiently below the normal range for their age to indicate chronic under-nutrition. Stunting, like LBW is linked to an increased susceptibility to illness and premature death. It also leads to a reduction in cognitive ability and educational achievement hence lower productivity and earning potential in adulthood. When stunting occurs within the first five years of life the damage to both physical and cognitive capacity is generally irreversible. The intergenerational impact of LBW and stunting is all too clear as malnourished mothers give birth to LBW babies, repeating the cycle of impoverished health and opportunities. This cycle of wasted human potential is not just a moral issue. The impact on a country's chances of developing and democratising cannot be underestimated. According to many development economists, these are considered key requirements, which increase the possibilities of escaping the traps that keep many countries so poor and so vulnerable to famine (Collier 2007; Easterly 2006; Pogge 2003; Sachs 2005).<sup>57</sup>

Famine analysts have established the close and even synergistic link between malnutrition and infectious diseases. In addition, malnourished people are far more susceptible to invasion by the parasites that proliferate in poorer countries (de Waal 2006). However, whilst governments are often willing to invest heavily in curbing disease with vaccination programmes and so forth, there is less willingness to fund a

---

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter 4.

major preventative programme in the reduction of malnutrition. There are structural reasons for this, both national and international, which will be explored in relation to the global food system in Chapter 2, failed economic policies in Chapter 4 and government failure in Chapter 6.

The key point of emphasising the devastating, multi-faceted effects of undernutrition here provides an opportunity to show in the following chapters how a model of Food Sovereignty would overcome these adverse effects. The Food Sovereignty model stands in marked contrast to the current global food system, which is failing in meeting the food needs of the global population.<sup>58</sup>

#### *How the famine vulnerable are counted*

It has been noted that estimates of famine deaths are usually approximate and often politicised by governments wishing to exaggerate, or more usually, to conceal figures (Devereux 2000:4).<sup>59</sup> Conversely NGOs and aid agencies have been criticised for painting worst-case scenarios in order to mobilise humanitarian efforts (Chandler 2005). Similarly those quantifying the extent of famine often report crude mortality rates, for example 20/1000 among certain populations or sub groups, whereas the media typically report in more sensationalist terms giving aggregate totals, e.g., 1.5 million, which may be headline-grabbing but not necessarily revealing or reliable. Problems in estimating famine mortality arise for a number of bona fide reasons. Firstly in many poor countries comprehensive data on numbers of births and deaths or even national populations may be unreliable or wholly absent. Yet the methodology involved in famine mortality rates necessarily involves 'scaling up' mortality rates of monitored populations (say children in refugee camps) to national populations then comparing these against 'normal mortality rates' (Devereux 2000: 5). Also mortality risk varies a great deal between different age and sex cohorts with children and the elderly typically being at greater risk than other ages, yet the elderly population are often left out of nutritional monitoring systems.

Migration of large numbers of people in relation to food shortages is in itself associated with heightened mortality risk, not only because of loss of access to normal

---

<sup>58</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>59</sup> China's 'Great Leap Forward' famine 1958-62, for example, or the Sudanese governments official stance during the famines in the 1990s.

food supplies but, more importantly, increased exposure to disease and unsafe water.<sup>60</sup> Perversely then, the highest death rates are often in the very places set up to try to relieve suffering, the refugee camps. Overcrowded and unsanitary environments provide a perfect breeding ground for deadly diseases, such as cholera or dysentery. The fact that famine mortality rates are often collated in somewhat artificial conditions gives rise to the view, in some circles, that these figures are inevitably inflated. This of course does not deny the scale and tragedy of the deaths that do occur, but methodologically it is problematic in terms of extrapolating these figures to a population at large. Just one example may be useful in illustrating these problems of measurement in recent times. During the Ethiopian famine of 1983-1985 the United Nations put the death toll at one million. Kumar however claimed that the

‘estimate of one million deaths would constitute an absolute minimum for the entire famine period and the actual figure could turn out to be more than 1 ½ million’ (Kumar 1990: 203).

Conversely Africa Watch dismissed the widely quoted figure of one million as no more than a guess and calculated a significantly lower figure of 590,000 (Africa Watch 1991a: 173).

What this example demonstrates is all the usual pitfalls of using statistical data both in terms of measurement and the methodological biases of those involved in their calculation. In addition, many recent African famines have been integrally associated with civil wars and it is therefore often impossible to separate mortality due to famine from mortality due to conflict. Examples such as Angola 1974-1976, Liberia 1989-1996 and 1997-2003, Tigray 1984-1985, and Sierra Leone 1995-1998 illustrate this point only too well, but perhaps none so much as the ongoing conflict and associated hunger in the Darfur region in Sudan. Given these problems of both overestimation and under-reporting<sup>61</sup> it is prudent to do as Devereux suggests and take published figures as indicative of the magnitude of famine mortality rather than precise statistics (Devereux 2000:7). For this reason the use of statistical data in this thesis are kept to a minimum. The focus, throughout, is on providing a greater understanding of how the

---

<sup>60</sup> Samir Elhawary, ‘Famine in Somalia’. Guardian Focus podcast. guardian.co.uk, 18 August 2011

<sup>61</sup> North Korea, Sudan and Afghanistan are examples of countries whose figures on food insecurity are consistently under reported due to government involvement and pressure.

GFS contributes to famine vulnerability rather than an empirical analysis of the number it affects.

With regard to the famine data analysis provided by Devereux there is, however, one further point worth mentioning. Of the 70 million plus deaths attributed to famine in the twentieth century Devereux made two striking observations, which resonate with the central themes of this thesis. Firstly, with the odd exception, in terms of mortality rates, famine has moved from the Northern hemisphere and Asia to Sub-Saharan Africa. Secondly, there has been a dramatic decline in the actual numbers of deaths, in that famine mortality now involves numbers in the thousands rather than millions.<sup>62</sup> Whether this pattern reflects significant progress in famine prevention policies or simply reflects the absence of any major malevolent government policy as previously witnessed in China and the Soviet Union is a matter of contention. Equally, it can be taken to reflect the differences that arise when only official famine statistics are recorded as opposed to death from chronic hunger. The former will obviously be less than the latter. This was famously articulated by Amartya Sen who stated that there are more hunger-related deaths of children under 5 in India every year than total deaths in the Bengal famine of 1943 (Sen 2010). The importance of recognising the complexity of famine causes and effects is not to be underestimated. Since famine is by definition a 'food crisis' the perceived wisdom has been that those who die during famines die of starvation. Latterly, however, it has been appreciated that there are complex relationships between under-nutrition and infectious diseases. Thus, rather than starvation being given as the cause of death in famines, deaths are often attributed to hunger related diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery or gastro-enteritis. Conversely, it is the case that famines are often accompanied by epidemics that are not necessarily hunger related such as malaria, cholera, typhus or measles. Famine related deaths, therefore, demonstrate not only an increased susceptibility to disease but also an increased exposure to it. An early study of the Irish famine where 193,000 from 'fever', 125,000 from dysentery and 22,000 from dropsy outnumbered the 20,000 deaths directly attributed to starvation illustrates this point very well (Arnold 1988: 22). Similarly, Alex de Waal's (1989) research in the Sudan resulted in his 'health

---

<sup>62</sup> The total mortality in all African famines in the twentieth century was just over 4 million. By comparison the Soviet Union famines in 1921-22 and 1932-34 claimed 18-19 million lives with the Chinese famines in the 1920s, 30s and 50s combined amounting to over 40 million.

crisis' model of famine mortality in contrast to the commonly accepted 'food crisis' model thus adding another layer to famine analysis.

As already stated this thesis adopts an holistic understanding of famine, as a process with associated ills, that goes beyond starvation and denies people more than just the right to food. This conceptualisation is important because the central argument of this thesis is predicated on the idea of a holistic political solution to food insecurity, that of Food Sovereignty.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, this thesis rejects the commonly held assumption that there is a direct route from crop failure to income collapse, to decline in food intake, to starvation and death. It accepts that the pathway is just as likely to be vulnerability as a result of crop failure, or conflict, leading to displacement of people and increased exposure to new diseases, thus resulting in epidemics and death. The fact that there was no correlation between individual wealth and probability of death in the Sudanese refugee camps in 1985 lends weight to this argument. Wealthier people who had enough money to buy food but were displaced into refugee camps were just as susceptible as the destitute to catching a communicable disease and dying (de Waal 1989).

It must be said, at this stage, that although de Waal's findings are accepted at a certain level in this thesis, they are contested on the grounds that they are applicable to certain famines but cannot be generalised. One of the key aims of this thesis is to understand, in what ways, the global food system (GFS) increases vulnerability to famine and thus demonstrates that it cannot be attributed to conflict alone. The centrality of the GFS, as understood here, also suggests that de Waal underestimates the importance of under-nutrition and the symbiotic relationship between malnutrition and morbidity (Young & Jaspers 1995). The most important aspect of adopting a broader understanding of the famine process is the policy implications for governments and development agencies with respect to the most suitable responses. It is clear that a famine triggered by food shortages is just as likely to develop into a health and water crisis as well.

Furthermore the political landscape is of central importance; appropriate action, therefore, may not reside in simply increasing food availability. Availability does not guarantee access and sufficient calories do not assure a healthy and nutritious diet.

---

<sup>63</sup> See Chapter 3.

The distribution of available food is also critical and an issue of central importance to this argument. It will be shown in the following chapter that these complex synergies are in fact related to the position of vulnerable populations in the global food system. This increased vulnerability to famine is structural and, as such, could be reduced or prevented through structural changes.

As mentioned, a vital feature in the underestimation of famine is an over-reliance on starvation as the cause of death. In *World Poverty and Human Rights* Thomas Pogge has a great deal to say about poverty related deaths which he claims amount to a 'full sized crime against humanity' (Pogge 2003: 25). Whilst Pogge's arguments are general and based on the negative rights of the global poor not to be subjected to an economic order which harms them, they are applicable with specific regard to issues of food insecurity. The extent of human suffering and premature deaths on a daily basis due to poverty and hunger related causes are not necessarily well known but only surface when they reach 'famine' proportions. The critical point here is that avoidable starvation (and this thesis will argue that almost all starvation is avoidable) whether it is defined as famine or not deserves greater attention and understanding. Much media attention is given to natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes, so-called 'acts of God', but the ordinary deaths from hunger and preventable diseases seldom make the headlines. The Asian Tsunami in December 2004 or the Tokyo Earthquake in 2011 and the world media attention it attracted illustrate this point quite clearly.

#### *Mal-nutrition/undernutrition*

As with determining the mortality rates due to famine, there are as many variations in techniques for determining the existence of malnutrition and classifying it. The standards vary depending on whether the data are of interest to public health officials, other government officials, NGOs or aid agencies. Different again are techniques employed by the medical profession dealing with individual cases of malnutrition. Methods most commonly used are anthropometric measurements, which compare various body measurements and weight ratios, for example, height for age (stunting) weight for age or weight for height measurements (wasting). However other nutritional investigations have also used household consumption surveys, clinical



assessments, socio-economic and environmental status, and epidemiological surveys.<sup>64</sup> With regard to establishing who is malnourished, much of the academic and official literature concentrates on per capita consumption of calories and proteins. In general these studies compare national averages, country by country. As with all aggregate figures though, the status of particular classes of people in any given society is often ignored. This is important for this discussion in view of the fact that a sectoral analysis of the food system is applied at a local, national and an international level. The methodology employed in such surveys is crucial both in terms of its reliability (can the survey be successfully replicated elsewhere?) and its validity (is it measuring the phenomenon it claims to?). As with much of political or social scientific research, many findings in this area are hotly disputed and invariably reflect the bias of the researcher. Thus, in this thesis, every attempt has been made to present a balanced interpretation of research concerning food insecurity and analyses have been considered from writers across the political spectrum and from opposing interested parties.

From 2004 onwards the authors of the SOFI reports have made a concerted effort to utilise different methods of measuring food deprivation and undernutrition in order to minimise this effect. Indeed the FAO hosted an International scientific symposium in 2002 aimed at ways of improving and refining data collection and analysis, looking to improve its own methodology and validate alternative approaches.<sup>65</sup> The estimates of food insecurity in their recent reports are based on calculations of three key parameters for each country: the average amount of food available per person, the level of inequality in access to that food and the minimum number of calories required for an average person.<sup>66</sup> Food security, as defined by the FAO can provide a useful benchmark towards which policy makers should strive. However, it is a valuable concept only if there is a clear understanding of what it means and an appreciation of its limitations and the impact on individuals of other non-food factors such as poor sanitation and contaminated water. Furthermore, as we will see in Chapter 3 on Food

---

<sup>64</sup> See Pinstrup-Anderson (2009) 'Food Security: definition and measurement' for a discussion of the various meanings attached to the concept of food security and the appropriate anthropometric measurements.

<sup>65</sup> See SOFI 2000: 5-6 for a concise explanation of FAO methodology for measuring the prevalence and depth of hunger.

<sup>66</sup> See SOFI 2004:14 for a fairly in-depth description of methodology used and its strengths and limitations.

Sovereignty, food security is a technical concept and is understood in terms of the global food trade. It thus lacks the political perspective and nuances that are central to the way food insecurity needs to be understood.

### **3. Where does food insecurity occur most?**

Ever since Malthus wrote his seminal 'Essay on Population' in 1789 there have been ongoing predictions that the world simply could not feed itself indefinitely. To date this has not occurred, but nonetheless many influential writers from the ecological movement, often referred to as neo-Malthusians, have perpetuated the belief that it is only a matter of time until Malthus is ultimately proved right (Brown 1991; Kaplan 1994). Although this thesis is concerned with the political causes of famine, theories of famine that remain preoccupied with demographic issues are important because they continue to inform (or misinform) the debate. Evidence to support the neo-Malthusian view is not always obvious but the two key factors, on which the hypothesis is based, are worthy of attention. These factors are population growth and sustainable food production. The global population is undeniably rising, particularly in those parts of the world that are considered the least 'developed'.<sup>67</sup> For many years ecologists have argued that the environment cannot tolerate the current level of intensive farming and that land degradation will only increase.<sup>68</sup> Two decades ago it was argued that:

As we enter the nineties, the world has little to celebrate on the food front. Between 1950 and 1984, the world's farmers raised grain output 2.6 fold ... since then, unfortunately, little progress has been made ... Drought damaged harvests in key producing countries in 1987 and 1988 brought world grain stocks to their lowest levels in decades. The 1989 world grain harvest depleted stocks even further. If stocks cannot be replenished in years of near normal weather, when can they be? (Brown 1991: 59)

On the other hand, analysts of global food issues writing at the same time provided contradictory evidence that was equally compelling. Relatively speaking, towards the

---

<sup>67</sup> See later section in this chapter for a discussion on the categories of global inequalities.

<sup>68</sup> There are more optimistic counter-arguments, which will be discussed later in relation to the GFS and Food Sovereignty.

end of the 1990s prices of agricultural commodities were at their lowest levels ever recorded. Crop yields continued to grow faster than populations and the food situation had improved dramatically for much of the world's populations (Mitchell, Ingo & Duncan 1997). This is clearly not to say that the problem of famine did not exist at the time, there is ample global data to show that it did. But from a liberal economic and optimistic vision of the world food situation, the reasons for, and the solution to the problems of food insecurity, were to be found in the functioning of the market.<sup>69</sup>

This trend in falling food prices, however, went into reverse after the turn of the century, with prices peaking in 2008 (SOFI 2010). The impact of fluctuating food prices on the world's poorest populations is of great importance to this discussion both in relation to the functioning of the global food system<sup>70</sup> and the protections built in to an agricultural model based on the concept of Food Sovereignty.<sup>71</sup>

Population growth has usually been taken as the most important determinant of the growth of food demand in most economies. The world population in 2011 stands at just under 7 billion and the World Bank and United Nations estimate that world population growth rates are expected to fall to less than 1% per annum by 2020.<sup>72</sup> This, in real terms, would mean a world population of approximately 7.5 billion with an average yearly increase of 73 million. The fact that it is also predicted that 97.5% of this increase will be in the developing world is obviously not without significance. Figures published by the World Development Forum predict the global population to be 9.3 billion by 2050 with Africa and Asia accounting for 90% of this projected world population growth.<sup>73</sup> The question of how enough food will be produced to meet future demands, and by whom, is a question central to the contemporary debates on global food issues.

However, the current food sustainability debates clearly depend on whose consumption levels we are predicting and measuring, as globally there are enormous disparities both between and within the developed and underdeveloped worlds.<sup>74</sup>

Even the most pessimistic of ecologists couldn't ignore this issue of disparities

---

<sup>69</sup> See Chapter 4 on neo-liberal economic reforms and the impact of structural adjustment (SA).

<sup>70</sup> See Chapter 2

<sup>71</sup> See Chapter 3

<sup>72</sup> See [www.geohive.com](http://www.geohive.com) Accessed 12/04/11

<sup>73</sup> World Development Forum @ [www.wdfweb.com](http://www.wdfweb.com) Accessed 12/04/11

<sup>74</sup> See SOFI 2010

entirely:

‘a world grain harvest of 2.1 billion tons in 2030 would satisfy populations of different sizes depending on levels of consumption. At the U.S level of 800kgs per person per year (PPPY), it would be enough to sustain approximately 2.5 billion people. At the Italian level of 400kgs PPPY it could support just over 5 billion and at the Indian level of 200kgs PPPY it could sustain just over 10 billion people’ (Brown & Kane 1995: 202).

Though it is unlikely anyone would seriously advocate a global shift to Indian levels of consumption, what is clear from these projections is that the current level of consumption in the U.S could not be achieved worldwide with current levels of production. The growing global trend in meat consumption and the demands this imposes on crops for animal feed coupled with the growth in crops as agrofuel have exacerbated both environmental and political concerns.<sup>75</sup> These concerns, however, do not negate the fact that the world produces enough food to feed everyone. World agriculture produces 17 percent more calories per person today than it did 30 years ago, despite a 70 percent population increase. This is enough to provide everyone in the world with at least 2,720 kilocalories (kcal) per person per day (FAO 2002, p.9). The main problem is that many people in the world do not have sufficient land to grow, or income to purchase, enough food. These themes will be revisited in Chapter 2, which explores the fundamental inequalities inherent in the global food system and the reasons why such a system evolved and is maintained.

### *Categories of inequality*

Just as defining famine and food insecurity requires a certain level of explanation, so too does the use of the terms used to describe particular global differences of food insecurity. One of the key characteristics of the world today is the uneven level of so called ‘development’ between continents, regions and nation states. There are various categories of classifications to conceptualise these developmental differences. In recent history the least developed countries, often former colonies, were grouped together under the umbrella term of the ‘Third World’. The term ‘Third World’ arose

---

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter 7.

during the Cold War to define countries that remained non-aligned with either capitalism and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) (which along with its allies represented the First World), or communism and the Soviet Union (which along with its allies represented the Second World). This definition provided a way of broadly categorising the nations of the Earth into three groups based on social, political, and economic divisions.<sup>76</sup> The term was used in a pejorative way in the past and for a period fell out of common usage giving way to the ‘developmental categories’. International agencies tend to talk in terms of developed, developing and least developed countries as a way of minimising the pejorative connotations associated with the three-world model. More controversially, the term ‘under-developed’ is often used which does not indicate lack of development, nor does it necessarily denote abject poverty. It is a comparative phenomenon, like poverty in general, in that it exists only in relation to more advanced development.

Indeed the term ‘development’ is itself deeply controversial. Broadly speaking, economists equate it with economic growth usually quantified by per capita gross domestic product (GDP) or gross national income (GNI). The position taken in this thesis, however, is that development means more than just economic growth. For development to occur there must be an expansion in access to other goods required for survival and well-being, such as food, shelter, healthcare, education and so on. Indeed this broader understanding of development has recently been given greater recognition with calls on the international community to use new ways to measure economic prosperity by giving more weight to the environment and a nation’s social well-being.<sup>77</sup> From this moral perspective, and the one adopted in this thesis, development includes concepts such as equality, dignity and the full range of twentieth century political rights. The exclusion of many of these concepts from measurements of so-called development is problematic, but they are all vital components in the concept of Food Sovereignty.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> French demographer, anthropologist and historian Alfred Sauvy, in an article published in the French magazine *L'Observateur*, August 14, 1952, coined the term ‘Third World’. His usage was a reference to the Third Estate, the commoners of France who, before and during the French Revolution, opposed priests and nobles, who composed the First Estate and Second Estate, respectively. Sauvy wrote, "Like the third estate, the Third World is nothing, and wants to be something."

<sup>77</sup> As advocated by economist Joseph Stiglitz at the G20 summit in September 2009. See <http://www.g20.org/i>

<sup>78</sup> See chapter 3.

More recently many writers refer to the global North and South to describe rich versus poor nations but these terms, for the purpose of this work, are overly simplistic politically, economically and geographically. They do feature in this discussion, however, particularly with regard to trade because it is in the literature on this particular area that these terms are most commonly applied.

In addition, there is another model of global differentiation based on the dynamics of changing agricultural around the world, known as the ‘Three Rural Worlds’ model (Vorley 2003:14). In many ways this model lends itself particularly well to this thesis because of its applicability to the framework of Food Sovereignty and its bias towards rural food producers. It consists of Rural 1, Rural 2 and Rural 3 and has been adopted to explain the differentiation among those involved in agriculture in both the developed or industrialised and the developing world. Rural 1, includes large farmers and entrepreneurs, which are numerically a minority. They are, however, connected into the global food economy through contracts with a rapidly consolidating agricultural handling and processing industry, and even directly with food retailers. Consequently these farmers have become a vital part of agribusiness, and the lines between Rural 1 and agribusiness are becoming increasingly blurred. Only the most capitalised and tightly managed enterprises can meet the strict standards imposed by importing nations or processing and retail sectors.<sup>79</sup>

Rural 2 comprises the family farmers and landed peasantry who have traditionally constituted the bedrock of the rural economy, from India to the American prairies. It is characterised by low levels of capitalisation, poor integration with downstream food businesses<sup>80</sup> and other factors, such as lack of information and assets. These factors leave this sector exposed when government withdraws from agriculture and when agricultural trade is liberalised, or when agribusiness concentrates market power (and hence profits) off the farm. Undermined by a cost-price squeeze, Rural 2 faces declining returns and increased risks from agricultural commodity production. Juggling a number of agricultural and non-agricultural income-earning activities has become the norm as households attempt to compensate for the high risks associated with agricultural price decline, output fluctuations and lack of access to land or credit

---

<sup>79</sup> Work by Humphrey (2008) demonstrates the detrimental impact of these developments on Kenyan horticulture.

<sup>80</sup> See Chapter 2 on the GFS

(Bryceson, Kay & Mooli 2000, Raikes & Gibbon 2000). Niche marketing such as agritourism, organics and local markets has provided viable alternatives to a minority of Rural 2, but these are mainly in industrialised countries and thus of no real benefit to most farmers in the developing world.

Rural 3 denotes the struggling underclass that includes almost four-fifths of the world's most food insecure. The households of Rural 3 focus mainly on survival, with livelihoods fractured into mixtures of off-farm work, farm labour (often for Rural 1), temporary migration and subsistence agriculture. This group may be prevented from joining the formal urban economy by lack of education, training and access to regular employment opportunities. They are generally excluded from the key arenas of power and policy-making, despite the rhetoric in the World Bank and government agencies of 'pro-poor' development (Vorley 2003:14).

This 'Three Rural Worlds' framework is an interesting one for this thesis on several levels and as the Food Sovereignty model develops it may well become more prevalent in the literature. Firstly, it links in very well with Chapter 2, which explores global commodity food chains and this framework can be used to explain how different regions are situated within the GFS. In addition it provides a social and political backdrop for the conceptualisation of Food Sovereignty as a movement for change. The Three Rural Worlds model makes very clear the social and economic beneficiaries of the current GFS and equally those who would benefit from a reformed agricultural model, which favours rural populations rather than agri-businesses. Its drawbacks are that it has yet to have any real influence on mainstream literature on food and agricultural issues, particularly in an institutional and policy-making context, thus much of the discussion in this thesis refers to the more traditional categories. Therefore the 'First, Second and Third World' categorisation and the developmental categories will both be used where appropriate in this thesis, not in any pejorative sense but in the political sense.

#### **4 Kenya and Ethiopia as examples of food insecure countries.**

As stated in the introduction, the focus of this thesis is on Kenya and Ethiopia. There are good reasons to have chosen these countries as suitable cases through which to explore the shortcomings of the global food system and the potential for the development of Food Sovereignty as an alternative paradigm. Both countries are

located in East Africa, which has been plagued by issues of food insecurity in a past and present context. They share a border, both with each other, and Somalia, and have tense, but different, border demarcation issues. Indeed the land issue is a central feature of the argument developed in this thesis and both countries provide interesting and contrasting land ownership histories.<sup>81</sup> Despite their geographical proximity they have also experienced very different political, economic and security challenges over recent decades. They are both drought prone countries but whereas Ethiopia has experienced several famines over recent decades, Kenya has never officially declared a famine. Both countries have moved towards floriculture as a major export industry<sup>82</sup> and as such, both have attracted foreign direct investment (FDI). The growth in FDI in agricultural systems is central to both the understanding of the GFS and to the role that national governments may or may not play in reducing their food insecurity. Thus Kenya and Ethiopia offer differences and similarities on a number of levels but four specific areas will be introduced here because of their particular relevance to the political focus of this thesis. These are firstly population size and ethnic mix; secondly, the political context; thirdly, the food aid/food security context; and lastly, the issue of land ownership. In different ways these four areas demonstrate the potential and possibilities for the adoption of a Food Sovereignty model in East Africa. Equally, they demonstrate why it will be difficult to overcome entrenched political interests and logics to actually enable Food Sovereignty and land redistribution to become a reality.

*Population and ethnic mix.*

Kenya's population is currently just over 41 million and it is the country with the fastest population growth in East Africa with about 2.9% per annum (FIAN 2010:17). Poverty is now endemic in Kenya, with approximately 56% of the population living in absolute poverty,<sup>83</sup> among whom 53% live in rural areas and 47% in urban areas. The Human Development Index (HDI) ranked the country at 128th position in its 2010 edition out of 169 countries with comparable data. There are over 70 distinct ethnic groups in Kenya, ranging in size from about seven million Kikuyu to about 500 El

---

<sup>81</sup> See Chapter 7

<sup>82</sup> See Chapter 2

<sup>83</sup> Set by the UN as living on less than 1 US dollar a day.



Molo who live on the shore of Lake Turkana.<sup>84</sup> Kenya's ethnic groups can be divided into three broad linguistic groups, Bantu, Nilotic and Cushite. While no ethnic group constitutes a majority of Kenya's citizens, the largest ethnic group, the Kikuyu, makes up only 20% of the nation's total population. The five largest - Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya, Kamba and Kalenjin account for 70%. Of these, the Kikuyu, who were most actively involved in the independence and Mau Mau movements, are disproportionately represented in public life, government, business and the professions. The Luo people are mainly traders and artisans. The Kamba are well represented in defence and law enforcement and the Kalenjin are mainly farmers. While a recognised asset, Kenya's ethnic diversity has been the source of ongoing disputes and interethnic rivalries and resentment over Kikuyu dominance in politics and commerce have arguably hindered national integration.<sup>85</sup>

Ethiopia has a population of approximately 90 million people with a relatively high population growth rate of 2.6% per annum.<sup>86</sup> Income poverty is widespread and deep. Some 31 million people live below a poverty line equivalent to 45 US cents per day and between 6 and 13 million people are at risk of starvation each year.<sup>87</sup> Pastoral farming, undertaken by 12%-15% of the population, is also limited by extreme poverty in its capacity to cope with the increasing aridity of grazing lands. This sector is also threatened by pressure to convert land to other uses.<sup>88</sup> With 85% of the population dependent on livelihoods linked to this volatile agriculture sector, many commentators argue that vulnerability to food insecurity in Ethiopia is inevitable. Ethiopia is characterised by a considerable variety of ethnicities and inequalities. The main ethnic group in the country is the Oromo, comprising 34.5 percent of the population. Amhara (26.9 percent), Somali (6.2 percent), and Tigray (6.1 percent) make up the other main ethnic groups (Horne 2011). Amharic is the official language and is spoken by approximately 27 million people although dozens of local languages and dialects are also spoken.

### *Political context*

According to the United Nations Development Project (UNDP 2010) Kenya and

---

<sup>84</sup> See <http://www.africa.upenn.edu/NEH/kethnic.htm> Accessed 19/12/11

<sup>85</sup> The entrenched political realities of this situation will be discussed in Chapters 6 & 7.

<sup>86</sup> Estimated July 2011 see [www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/) Accessed 02/01/12

<sup>87</sup> See <http://www.undg.org/docs/10143/Ethiopia-UNDAF-2007-2011.pdf> Accessed 19/12/11.

<sup>88</sup> See Chapter 7 on land issues.

Ethiopia are listed as forty-first and twelfth, respectively, from the bottom of 169 countries. In terms of their political systems 'Freedom in the world 2011' lists Ethiopia as 'not free' and scores 6 on political rights and 6 on civil liberties;<sup>89</sup> Ethiopia represents the most significant setback in terms of freedom scores in Sub-Saharan Africa as it has declined from 'partly free' to 'not free'. Ethiopia is an ethnic federal republic, made up of 9 ethnically based states. These states are designed, in theory, to provide self-determination and autonomy to Ethiopia's different ethnic groups. In theory this decentralisation would lend itself to the localised decision-making explicit in a Food Sovereignty model.

Although technically a multi-party democracy, Kenya has experienced steady, incremental declines in recent years, and in 2010 the pace of erosion accelerated due to the widespread repression that accompanied national elections. Kenya in 2011 is classified as partly free and scores 4 for political rights and 3 for civil liberties. The two countries have been influenced by different political ideologies in a post cold-war context, with Kenya embracing a Western liberal economic system and Ethiopia doing the same for a period. However post 1972 and the fall of Haile Selassie, Ethiopia embraced a Marxist ideology with backing from the Soviet Union. The relative political systems in these countries are relevant in a past and present context particularly in terms of the government's responsibilities to their people and how this has impacted on the issue of food insecurity for certain population groups.<sup>90</sup>

Ethiopia remained independent during the 'scramble for Africa'<sup>91</sup> with the exception of a brief period under Italian control as part of Italian East Africa. It has, however, experienced decades of internal conflict and border disputes with Eritrea, in part as a result of allegiances and alliances developed during the colonial era. More recently Ethiopia has had cross border conflicts with Somalia (2005), which are yet to be resolved. Kenya, on the other hand, was colonised by the British and gained independence in 1963 in a period of global expansion and relative stability. Commodity prices were high and the country had significant foreign exchange reserves. In the first decade of independence, tremendous economic progress was

---

<sup>89</sup> Countries are ranked according to a range of rights and liberties with 1 scoring the highest and 7 scoring the lowest possible. See [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org) for an explanation of their methodology.

<sup>90</sup> See Chapter 6.

<sup>91</sup> A term used to describe the process of invasion, occupation, colonisation and annexation of African territories by European powers.

made in that gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 6.6% (Rono 2002). Life expectancy, which was 44 years at independence, had increased to 69 years in the 1980's with infant mortality rates during the same period dropping from 219 per 1000 live births to 68 per 1000 live births (Swamy 1994:196). Overall, in terms of all UNDP health indicators the record of the first decade of Kenyan independence was impressive and often referred to as 'the golden years'. This period, however, was short lived and serious challenges to the progressive pattern began after 1973 partly as a result of the increase in oil prices, and the world recession that followed the economic crises of the 1970's. Kenya is a member State to several international and regional human rights instruments, one of which is the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. However, the country has not taken legislative steps to implement the rights enshrined in the Covenant, as social, economic and cultural rights are not present in the Constitution, or in the Bill of Rights. Like Ethiopia, Kenya is now involved in cross border conflicts with Somalia.<sup>92</sup>

#### *Food insecurity context*

Whilst Ethiopia has experienced acute famines in both a historic and a contemporary context, Kenya has experienced no recorded famine, to date, but many of its people suffer from chronic hunger and the constant threat of famine. It is estimated that 10 million people suffer from chronic food insecurity and around two million people rely on food assistance at any given time. Around 32% of the entire population is considered undernourished (FIAN 2010) Furthermore, child nutrition in Kenya has not improved during the last 20 years, and according to Kenyan government figures from 2005/6, levels of stunting, wasting and underweight among children under five years old had increased slightly to 33%, 6.1%, and 20.2%, respectively. It is already clear that Kenya will not reach the targets of Millennium Development Goal 1, which is a major concern in terms of the progressive realisation of the right to food in Kenya.<sup>93</sup> According to the current Kenyan government (2011) the root causes of hunger in Kenya are poverty (inability to produce own food and lack of means to access food); unemployment and underemployment; landlessness; vagaries of weather (especially because of dependency on rain-fed agriculture); the maize syndrome (overemphasis on

---

<sup>92</sup> .[www.reuters.com/africanews](http://www.reuters.com/africanews) Accessed 15/11/11.

<sup>93</sup> See United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Kenya, 2010-2013, p. 6-7, available at:<http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Kenya> Accessed 04/04/11

maize which locks people into risky maize-based subsistence agriculture even in areas where maize production is unsuitable); education (especially female education because of its effect on child health and nutrition); inadequate sanitation, health facilities and clean water (effect of common infectious diseases on nutrition and health); and socio-political issues affecting access to food (disempowered groups, especially women, have limited access to food and incomes). Of these reasons the two most relevant to this discussion are the issue of food production and the socio-political issues affecting access to food. Both concepts are integral to Food Sovereignty and encapsulated in the second principle of Agrarian Reform and the seventh principle of Democratic Control.

Agriculture is the foundation of the Ethiopian economy, employing 80 percent of the country's 90 million people. The country's well-being is, therefore, dependent on both internal and external factors including the global food system. The latest assessment is that 3.2 million people will require emergency food aid during 2011. In addition, there are 8.2 million Ethiopians classed as chronically food insecure, being unable to overcome persistent drought conditions.

There is also extreme vulnerability to famine, with consumption rising and falling dramatically from year to year as the result of drought, ill health, or other family shocks. Reports suggest that food price inflation exceeded 40% for the year ending May 2011, causing serious hardship for poor families in both rural and urban areas.<sup>94</sup> As a result, many families who are not currently poor are at constant risk of falling into extreme poverty, and are unable to accumulate enough assets to break out of poverty. The prevalence of 'wasting' in children under the age of 5 in Ethiopia was estimated as 11%.<sup>95</sup> However, within this context of poverty and food insecurity the government leases vast stretches of prime agricultural land to business interests from India, the EU, the USA, Israel and Saudi Arabia - mainly for sugar, meat, agro-fuels and flowers (FIAN 2009). As will be discussed later in this thesis the growth in prioritisation of foreign direct investment over and above meeting the food needs of national populations is a matter of growing concern in famine prone countries such as

---

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Roger Bracke, Head, Horn of Africa Operations IFRC at [uk.oneworld.net/guides/ethiopia/food\\_security](http://uk.oneworld.net/guides/ethiopia/food_security) Accessed 26/09/11

<sup>95</sup> Wasting, or low weight for height, is a strong predictor of mortality among children under five. It is usually the result of acute significant food shortage and/or disease. There are 24 developing countries with wasting rates of 10 per cent or more see <http://www.unicef.org/progressforchildren/2007>

Ethiopia.<sup>96</sup>

### *Land ownership*

The current Kenyan Constitution establishes three types of land: government land, private land, and trust land. As such, much of Kenyan land is privately owned (FIAN 2010:18). Approximately 80% of the land is arid or semi-arid and only about 20% is arable. The disparity in rainfall amounts and distribution has a significant effect on the country's capacity for economic production. Many parts of the country cannot produce adequate food from rain-fed agriculture, and are therefore exposed to frequent hunger. The arid and semi-arid lands depend mainly on livestock production; which is frequently adversely affected by drought (Kenya Government 2005). The organisation of land tenure, and how it impacts on food security, is a central tenet of Food Sovereignty. The issue of land will be explored in relation to both obstacles to and potential for a Food Sovereignty model in Ethiopia and Kenya in Chapter 7.

In terms of land ownership, the Ethiopian government currently owns all of the country's land and leases it. Although families enjoy lifetime tenure, there is currently no right to buy or sell land in Ethiopia thus, liberal economists argue, diminishing incentives for prudent management of soil and water resources. For example, poorly maintained hillside plots are particularly prone to erosion by intense rainfall. Almost 65% of rural households farm plots of less than one hectare, with primitive tools and negligible access to capital.

In recent years, a very different volatility – global food prices – has imposed a new dimension of risk. Projected cereal production in Ethiopia for 2011 is much the same as the average over the last five years. The country continues to be dependent on imports and exposed to the latest round of unstable prices. In 2004 Ethiopia joined a group of seven priority countries, selected by the Millennium Project, to draw up a scaled-up investment plan that would allow the country to meet the MDG targets.<sup>97</sup> Ethiopia's medium term plans go beyond a vision of ending hunger and food insecurity. Ambitious growth in agricultural output is a key strategic component of the broader goal to achieve middle-income status. Government plans describe this strategy as 'agriculture development led industrialization' (Horne 2011). The intention

---

<sup>96</sup> See Chapter 7

<sup>97</sup> See UNDAF 2010 Ethiopia.

is to invest resources, not just in the chronically vulnerable households, but also in the more successful small farms, which have potential to graduate from subsistence to semi-commercial. Such investments would seek productivity gains through improved seed and chemical inputs, restoring degraded land and creating a rural infrastructure to develop market activity. The government has therefore announced its intention to maintain its financial commitment to agriculture. This is currently 15% of the national budget, considerably above the average for Sub-Saharan Africa.

The cost of the programme is nevertheless far beyond national resources and extensive donor support will be essential. If fulfilled, recent commitments by world leaders to support national food security plans in developing countries will go some way towards making this possible. These new directions in government policies and what they mean for the development of a Food Sovereignty framework will be explored in later chapters.

### **Concluding comments**

This opening chapter has demonstrated that the terms associated with food insecurity can be unclear and famine, in particular, has been understood to mean different things. Traditionally, famine has been understood as a catastrophic event resulting in mass starvation. Modern famine analysis, however, demands a more complex approach that recognises famine as a process with inter-related characteristics. Though the typologies introduced in this chapter seem somewhat overly simplistic in their demarcations, when most current research demonstrates a considerable overlap, they are useful because they highlight the idea that different types of famine and food insecurity demand different remedies. They also demonstrate that the international context has been absent from famine analysis in the past. The idea that 'one size fits all' has in many ways been the international response to famine in the past and goes some way towards explaining its failure in terms of lasting solutions to ongoing famine vulnerability. Most importantly, understanding different causal factors and different effects of famine are key to understanding how it can be eradicated in a permanent way. More politically, who can be held accountable when it is not prevented? There has been much written, with justification, about how the corrupt governments and elites in the developing world are to blame for the plight of their poor and hungry

people.<sup>98</sup> This is a rejection of dependency theory, which locates almost all responsibility for gross global inequality in the developed world. There is no doubt that many governments in the developing world are non-democratic, corrupt, brutal and manifestly not acting in the interest of the poor majority. Indeed the issue of responsibility has led some famine analysts to believe that avoiding the famine 'label' has often been convenient for those seeking to justify slow or failed responses (Edkins 2007: Ch3). Food crises in Niger 2005 and Ethiopia 2007-2008 have been cited as examples of national governments employing this tactic.<sup>99</sup> However the role of foreign governments and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) within the current global food system is often underplayed, or completely overlooked in famine analysis. This is a key point and may explain how the logic of the GFS tolerates the persistence of chronic hunger for this very reason i.e. it is not labelled or considered as 'famine'. The following chapter addresses this issue by considering famine vulnerability specifically within the framework of the global food system.

---

<sup>98</sup> See Chapter 6.

<sup>99</sup> Howe and Devereux have devised an intensity scale for famine and its importance lies in its implications for accountability. See *Accountability Matrix*, Devereux (ed) 2007.

## CHAPTER 2 - THE GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEM

This chapter introduces and explains the concept of the global food system and how it relates to contemporary food insecurity in parts of Africa. It discusses Africa's place in the global system with specific reference to Kenya and Ethiopia. The GFS, as it is presented in this work, is a system that evolved, in part, through a project of rule. It will be argued that the position of Africa, as a whole, in the GFS is integrally linked to its colonial past and this past resonates in the present. It is acknowledged, however, that some African ruling elites played an active rather than a passive role in the establishment of their nations as dependent partners in the world economy (Bayart 1993, 2009). The nature of land ownership, tenure and use is crucial to understanding the current patterns of food production and consumption; the link between access to land and political, social and economic freedoms in many parts of Africa is a fundamental one and central to the development of a Food Sovereignty framework.<sup>100</sup> Part 1 begins by addressing the following questions: what is the global food system? What are its key analytical features in terms of structures, institutions and processes? What are the various theories that have been proposed to make sense of it? Part 2, considers how the global food system evolved and importantly, from a political perspective, when and why it evolved. Part 3 sets out, in general terms, the relationship between the global food system, past and present, and food security/insecurity. The aim of this section is to understand how this relationship works in theory and in practice. Changes in African primary food production, particularly its orientation towards export crops are an issue of growing importance in debates on matters of food insecurity. The term 'export crop' is used to describe crops primarily grown for export in one form or another.<sup>101</sup> These changes, coupled with the projected rise in foreign direct investment in productive land in Sub-Saharan Africa are central elements of the critique of the global food system developed throughout this thesis. Part 4 of this chapter asks in what ways the changes to agricultural production can be linked to increased food insecurity and vulnerability to famine, in

---

<sup>100</sup> See Chapter 3

<sup>101</sup> This implies that some crops exported in large quantities should not be called 'export crops' because their domestic consumption exceeds their export, as is the case with some fresh produce in Kenya. This, however, will not be made in this discussion on export crops.



Ethiopia and Kenya. It becomes evident that certain theoretical approaches to the global food system (GFS) are more relevant to Kenya than Ethiopia.

### **1. Defining the Global Food System**

The concept of the global food system can only be understood in the wider context of 'globalisation'. For the purposes of this thesis, globalisation refers specifically to recent and current changes in the global economy. Critically understood, 'globalisation' refers to the increasing integration of the world economy and the decreasing capacity of national governments to pursue policies that do not best serve the interests of international capital. There are widely differing opinions of how far this process has gone and the desirability of more or less integration (Collier 2008; Rosset 2006a). There is, however, a consensus that the current levels of economic integration go beyond previous levels and that this has increased the capacity of the largest states or regional groupings to make and implement policies (Pogge 2003, Stiglitz 2006). Susan George, a long-standing critic of the global food system defined it as 'the totality of tangible and intangible means employed by a given community for the production, conservation, distribution and consumption of food.' (George 1991: 19). The process of globalisation has resulted in agriculture becoming a 'system for transforming one series of industrial products into another series of industrial products which happen to be edible.' (George 1991: 25). Thus the GFS can be understood as a process involving machinery, fertilisers, pesticides, irrigation systems and such like on the input end, with food (after manufacturing and processing) on the output end.

Despite an abundance of literature exposing the inequities and unsustainable basis of this model in recent decades, the West, and the U.S in particular, is still generally perceived as having the most efficient food production system in the world (Patel 2007; Shiva 2000a). So much so that the industrial system of farming has become the 'blueprint' for many developing countries. For example, over recent decades the U.S system of farming has had a very significant impact on agricultural practices in South America, particularly Brazil.<sup>102</sup> The move away from traditional farming methods to a system dependent on highly sophisticated technology and intensive energy inputs is one of the defining characteristics of the agricultural sector in recent times. This

---

<sup>102</sup> Growing dissatisfaction with the way agriculture has been refocused has led to the concept of 'Food Sovereignty' originating in Latin America and will be explored in the following chapter.

development of institutions, structures, processes and power relationships that dominate the modern GFS has been referred to as the 'factory farm complex' (McMichael 2008:106-116). In terms of an environmental discourse, the current GFS can be understood as one of 'economic rationalism' as opposed to a 'green rationalism' that characterises a Food Sovereignty model.<sup>103</sup> 'The basic entities of economic rationalism are economic actors such as the WTO which regulates international trade undertaken by mostly private firms. This model assumes that natural relationships are competitive i.e. market relations and that actors are motivated by rational self-interest. Its key metaphors are mechanistic and based on notions of levels of production, price competition and efficiency. In contrast, the environmental discourse of the Food Sovereignty framework could be described as 'green rationalism' given its notions of the complexity of food production, the interrelationship of farmers and nature and the use of organic metaphors such as agro-ecological food production.

Indeed, the global food system can be understood in terms of some key analytical features, which contrast markedly with the model of Food Sovereignty. First and foremost, much of food production in the First World, especially in the U.S, takes place within an industrial or productivist model of agriculture. This means food production is largely controlled by huge corporate farmers or so-called agribusinesses and this applies to both livestock and arable farming.<sup>104</sup> Most of the beef, chicken or pork available to consumers in the U.S, for example, is reared on industrially processed animal feed on industrial 'feedlots'. Europe has developed a similar agricultural model, though most cattle and sheep are still grazed on pastureland, pigs and chickens are largely 'factory farmed' in sheds or coups. One of the most important features of this model, particularly with regard to its development in the Third World, is the conversion of labour to capital-intensive modes of product. Concentration on crops for export has also seen a rise in so-called 'mono-culture, where a country's entire agricultural sector remains dependant on one or two crops. Traditional food crops like grains and seeds have lost virtually all their retail value in the modern global food system. They are now part of industrial processes involved in

---

<sup>103</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>104</sup> The term 'agribusiness' includes all aspects of food from production, and processing to distribution.

manufacturing bread or pasta or more recently as livestock feed or biofuels.<sup>105</sup> There is empirical evidence that this pattern is on an upward trajectory with about two-thirds of global maize production currently used for animal feed (Massari 2003). Britain, alone, is estimated to use in excess of 4 million hectares of ‘ghost acres’<sup>106</sup> to grow mainly animal feed (Lang & Heasman 2004:240). Understandably, many find this situation difficult to justify in view of the number of people around the world lacking in sufficient food.

In terms of structural changes, deregulation has been central to the concept of globalisation and this is evident in the GFS. The model of agricultural trade in the GFS can thus be described as liberalised. Since the 1980’s large parts of nation-state regulatory systems, mainly those established after 1945, have been dismantled. This has led to an increased integration of the world economy and facilitated a strengthening of economic liberalisation. A crucial factor with regard to these highly sophisticated agricultural systems is their relative flexibility. Deregulation and contractual agreements, through international institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), agribusinesses and giant supermarkets can now be considered as defining features of the global food system. Indeed the WTO can be conceptualised as the lead organisation of the GFS operating through the use of key instruments such as the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). The WTOs remit has been extended to include issues such as investments, services, intellectual property rights and agriculture that go way beyond trade and in effect make domestic economic policy subject to global rules.<sup>107</sup>

Furthermore the expansion and integration of agriculture on a global scale has resulted in tapestries of networks of commodity exchanges, known as commodity chains. The chain metaphor helps illuminate the inter-connectivity of people, places and resources. Many commodity chains have become dominated by a just a few agri-businesses from the First World (Vorley 2003). Cocoa processing of African cocoa, for example, is concentrated within only four companies (Cargill, ADM, Barry Callebaut and Hosta)

---

<sup>105</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>106</sup> The term ‘ghost acres’ refers to additional land offshore used to supply the diet of a nation. It has been suggested that this type of global outsourcing of food “is not only energy-inefficient, but it is doubtful whether it improves global equity and helps local farmers to meet the goals of sustainable development (Lang & Heasman 2004.241)

<sup>107</sup> See Shah ‘WTO Doha ‘Development’ Trade Round Collapse, 2006.’ *Global Issues*, Created: 28 Jul. 2006. Accessed 29/11/09.

controlling 40% of cocoa grinding.

In the current global food system, interactions between different food systems, in different parts of the world, are taking place with increasing frequency, but with more intense and often unintended consequences (Raikes & Gibbon 2000). When we consume products such as coffee, fresh fruit or vegetables we are often participating in a global process; it may feel like an individual experience but it is, increasingly, a social, political and environmental act. What is crucial to this analysis of the global food system is that recent changes are not necessarily in the interest of the most hungry or famine vulnerable communities. This can be demonstrated by the fact that a food trade surplus of \$1 billion for developing countries in the 1970s was transformed into a deficit of \$11 billion by 2004 (FAO 2004). Recognition of this transformation is integral to the Food Sovereignty movement and its reversal is the basis of the fifth principle which calls for an end to the ‘Globalisation of Hunger’.<sup>108</sup>

#### *Some theories of the global food system*

There are various frameworks of analysis that attempt to explain the global food system and the theories most relevant to the position adopted in this thesis are introduced here.<sup>109</sup> These are Global Commodity Chain theory (GCC) (Hopkins & Wallerstein 1994) International Food Regime theory (IFR) (Friedmann & McMichael 1989) and what I will call here Theory of Extraversion (ToE) (Bayart 1993, 2000). Several strands of the theoretical approaches are developed in this thesis with the specific purpose of exploring Food Sovereignty as a viable alternative framework within which to situate the global food system. Vandana Shiva’s depiction of the global food system as a battle between corporate ‘control and command’ methods of food production with the small farmer economy that predominates in the Third World resonates well with the arguments for a Food Sovereignty framework<sup>110</sup> (Shiva 2000a). An analysis of the global food system characterised by the paradox of starvation and obesity also fits well with the position in this thesis (Patel 2007). The calls from international social movements for reclaiming food democracy in the global food system are optimistic and hopeful, and will be explored specifically within the context

---

<sup>108</sup> See appendix 3.

<sup>109</sup> See Raikes & Gibbon (2000: 50-93).

<sup>110</sup> Shiva’s analysis is of India although it lends itself to East Africa as well.

of Food Sovereignty as an alternative to the existing food model.<sup>111</sup>

The current position of Africa in the GFS can be explained in part by Global Commodity Chain theory (GCC) (Hopkins & Wallerstein 1994). GCC theory is situated within a World Systems Theory (WST) (Wallerstein 1993) which itself is a progression from Dependency Theory. Dependency Theory suggests that the international system, has a centre, i.e. the Western industrialised nations or the First World, with the U.S being the centre of the centre, the bull's-eye on a dart board so to speak. Surrounding the centre is the Second World and on the periphery is the Third World.<sup>112</sup> For dependency theorists, the former has consistently exploited the latter since colonial times and continues to do so. Indeed dependency analysis argues that it is development itself that creates 'underdevelopment' because countries are locked into unequal interdependencies created by colonialism. Early exponents of Dependency Theory believed that the remedy to correct this ongoing imbalance was to be found in the creation of a so-called New International Economic Order (NIEO) instituted by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Barratt-Brown 1987). The obvious weakness of Dependency Theory is its applicability to a global food system in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Though its explanatory power perhaps resides in demonstrating why colonialism was so 'easy' and this is now well understood, it in no way explains why independence has not delivered food security for the people previously subjected to colonial rule. This lack of explanatory power will be discussed below in relation to the Theory of Extraversion.

Like Dependency Theory the central feature of World Systems Theory is the relationship between economic activity and power between the 'three worlds'. WST builds on the dependency concept and argues that a single division of labour is the organising concept of a 'centuries-old world-economy' (McMichael 2008:43). WST theory can be thought of as less rigid than dependency theory because it takes into account the flexibility of capital and the presence of long-term cycles in the global economic system (Raikes & Gibbon 2000:54).<sup>113</sup> A global commodity chain can be defined as 'a network of labour and production processes whose end result is a

---

<sup>111</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>112</sup> See Chapter 1 for an explanation of these terms.

<sup>113</sup> For example, GCC theory takes into account the Kondratieff cycle which has a 70 year, or so, pattern which acts like a giant bellows-pump causing the system to expand and contract, bringing about changes in patterns of activity and control along CCs. See <http://www.kondratieffwavecycle.com/>

finished commodity' (Hopkins & Wallerstein 1994:17). All firms are involved in commodity chains and at a local level this involves short links and short geographical differences between producer and consumer. WST, however, within which the GFS can be situated is more interested in GCCs and therefore relevant for this discussion.<sup>114</sup> This theory of GCCs has been further developed and the distinction between 'producer' and 'buyer' driven GCCs has been added (Gereffi & Korzeniewicz 1994).<sup>115</sup> This more nuanced development is of increasing relevance to the agricultural changes in East Africa and shifts in the balance of power in the agricultural sector. The former are associated with complex industrial commodities like aircraft or military hardware whereas most agricultural commodities, especially food, are strongly and increasingly, buyer driven. Importantly, in modern complex food GCCs the shift in control has been from wholesaler to retailer, especially giant multi-national retailers (Vorley 2003).

The applicability of WST/GCC for this thesis is the concern with the issue of power in relation to the restructuring of international economic relations. More specifically, GCC theory recognises that the location of power and how and by whom it is exercised can vary on a commodity-by-commodity basis.

Another theoretical approach to the GFS that has influenced the understanding of the global food system presented in this work is International Food Regime theory (IFR). This theoretical position is also concerned with the location of power but the focus is more on the withdrawal of the state from corporatist or Keynesian forms of macro-economic management (Friedmann & McMichael 1989).<sup>116</sup> IFR theory is particularly relevant for this thesis, both in the way that structural adjustments (SA) have impacted on food security in certain East African countries and how national governments have become less able to prioritise their food security over and above other international trade agreements.<sup>117</sup> From the IFR perspective, the current GFS is a result of the inter-connectivity of three distinct historical periods: colonialism, developmentalism and globalisation. Situating the GFS within an historical context that recognises past and present power relations is central to the framework of enquiry in this thesis.

---

<sup>114</sup> For an elaboration of these processes see Wallerstein 1994:18

<sup>115</sup> For work on this see subject see [www.ids.ac.uk/globalvaluechains](http://www.ids.ac.uk/globalvaluechains) Accessed 06/04/11

<sup>116</sup> Also referred to as the International Food Order see Friedmann 1982.

<sup>117</sup> See Chapters 4 & 6

International Food Regime theory is perhaps the most applicable for this thesis because it provides a theoretical basis on which to evaluate both the potential and the obstacles to Food Sovereignty as a political project and as an alternative agricultural framework. The key point is that the potential and obstacles to Food Sovereignty reside in the relationships not just between the people and their governments but also between national governments and international political and economic institutions.

It is fair to say that the theoretical basis of the Food Sovereignty framework is probably closer to the IFR theories than any other. Principle 7 of Food Sovereignty demands democratic control, which recognises the need for good governance, accountability and equal participation in economic, political and social life. This includes active decision making in food and rural issues.<sup>118</sup> However, this lack of internal democracy, in an African context, cannot be fully explained by the previous theories. Thus, there is room in this discussion for an analysis of the GFS that rejects African ruling elites as passive players in the process. Rather, they can be considered as active agents in the establishment of their nations as dependent partners in the world economy (Bayart 1993, 2000). Bayart's model is based on 'the central role played by strategies of extraversion in the way that the relationship between Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world is articulated' (Bayart 2000:231). From this perspective 'dependence' is viewed as an historical process rather than a purely structural concept as Dependency Theory conceives it to be. Thus Africans are actors in their own history and this extends to their position in the global food system. Bayart's analysis is interesting and challenging on many levels and we will return to it in more depth when we consider the role of African governments and their responsibility for food insecurity in later chapters. In contrast to Dependency and IFR theories which view the capacity of Third World national governments to prioritise domestic food as being reduced by the structures and processes imposed by the GFS, Theory of Extraversion argues that both a big state and a slimmed down state (as a result of structural adjustment for example) largely serve the interests of the same, elite groups. Which ever theoretical position one accepts, the reality of Sub-Saharan Africa in the current GFS is one of dependence.

---

<sup>118</sup> See Appendix 3.

## 2. The origins of the global food system

Having set out a working definition of the global food system, this next section considers, when and why it evolved. The origins of the global food system are typically situated within the legacy of colonialism and giving further nuance by the recognition of distinct periods of 'development' (McMichael 2008). However the current system must also be understood in a postcolonial context; in other words understanding why independence has not eradicated food insecurity? (Thornton 1998). Proponents of IFR theory suggest that the first period of the modern GFS dated from the second half of the 19th century and then two separate periods can be located from the late 1940s-1970s and then from the late 1980s onwards (Patel 2007: Ch 4).

### *Phase 1*

The first period was driven by the focus on food imports to support the industrialisation that was occurring in Europe. As stated, a characteristic shared by most of the continent of Africa is a common experience of European colonial rule and behind that the slave trade (Goldsmith 1994:57).<sup>119</sup> This said, there is a great deal of literature that criticises the use of colonialism as a generic term because it subsumes a variety of different factors that are historical, political, cultural, administrative and so forth, 'the examples and permutations are legion' (Bayart 2000:221) From an IFR perspective, however, colonialism, in an African context, can be understood as the subjugation by physical and psychological force of one culture over another; the colonial power over the colonised.<sup>120</sup> It is worth noting that colonialism predates European expansion during the 15<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and continues today with the Chinese colonisation of Tibet, for example. Generally speaking, colonialism has two forms, colonies of settlement, which often eliminate indigenous people such as the Europeans in the Americas or Australasia, or colonies of rule. African colonisation, by and large, took the latter form. The types of commodities traded within the modern global food system can be explicitly linked to these forms of colonisation. Early colonial imports consisted of grains and meats from the USA and other settler colonies, and tropical goods for both urban consumption and raw materials for

---

<sup>119</sup> As we will see, Ethiopia is something of an exception to this rule.

<sup>120</sup> As stated many authors reject this notion and view African ruling elites as active agents, rather than passive recipients of the colonial process. See Bayart 1993, 2000; Berman & Lonsdale 1992; Thornton 1998, for example.



industrial input. Whilst the former goods came from countries that traded as nation states on an integrated world grain market, the tropical goods were a result of a very different colonial relationship, one of rule. They were often based on the coercion of native labour to supply these commodities and more importantly, this trade was not internationally integrated. British colonialism in Kenya, for example, resulted in large-scale confiscation of peasant lands and mass migration of men to work on European estates. Thus colonial agriculture in Kenya was designed specifically for export crops such as coffee, tea and sisal (McMichael 2008:35). This relates to patterns of land use in the past and is evident in the present position of Africa in the global food system as is discussed in part 3 of this chapter.

### *Phase 2*

The second phase of the GFS, sometimes referred to as ‘the development project’ (McMichael 2008) which started around the end of the Second World War was ‘more complex, ambiguous and, in the long run self-destructive’ (Raikes & Gibbon 2000:56) It involved a rapid expansion in Northern grain production as a result of new green technologies and massive producer subsidies, and the diversion of land, capital and ultimately grain to increased production of meat. Structural changes resulted in certain parts of the agricultural labour-process being replaced by industrial capital and industrial processes aimed at higher value products. The rise of the WTO saw farmers drawn into networks of contractual relations and other forms of regulation aimed at standardising quality and delivery and homogenising products for consumption in the industrialised countries. Internationally, this period had a dramatic effect on commodity flows, with Europe changing from being a net importer of grain to a net exporter.

The area of new export growth most relevant to the developing world during this period, and particularly relevant to East Africa, was in fresh fruit and flowers. This period has been referred to as the development project because it was about restructuring a world market that was nonetheless subordinate to the development concerns of nation-states (McMichael 2008). It was arguably the beginning of a US centered world economy through which the US created an informal empire based on economic and military might as the European colonial project receded. Through the use of food aid and green technologies many developing countries were incorporated into international circuits of food and agri-business technology that persist. In the

postwar era the US set up a food aid programme to channel food surpluses to Third World countries.<sup>121</sup> This 'food aid regime' evolved from the US agro-industrial model, protected by tariffs and subsidies and institutionalised by GATT (Friedmann 1982). US farmers were motivated to specialise in one or two commodities such as corn, sugar or dairy products, and with the incentives of technological and financial assistance from the public purse, over-produced as a matter of course. These subsidies set prices for farm goods above their price on the world market and the resulting surpluses flooded the developing world with cheap imports. In real terms it was a significant transfer of agricultural resources to the Third World and as a result the 'world-farm emerged alongside the world-factory' (McMichael 2008:106). Crucially, the agricultural policies of many Third World governments switched from focusing on modernising agriculture as a domestic industry towards developing agriculture within a global industry. The negative impacts of such a shift are discussed in the next section.

A crucial factor with regard to these highly sophisticated agricultural systems is their relative flexibility. They can adapt to an increase or decrease in market demand with surprising speed. Such a system can, therefore, respond reasonably quickly to changes in demand most crucially when that demand is expressed in monetary terms. This, however, can lead to increased vulnerability when a country's entire agricultural production is virtually dependent on the vagaries of the international market both in terms of demand and price controls. The negative impact of price volatility of basic foods on developing countries has only recently been fully recognised and is now a key criticism of the way the GFS operates in practice (FAO 2003; SOFI 2011). The recent rise in global food prices and the conversion of food crops to animal feed crops and biofuels are two relevant and important factors in calls for a change to an alternative model of Food Sovereignty. Though, under the current system, agriculture in the developed countries, guarantees high consumption of industrial inputs and energy and maximises the monetary value of output, in real terms it is also wasteful of land and grain and thus inefficient and unsustainable in the long term (Patel 2007).

### **3. The relationship between the global food system and food insecurity.**

---

<sup>121</sup> See Chapter 6 on Food Aid.

An FAO report published in 2003 on 'Trade Reforms and Food Security' suggests that:

...The potential gains from trade liberalisation are not guaranteed and will not necessarily be reflected in improved food security status of all groups within society. In particular, there are likely to be significant differences between the impacts on small scale and commercial farmers, rural non-farm producers and urban consumers both within and across countries. These need to be considered in identifying the food security implications of trade liberalization. (FAO, 2003: 16-17)

As stated, from its earliest inception, European colonisation in Africa established a structure whereby colonies specialised in extraction and production of raw materials and primary goods that were unavailable in Europe. These included rubber, ivory, cocoa, peanuts gold, diamonds and cotton. This specialisation between European economies and their colonies came to be called the 'colonial division of labour' (Warnock 1993). This is explained by WST, which is based on the idea of a single division of labour as the organising concept of the world economy. This division of labour facilitated European industrialisation and pushed non-European societies into primary commodity production. It should be noted that there are significant differences between countries in Africa with regard to their role in the global food system and their vulnerability to famine. More pertinently, there are differences in the direction that African governments are moving in order to improve their food situation.<sup>122</sup> There are, none-the-less, common characteristics, which may help explain the relationship between the GFS and food insecurity on the continent in regional terms before looking at countries at an individual level.

As already made clear, European colonisation is the most obvious shared characteristic across the continent of Africa. The second characteristic and the most relevant in Sub-Saharan Africa is that, even now, the overwhelming majority of the population are peasants or subsistence farmers in as much as they live and work on the land to feed, clothe and house themselves and this makes them vulnerable in a number of ways.<sup>123</sup> The third common characteristic is that these rural societies are extremely

---

<sup>122</sup> See Chapter 7 for a discussion on developments in Kenya and Ethiopia.

<sup>123</sup> See FIAN 2010.

poor, in the main still using simple tools, slashing and burning forests to plant crops and following herds of sheep and cattle over poor grazing ground. The fourth characteristic, and this is of vital importance, is that whatever agricultural development has taken place is largely of products for export to Europe; cash-crops such as cocoa, coffee, tea, palm oil, and bananas, textile fabrics or minerals such as copper, gold, bauxite and most recently oil (Gibbon & Ponte 2000:56) These cash crops demand enormous inputs in terms of time and space in the developing countries but in the GFS, as it is currently constituted, it is developed countries that directly benefit from them. As discussed earlier, the position of producers of basic commodities in modern global commodity chains (GCC) is, generally speaking, subservient to manufacturers and retailers higher up the commodity chain. Research on corporate concentration along commodity chains, from farms to consumers, shows how the dominance of a handful of northern-based agri-food firms in Rural 1 is making it difficult for commodity dependent developing countries to enter global markets. They are prevented from moving up the value-added ladder, reinforcing the cycle of dependency, economic stagnation and extreme poverty (McMichael 2008, Vorley 2003).

Marx was an early critic of what he saw as the inevitable move towards more and more capital-intensive plants and to giant companies accumulating the necessary capital to finance them. The strength of the Marxist model of analysis is that by focusing on the *process* of production, it helps to explain the ongoing strength of the North American, Japanese and European industrially developed nations and the weakness of much of the rest of the world. This is not just the result of the bargaining strength between industrial and agricultural producers in terms of trade (though this is crucial), but also a result of the fact that profits are made, and the actual accumulation of capital takes place, inside the giant multinational companies. Crucially, where this capital should be invested is decided in New York, London, or Tokyo, not in the countries that are affected; it is not in the government offices of the producing nations but in the head offices of the multinational giant companies (Stiglitz 2006: Ch 4) This corporate control can be perceived as a very real obstacle to developing a Food Sovereignty model because of its undeniable power within the dominant agricultural model. The challenges it poses, not just to the right to food, but to land rights and the right to work as well, is inextricably linked to the concept of Food Sovereignty and

will be considered in more detail in the following chapter.

There are certain aspects of the global economic system that have particular significance for African export agriculture. There is, for example a high degree of differentiation between different commodity chains with regard to raw material production, industrial processing/production and consumption. The cotton-to-textiles-to garment commodity chain is probably the most complete in terms of being more or less fully globalised. (Raikes and Gibbon 2000:86) On the opposite end of the scale, there are commodity chains such as cocoa in which raw material production and industrial processing and consumption remain polarised along classic nineteenth-century lines.<sup>124</sup> In many processing industries this division is exacerbated by the trend towards capital intensity and technical complexity, which creates an increasingly unequal distribution of economic opportunities. GCC theory is also a useful tool in disaggregating certain agricultural products from others, edible and non-edible crops for example, and how they relate to land usage. This framework of GCCs allows analysis of certain crops within individual countries, fresh flowers in Kenya for example, and facilitates the measurement of the negative effects on food security.

African crops may be non-edible as in cotton or flowers, edible with no nutritional value such as coffee and tea, or edible food such as bananas, sugar, wheat, vegetables or meat. The important thing to understand here is that the distinction between cash crops (food or non-food) and food crops is who uses or eats them. In the case of cash crops it is almost never the same people who produce them and in terms of finding viable solutions to reduce food insecurity this fact is of monumental importance because it is so obviously political.<sup>125</sup> In Kenya, for example, forty percent of children work on plantations, which produce pineapple, coffee, tea and sugar for export. While these foodstuffs are destined for the European market it is estimated that 10 million Kenyans suffer from chronic food insecurity and around 2 million rely on food assistance at any given time (FIAN 2010:15)

A fifth characteristic is that European colonisation led to national or state boundaries that were drawn fairly arbitrarily, cutting across tribal, ethnic, linguistic, religious and

---

<sup>124</sup> See section below on origins of the relationship between the GFS and exports from Africa.

<sup>125</sup> This lack of ownership of crops produced has important implications for the relevance of Sen's Entitlement Theory, as a protection from hunger, discussed in Chapter 4. It is also a key feature of a Food Sovereignty model.

cultural divisions (Ake 1996).<sup>126</sup> For example, a line was drawn through Somalia cutting off part of the Somali people and placing them within the borders of Kenya. Likewise the Masai nation was split into two between Kenya and Tanzania (Goldsmith 1994). As we will see, the failure of the Kenyan national government to address these issues at the time of independence has ongoing negative political, social and economic consequences today (Branch 2011).<sup>127</sup> Transport links, railways and shipping were developed with the specific aim, to facilitate the export of natural resources to the colonial power. This dependent development has resulted in the division of labour that is still emblematic of the global food system, whether African ruling elites were complicit, or not.

It is the case, of course, that colonialism allowed overtly aggressive approaches to Africa in defence of European national interests. The need for primary commodities and the competition for power and influence between the colonial powers were deemed both natural and justifiable (Gallagher 2011). For proponents of IFR theory this position, generally speaking, remains today, although it should be qualified that the motivation of self-interest is perhaps not the driving force it once was. Indeed it could be argued that the developed world has adopted a ‘constructivist approach’ based on ideas that might include notions of justice and responsibility, rather than the ‘realist approach’ of the past which was motivated by interest alone. This change in approach to a more enlightened one, however, does not negate the argument that both famine and vulnerability to famine continue to be, to a great extent, a result of political factors both past and present.

Lastly, and of great significance to the relationship between the GFS and food insecurity is the dependent trade relationship which evolved during the colonial era. This trade relationship resulted in the emergence of an elite class of state officials and traders, committed beneficiaries of the export/import business with European powers. Many of these ‘elites’ took control when the colonial powers withdrew or were expelled and their advantaged position, and how this relates to land and agricultural policies, remains important at many levels. The Theory of Extraversion can be invoked here. The ‘neo-patrimonial’ position goes as far as to say that ‘sovereignty in

---

<sup>126</sup> Also see Afigbo et al ‘The Making of Modern Africa’, Volume 2, 1989 for an in-depth, but accessible account.

<sup>127</sup> See Chapter 6.

Africa is exercised and maintained through the creation and management of dependence' (Bayart 2000:228) With this in mind later chapters will look at how ruling elites can be held more responsible for ensuring food security through more democratic processes both within and beyond famine prone countries.<sup>128</sup>

What is clear is that in the case of Africa, as a whole, global deregulation in conjunction with liberal economic policies and structural adjustments have resulted in significant changes in agricultural policy.<sup>129</sup> What is of central importance is that these changes have intensified the marginalisation of many Third World countries within the GFS. In contrast to the promise of economic liberalisation, evidence suggests that deregulation, has been considerably one-sided. The introduction of lawyer-driven regulative regimes tends internationally to privilege forms of protection most applicable to advanced industrial economies (anti-dumping) over those historically employed by poorer countries with less sophisticated institutional structures (generally quota-based) (Raikes & Gibbon 2000:87). By way of illustration, many economists have criticised the Uruguay round of trade talks as being skewed in favour of the already rich and developed nations (Pogge 2003; Collier 2007; Sachs 2005) Agricultural subsidies are one of the most contentious of all the issues, which concern the global food system. The agricultural subsidies of the US, the EU and Japan amount to at least 75% of the total income of Sub-Saharan Africa (Stiglitz 2006: 85). Were it not for enormous Government subsidies it would not, for example, pay the US to grow cotton.<sup>130</sup> This causes direct harm to African cotton farmers who simply cannot compete in such an unequal arena. In globally integrated markets international prices affect domestic prices. Heavily subsidised agricultural products from the US and the EU not only affect farmers who could export but also those who sell at home. The usual political reason for continuing with such policies in the US is the government's desire to protect the small family farmer and their traditional way of life. However, the evidence does not support this position. The over-whelming majority of subsidies go to very large, often corporate farms and in fact huge subsidies have actually driven out the small farmer in many areas.<sup>131</sup> The US federal government

---

<sup>128</sup> See Chapters 4-7.

<sup>129</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>130</sup> 25,000 cotton farmers in the US receive between \$3 and \$4 billion a year in subsidies.

<sup>131</sup> McMichael 2008: Ch 4.

spent \$114 billion on farm subsidies between 1995-2002, and it was estimated that the 2002 Farm Bill would cost at least \$180 billion for the ten years following its implementation.<sup>132</sup>

Furthermore, countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia are at a particular disadvantage by the ways in which developed countries have structured agricultural trade tariffs. By placing higher export tariffs on manufactured goods than on raw materials, developing countries have been discouraged from developing any processing industries. Through these escalating tariffs countries in the European Union, for example, continue to receive a supply of cheap raw materials while reducing the threat posed to processing industries from the developing world. Judging by the crops chosen for production in East African large-scale land acquisitions this structural inequity in the food system is likely to be perpetuated.<sup>133</sup>

One further factor in the relationship between the global food system and food insecurity is the link between rising oil prices and the rise in the price of basic foods such as cereals. Rising oil prices contribute to costs of agricultural production through the cost of fertiliser, other inputs and transport. Oil prices have been rising steadily for the last three years and this is generally understood as having contributed to the food price rise since 2008. In the wake of an oil price rise in 1974 there was a wave of food crises, which led to famine, across parts of Africa and Asia. At least as important as its direct effect on food prices is an indirect consequence of the price of oil. The rising cost of oil has led to a shift in the US, with encouragement from government subsidies, to the use of corn in the production of ethanol as an alternative energy source. Nearly one third of corn acreage in the US has now been diverted to ethanol production (Crow 2008) Global food grain stocks are at a 25-year low, encouraging speculative trading in food grains or food grain futures contracts. All these factors - the oil price rise, the shift to ethanol production and the reliance on the global food market, rather than national reserve stocks, to make up agricultural scarcities - have reduced the supply of cereals for food thus increased global food insecurity.

---

<sup>132</sup> US Farm Bill 2002:Its implications for World Agricultural Markets, available at <http://networkideas.org> Accessed 29/11/09.

<sup>133</sup> See Chapter 7.



*The GFS and exports from Africa.*

This section will look specifically at how certain aspects of the global food system are increasing food insecurity in parts of Africa (Massari 2003) and have led to what has been referred to as a ‘crisis in primary production’ (Vorley 2003:14-20). The UNCTAD report on international trade commodities showed that while Africa increased its share of fuels on the world market, it experienced severe losses in agriculture and non-fuel commodities. In fact the least developed countries have lost market share for all commodity groups except fuel (UNCTAD 2004).<sup>134</sup> This, potentially, has a very serious impact on a country’s ability to feed its own people and to protect itself from price volatility because it has to import much of its food needs. In the last four decades, the continent of Africa has changed from being a net exporter of basic food staples to relying on imports and food aid (Massari 2003).

These are however, predictable feature of a GFS that continues to be liberalised, WTO led and driven by economic rationalism. Two specific areas are generally considered to have had the most negative impacts in an African context. Firstly, concentration on the production of certain crops in the GFS deprives African countries, in general, of value added in the production price as profits are most significant in the manufacturing process (Raikes & Gibbon 2000). Thus the rationale of the GFS has driven a conversion from labour to capital intensive production and corporate concentration in agriculture.<sup>135</sup> Secondly the type of crops that have been grown for export is relevant and the growth of non-food crops has had a clear negative impact on national food security in parts of Africa. Kenya can be considered as a classic example of this phenomenon.

In general terms the most obvious negative impacts of the GFS in Africa are related to the terms of trade and range of export crops. The range of the continents main export crops is relatively narrow and has shown only limited evidence of broadening in recent decades (Raikes and Gibbon 2000). African Exports can be divided into two general groups, usually referred to as ‘traditional’ and new or ‘non-traditional’ export crops. The traditional export crops, which originated during the colonial period,

---

<sup>134</sup> In view of what we know and understand about the negative impact of the ‘resource curse’ this development is of great concern. See Collier 2007:Ch 3 for an analysis of the ‘natural resource trap’.

<sup>135</sup> See Vorley (2003) ‘Corporate concentration from farm to consumer’ for a detailed and wide-ranging examination of the concentration of business in global and regional agrifood chains.

include coffee, tea, cocoa, cotton, tobacco, sugar and rubber. The non-traditional export crops, which, as explained earlier, expanded during the second phase of the development project, include potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, pulses, onions, fresh fruits (including canned fruit) and cut flowers. Of these new export crops cut flowers are the most important and in terms of their growth in food insecure countries, the most controversial. The other general observation about the negative impact of the way the GFS is structured is the growth of biofuel production, in competition with food production, and the risks this imposes on food availability.<sup>136</sup>

With regard to the terms of trade, FAO Trade Year Books 1984-86 and 1994-96 show a continual fall in the value of Africa's share of exports and an ongoing deterioration of the 'terms of trade' for Africa's main 'traditional' export crops (Raikes & Gibbon 2000:61). This situation arises when the cost of imports continues to rise faster than income from exports. As stated, farmers in the poorest countries rarely control the processing technology or distribution systems, which could add value to their produce. Multinationals now control most of these areas and import the raw materials from developing countries then export the finished products back to source at hugely inflated prices.<sup>137</sup> The latest series of FAO trade yearbooks, which started in 2004, show a continuation of this trend. The three sectors most obviously affected by the inequity of this process are coffee, cocoa, grains and oil-seeds.

*How the GFS deprives African countries of value-added: coffee, cocoa and grains.*

Coffee is one of the world's most valuable agricultural commodities, next to oil, coffee is the most valuable commodity exported from the tropics. The world's largest coffee producers are Brazil and Columbia but the countries with the highest national dependency on coffee exports are Ethiopia, Burundi, Uganda and Rwanda (Vorley 2003: 47) Indeed the coffee bean is believed to have originated in Ethiopia and the Arabian Peninsula (Bates 1997). Roughly half of the world's coffee comes from small farms, of less than 5 hectares in coffee production, thus making it a very important commodity in terms of rural livelihoods. For many nations coffee constitutes a major source of foreign exchange, and everywhere it has been grown the politics of coffee has proved central to the politics of national development (Brazil can be considered

---

<sup>136</sup> See Holt-Gomez (2007) 'Biofuels: The five myths of the Agro-fuels transition' and Ford Runge & Senauer (2007) 'How Biofuels could starve the poor'.

<sup>137</sup> In theoretical terms this is a clear demonstration of Marx's theory of surplus value.

the classic example). Because of its importance as an export crop the politics of coffee is not just about domestic issues such as land rights, marketing controls and labour conditions but also international issues such as global prices and terms of trade. The global coffee market is mature with global consumption at about 7 million tonnes (FAO 2010). Coffee producing countries however, are not the main beneficiaries of this lucrative trade and thus it is not altogether surprising that the Food Sovereignty framework evolved from the international farming and peasant movement, La Via Campesina, which originated in Brazil.

In the early 1960s developing nations succeeded in forming a political agency to regulate international trade of the product – the International Coffee Organisation (ICO) (Gibbon & Ponte 2000). However the multi-lateral market mechanisms to regulate coffee production instigated by (ICO) have broken down since the collapse of the International Coffee Agreement (ICA), which was in place between 1962-1989. The ICA successfully raised and stabilised coffee prices but it was undermined and ultimately failed, it has been argued, due to the power wielded in the processing countries (Bates 1997). Again, this is perhaps a predictable outcome of a liberalised, WTO led GFS predicated on economic rationalism. Whatever the reasons, it seems clear that the end of the ICA signaled a shift in the balance of power in the coffee chain in favour of the commercial interests in the industrialised countries where the processing takes place. This is reflected in a higher proportion of value being added in the consuming countries. The main importing countries of unroasted coffee (known as green coffee in the industry) are the US, Germany (from where a significant quantity is re-exported), Japan and the rest of the EU. According to Ponte (2001) between 1989/90 and 1994/95 the proportion of total income gained by producers dropped by 13% whereas the proportion retained by consuming countries rose to 78%. Research commissioned by Oxfam, shows a stark decline in the share of coffee retail prices retained by producing countries. Coffee, which left farms/plantations as ‘fresh cherry’ or wet processed coffee earned \$0.06/kg and retailed at \$3.57/kg.<sup>138</sup>

*Cocoa* is another export crop that is of major importance to many African countries. Four of the eight largest cocoa-producing countries are in Africa; they are Cote

---

<sup>138</sup> See St Jean-Kufuor 2002 at <http://www.maketradefair.com/en/assets/english/CoffeeValueChain.pdf> for a breakdown of the margins in a coffee value chain. Accessed 01/04/11

d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon. Ten million Africans are involved in Cocoa production, most of which is exported to countries within the EU. Like coffee, two-thirds of all cocoa is ground in the consuming countries in the developed world and the value added margin in the producing country has declined from around 60% to less than 30% in the last three decades. (Vorley 2003:49-50). Coffee and cocoa farmers are amongst the most poverty stricken groups in African farming. Despite some African countries benefiting from the market liberalisation rationale of the global food system, Ghana is often cited as an example,<sup>139</sup> the general pattern resulting from withdrawal of government support from price setting and marketing has been deeper impoverishment. Small farmers have been systematically exposed to the extremes of market volatility and the superior bargaining power of international commodity buyers through the WTO.

Cocoa processing is concentrated within only four companies (Cargill, ADM, Barry Callebaut and Hosta) controlling 40% of cocoa grinding. The impact of the liberalisation in the cocoa sector has had a particularly negative impact on the Côte d'Ivoire. The domination by the multi-national processors has meant that the local exporters share of the export market has declined from 43% in 1997-98 to 10% in 1999-2000.<sup>140</sup> Apart from price volatility, the impoverishment of cocoa farmers has led to serious human rights abuses with issues of forced labour and child slavery in African cocoa plantations.<sup>141</sup>

### *Grains*

In the contemporary global food system, grains are produced for three reasons: human consumption; animal feed; and industrial purposes including biofuels. The fact that in the modern GFS cereals and oil seeds have virtually no retail demand but are sold as inputs to industrial processes that include the rearing of livestock and the production of bread, pasta and sweeteners is of great and growing significance. The impact, in terms of value added, affects both the countries that produce the raw materials (China and India in the main) but more importantly on the developing countries that import them. It is the case that developing countries account for nearly 80% of all wheat

---

<sup>139</sup> See 'The cocoa market – a background study at [www.maketrade-fair.com](http://www.maketrade-fair.com) Accessed 04/05/11

<sup>140</sup> See International task force on commodity risk management in developing countries (2002) at [www.itf-commrisk.org/documents](http://www.itf-commrisk.org/documents). Accessed 04/05/11

<sup>141</sup> See 'What is the Real Cost of Chocolate' at <http://www.worldvision.com.au>. Accessed 04/05/11

imports (Vorley 2003:39). Corporate control of the global grain trade was high on the political agenda in the 1970's and this has been further entrenched ever since.<sup>142</sup> The conversion, from labour to capital-intensive farming is an integral part and a defining feature of the modern GFS.

Concerns are generally expressed about the effects of the production phase, especially farming and processing, because these effects are more obvious. However, patterns of food consumption also contribute considerably to the lack of sustainability of the global food system and the changing use of grains is central to this debate.<sup>143</sup>

#### **4. Changes in export crop agriculture in Kenya**

The growth in non-traditional export crops such as flowers, fresh fruits and vegetables (FFVs) in Kenya is significant for this thesis for two reasons. Firstly, in terms of GCC theory this sector is essentially a short, buyer driven chain with very little state involvement, and is thus offered very little social protection. Profits, however, are highly concentrated at the end of the chain in the importing countries. The power of the retailer is paramount and when people in the developed world talk about 'supermarket power' it is generally to this particular area that they are referring to. This power is manifested in terms of exclusive contract growing and highly controlled quality standards set by the MNCs. Research by Dolan et al (1999) estimated that 46% of retail value of FFV exports from Kenya is retained by supermarkets whereas the producers share was only 14%. Such concern is echoed in the report of the FAO Panel of Eminent Experts on Ethics in Food and Agriculture (2000) which noted that 'there are serious power imbalances arising from the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few' (DFID 2004:5).<sup>144</sup>

The second important point is the shift from smallholder contract production introduced in the late colonial and early independence period to centralised employment on farms and packing-houses. This shift to large-scale commercial farming has transformed Kenyan farmers, particularly women farmers, into a migrant labour force as a necessary household survival strategy (Dolan 2004) The increased vulnerability of Kenya's food sufficiency, as a result of these changes, is of real

---

<sup>142</sup> See Chapter 6 on the politics of food aid

<sup>143</sup> See Chapter 7 on the growth of land and grain use for biofuels.

<sup>144</sup> See <http://dfid-agriculture-consultation.nri.org/summaries/wp13.pdf> Accessed 04/01/12

concern on a number of levels (Humphrey 2008).

Though Africa is by no means the major global exporter of FFVs (China, India, Brazil, the US and EU account for 70% of global exports) a sizeable export orientated horticulture industry has developed in both Kenya and Ethiopia for the European market. In Kenya about 90 percent of horticulture is destined for Europe (especially the UK) with main the exports being canned pineapples, fresh vegetables and cut flowers. Fruit, flower and vegetable exports from Kenya have increased by 70% since 1995. Horticulture is now Kenya's second biggest earner of foreign exchange and the industry supports as many as 500,000 workers (Vorley 2003:69). Despite workers in this sector earning more than workers in many other sectors, the flexibility required to meet supermarket standards has led to a worsening of labour conditions, long hours and the casualisation of labour.<sup>145</sup>

What this growth in non-traditional exports from Kenya is indicative of is the global shift from traditional cereal consumption to other food types such as meat, fruit and vegetables. The evidence suggests that those parts of the world that have already achieved adequate amounts of food, i.e. 60% of the global population, are now demanding an ever greater variety of food stuffs and there is empirical evidence to show that middle-income countries food consumption patterns are converging.<sup>146</sup> Many Asian populations, for example, who up until the 1980s consumed most of their cereal intake as rice, now demand wheat products such as bread and noodles along with more meat, fruit and vegetables.<sup>147</sup> Food consumption patterns in Thailand in recent decades offer a good example of this phenomenon where rice comprised 99% of cereal consumption in 1960 compared with less than 70% in the 1990s and less than 50% by 2000.<sup>148</sup> Whether or not these changes are consumer driven or corporate producer led is beyond the remit of this discussion.<sup>149</sup> What is not in dispute, however, is that the trend is on an upward trajectory (SOFI 2011). These emerging patterns are of increasing significance in the way that changing global agricultural demands impact

---

<sup>145</sup> See DFID (2004) for a balanced assessment of the significant concerns associated with this export orientated agricultural model.

<sup>146</sup> [www.ers.usda.gov/Amberwaves/February08](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Amberwaves/February08)

<sup>147</sup> The question as to whether this demand is consumer or producer led is beyond the remit of this study on food but it is an interesting and important question if steps are to be taken to reverse this overall trend.

<sup>148</sup> See Rice Today 2002 at [www.irri.org](http://www.irri.org) Accessed 10/06/2010.

<sup>149</sup> See Nestle (2007).

on a country's ability to feed itself, and this is certainly the case in Kenya.

*Export crops in Ethiopia.*

Ethiopia offers an interesting contrast to Kenya in terms of its position within the global food system. The absence of colonial rule meant that Ethiopian agriculture was not developed, specifically, for exporting raw materials and other produce to the European colonial powers. None the less its main agricultural produce is coffee and, as explained by GCC theory, this subjects Ethiopia to the inequities of the global trading system. Coffee accounts, on average, for about 35 percent of Ethiopia's export earnings (AFRODAD 2005). In addition, unlike Kenya, Ethiopia covers a vast area but it is landlocked and is mainly dependent on Djibouti for its import/export trade. This restricts, to a large extent, the level that it can engage with the international economy because its transport and freight costs are relatively high. It has a predominantly agricultural economy with more than 80% of the population dependent on some sort of agricultural production for their livelihood. Within this context, 8.2 million Ethiopians are classed as chronically food insecure, being unable to overcome persistent drought conditions. They are assisted by the government's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) which provides cash in return for labour on community projects, or food for those unable to work. In this regard, the IFR theories cannot fully explain Ethiopia's decades of food insecurity, but there have clearly been other political factors at work. The first is undoubtedly the role of conflict, particularly those concerning border disputes with Eritrea. The second relates to land-ownership, in as much as in a present context, all Ethiopian land is government owned. According to liberal economic theory this may explain why agricultural production has remained fairly static and international technological advances have not materialised. However, this may well be about to change. The current government in Ethiopia has declared medium term plans that go beyond a vision of ending hunger and food insecurity in their country. Ambitious growth in agricultural output is a key strategic component of their broader goal to achieve middle-income status. Government plans describe this strategy as 'agriculture development led industrialisation'. The government's intention is to invest resources, not just in the chronically vulnerable households, but also in the more successful small farms, which have potential to graduate from subsistence to semi-commercial. Ethiopia's flower industry has become a new source for export

revenue. The industry began in 2004, when the government made an aggressive push for foreign investments by establishing a presence at major international floricultural events. Since then, export earnings from this sector have grown significantly and are projected to double over the next few years. Along with pulses and oil-seeds, horticulture is very likely to attract more foreign direct investment and land acquisition in the coming years. Whether or not this transition will be attempted through the current industrial/ export model of agriculture or it will develop along lines more akin to a Food Sovereignty model is an interesting question to which the answer is not yet known. We will return to this question in Chapter 7.

### **Concluding Comments**

First and foremost, this chapter has established that the global food system can be understood within an historical context in which the developed, industrialised world represented itself as a model for future economic growth. It evolved during the era of European colonialism and changed shape but continued after the Second World War becoming part of the so-called globalisation project (McMichael 2008). This new direction reflected the growth in scale and power of the international financial institutions and corporations and their influence on the global food system as it is currently constructed. The present GFS cannot be described as sustainable in that it cannot ensure the present and future quality and access of food for all. Even a cursory glance at the global food situation reveals a system characterised by contrasts and disparities, perhaps nowhere more obviously than in the simultaneous problems of obesity and serious under-nutrition. The most food insecure communities are, to a large extent, smallholders, landless workers, pastoralists or fisherfolk, often situated in marginal and vulnerable ecological environments. Moreover, they are often neglected by both national and international policies. Without proper support they cannot compete with increasingly subsidised industrialised agriculture. For many of them market liberalisation has resulted in damaging and often unfair competition with farmers or commercial entities that have 'acquired' comparative advantages through decades of direct and indirect subsidies. The situation often results in smallholders being forced off their land and moving to even more marginal areas or migrating to the shantytowns around cities. From a political perspective, food consumption is ultimately about power and access to resources. A critical view of the global food



system cannot but challenge an agricultural model, which dictates that the availability and distribution of a basic and precious resource such as food must be governed by market forces that favour only those with bargaining and purchasing power. A broader understanding of the inefficiencies of the current dominant agricultural model is gaining momentum and so is the pursuit of an alternative model. This line of enquiry will be developed in the next chapter, which focuses on the concept of Food Sovereignty.

## CHAPTER 3 – FOOD SOVEREIGNTY-THE IDEA

Food Sovereignty implies the implementation of radical processes of comprehensive agrarian reform adapted to the conditions of each country and region, which will provide peasant and indigenous farmers – with equal opportunities for women – with equitable access to productive resources, primarily land, water and forests, as well as the means of production, financing, training and capacity building for management and interlocation. Agrarian reform, above all, should be recognized as an obligation of national governments where this process is necessary within the framework of human rights and as an efficient public policy to combat poverty. These agrarian reform processes must be controlled by peasant organizations – including the land rents market – and guarantee both individual and collective rights of producers over shared lands, as articulated in coherent agricultural and trade policies. We oppose the policies and programs for the commercialization of land promoted by the World Bank instead of true agrarian reforms accepted by governments. (Final Declaration, World Forum on Food Sovereignty, Havana Cuba, September 7, 2001).<sup>150</sup>

The aim of this chapter is to introduce and critically explore the concept of Food Sovereignty. Food Sovereignty is conceptualised throughout this thesis as both a goal, in and of itself, and a process by which this goal could be achieved. This chapter begins by defining Food Sovereignty and highlights the essential conceptual differences between three key approaches to food insecurity: the right to food, food security and Food Sovereignty. Part 2 then explores the origins of Food Sovereignty as a social movement, particularly in a Latin American context, with a view of exploring it in an African context in later chapters. Its development is traced over the last 15 years or so and includes a discussion of the factors that inspired the movement and a brief overview of the core declarations and documents that have been crucial to its development.<sup>151</sup> It is impossible to explore the development of Food Sovereignty

---

<sup>150</sup> [www.fao.org/Regional/Laneria/ong/cuba/pdf/06apoeng.pdf](http://www.fao.org/Regional/Laneria/ong/cuba/pdf/06apoeng.pdf).

<sup>151</sup> See Windfuhr & Jonsén 2005:47-52 for a comprehensive overview of the Food Sovereignty literature.

without acknowledging the centrality of the role played by the international movement known as La Via Campesina (which literally means ‘the peasants way’).<sup>152</sup> Part 3 of this chapter considers the scope for institutional reform as identified by the International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC).<sup>153</sup> The Food Sovereignty policy framework includes a set of principles that protect the policy space for peoples and countries to define their agricultural and food policies, and their models of production and food consumption patterns. This section introduces four key areas of reform which are now generally understood as necessary for Food Sovereignty to become a reality. These are: the right to food, access to productive resources, mainstreaming of agroecological production and local markets (Lee 2007:6). Advocates of Food Sovereignty stress that the framework is a ‘total package’; that the four pillars of the framework cannot be isolated from each other and that reform of food and agricultural requires fundamental change.

A key area of reform for the argument developed in this chapter is land reform. Land allocation is a political issue and addressing the ownership and maldistribution of productive land is a prerequisite in the Food Sovereignty model.<sup>154</sup> Failures in the private control of food security identified in the previous chapter are leading to a response in the form of Food Sovereignty (Lee 2007, McMichael 2009). First and foremost, this response calls for the control of food production and consumption to be resituated within democratic processes operating in localised food systems. The changes advocated by a Food Sovereignty model can be likened to bringing current international political and economic policies on food closer to a Kantian understanding of justice.<sup>155</sup> The Food Sovereignty model is committed to finding ways of organising both production and distribution to meet needs, including material needs, the absence of which destroys capacities or power to act autonomously. The conclusion reached in this chapter is that the concept of Food Sovereignty is a persuasive and highly political one, although not without significant challenges.

---

<sup>152</sup> [www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org)

<sup>153</sup> IPC is a global network of grass-root organisations and NGOs/CSOs concerned with Food Sovereignty and it is the focal point for this coalition. It includes social organisations representing small farmers, fisher folk, indigenous peoples, agricultural workers’ trade unions; sub-regional/regional NGOs/CSOs and NGO networks with particular expertise on issues related to Food Sovereignty and agriculture.

<sup>154</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>155</sup> See O’Neill (2000: 149-164) for an accessible account of Kantian justice.

**1. Definition.**

The notion of sovereignty has, in the past, been used by governments to obstruct international action aimed at preventing them from starving their own populations<sup>156</sup> or at the very least from failing in their obligation to fulfil the 'right to food'. This is, to a great extent, due to the way in which sovereignty is defined; sovereignty can be understood as pertaining to the State, the government or the people. In terms of international law it is generally interpreted in terms of the State or government, whereas from a human rights perspective it is obviously predicated on the people. However, if sovereignty can be defined as having the means to achieving self-determination, then it is logical that self-determination must relate to the people not just the State. Accordingly, Food Sovereignty does not primarily refer to nation-state sovereignty. A new and modern definition of sovereignty can be found in the different interpretations of Food Sovereignty. Sovereignty is used to demand the right to control policies, the distribution of resources, and national and international decision-making for those who are directly affected by these policies. Indeed it can be conceived of as a model based on deliberative democracy.<sup>157</sup> The term has, therefore, connotations of local democracy, direct democracy, participatory development, and subsidiarity<sup>158</sup> rather than national policy formulation and government bureaucracies. In other words the people must be given some guarantees and protections to enable them to provide for, and have control over, their own futures. It is within this political and democratic context that Food Sovereignty can be more fully understood.

Food Sovereignty is defined by the International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC) as

The RIGHT of peoples, communities, and countries to define their own agricultural, labour, fishing, food and land policies which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique

---

<sup>156</sup> Sudan, Niger and Ethiopia are just three examples of where this has occurred in recent years. It needs to be said that sovereignty has, to a large extent, been set aside in investigating past human rights violations. This was demonstrated by legal proceedings following conflict in the Balkans, and more recently Iraq. Crucially, it can be an obstacle to preventing these violations from actually happening.

<sup>157</sup> Deliberative democracy holds that, for a democratic decision to be legitimate, it must be preceded by authentic deliberation, not merely the aggregation of preferences that occurs in voting. This demands decision-making, which is free from distortions of unequal political power, economic wealth or overly powerful interest groups.

<sup>158</sup> Subsidiarity can be defined as the idea that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks, which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level.

circumstances. It includes the true right to food and to produce food, which means that all people have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources and the ability to sustain themselves and their societies.<sup>159</sup>

Food Sovereignty, therefore, can be understood as an extension of the right to food in that it demands democratic autonomy for people with respect to food, in a way that the right to food does not. Key elements of democracy such as equality, representation, accountability and transparency, particularly with regard to how they relate to food systems, are central to the concept of Food Sovereignty. Food Sovereignty, therefore, involves the right to consume and produce food and a range of other sub-rights, so it is a more complex and ambitious idea than the simple right to food. This broader perspective on rights and food is summed up by Jean Ziegler, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the Right to Food:

The right to food is a human right that is protected by international law. It is the right to have regular, permanent and unobstructed access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the consumer belongs, and ensuring a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free from anxiety. Governments have a legal obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food...

Whilst emphasising both the primary obligation of government and the need for international cooperation, Ziegler goes on to say that

...more attention should be paid to the alternative models proposed by civil society, particularly the concept of Food Sovereignty. Access to land and agrarian reform, in particular, must be the key elements of the right to food. (Ziegler 2008)

---

<sup>159</sup> See [www.foodsovereignty.org](http://www.foodsovereignty.org)

The seven key strategic principles of Food Sovereignty are summarised below.<sup>160</sup>

1. Food: A Basic Human Right – Everyone must have access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain a healthy life with full human dignity.
2. Agrarian Reform – A genuine agrarian reform is necessary which gives landless and farming people – especially women – ownership and control of the land they work and returns territories to indigenous peoples
3. Protecting Natural Resources – Food Sovereignty entails the sustainable care and use of natural resources, especially land, water, and seeds and livestock breeds.
4. Reorganizing Food Trade – Food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade. National agricultural policies must prioritise production for domestic consumption and food self-sufficiency.
5. Ending the Globalisation of Hunger – Food Sovereignty is undermined by multilateral institutions and by speculative capital. The growing control of multinational corporations over agricultural policies has been facilitated by the economic policies of multilateral organizations such as the WTO, World Bank and the IMF.
6. Social Peace – Everyone has the right to be free from violence. Food must not be used as a weapon.
7. Democratic control – Smallholder farmers must have direct input into formulating agricultural policies at all levels. The United Nations and related organizations will have to undergo a process of democratisation to enable this to become a reality.

Food Sovereignty can also be conceptualised as something other than previous demands for food security. The right to food, for example, is a legal concept; food security is considered more of a technical one; whilst Food Sovereignty is essentially a political one.<sup>161</sup> Food Sovereignty emanated from a political discourse focusing on the self-determination of local communities and allowing self-defined ways to seek solutions to local problems. This differentiation is an important one both conceptually

---

<sup>160</sup> See Appendix 3 for a more comprehensive list of the seven principles.

<sup>161</sup> See Windfuhr & Jonsén (2005:19-24) for a helpful comparison between these three concepts.

and in policy-making terms and so merits further explanation.

The 'right to food' is the oldest concept used in the discourse on food insecurity and was recognised by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. It was also included in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights of 1976. Thus the 'right to food' is indeed a legal concept, enshrined in international law and considered a fundamental human right, arguably upon which most other rights depend. As a human right, it implies that an individual can require the State and the communities of states to respect, protect and fulfil their needs for appropriate access to sufficient food of an acceptable quality. The right to food provides for individual entitlements and related state obligations, which are enshrined in national and international law. In this sense the right to food empowers oppressed communities and individuals against the State and other powerful actors. The reality, of course, is that the 'right to food' is a right that is frequently unfulfilled. The 'right to food', therefore, is commonly seen as an aspirational right that cannot be judicially enforced but is rather a statement of intention from government towards its citizens. However, since it is in the category of a human right, rather than a contested political concept, it has an essentially different and less contentious character than food security and Food Sovereignty.

'Food security' is a much more problematic term and one against which the concept of Food Sovereignty is very often contrasted. Smith et al (1992) pointed to the fact that food security has been defined in at least 200 ways not least because it can be differentiated in terms of scale, which varies from household to regional, to national or global. Hence the bias of the concept of food security towards global, national or regional availability of food, rather than individual access to food by deprived persons or groups. The FIVIMS analysis, however, is becoming more comprehensive in this respect, allowing an improved recognition of typical groups of affected people at the national or regional level.<sup>162</sup> There is, however, still a significant difference between this and a rights-based approach that starts from the entitlement of an individual, family or group.

---

<sup>162</sup> FIVIMS is a tool developed in response to the 1996 World Food Summit results. A technical consultation on Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS) was held at the FAO in March 1997. It recommended developing guidelines for the establishment of FIVIMS at the national level. The guidelines were published in 2000 (IAGW-FIVIMS, 2000).

The definition of food security has also changed over time and tends to reflect the relevant political and economic context. The FAO have tracked the evolution of food security as a concept, which sheds light on how and why the meaning of food security has been repeatedly redefined (FAO 2003). The first official definition of food security originated in 1974 and was defined as

The availability at all times of adequate food supplies of basic food stuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices. (United Nations 1975 cited in FAO 2003)

According to Patel (2009) the utility of this definition is derived from the political and economic context at the time. The 1970's saw devastating famine in the Sahel region of Africa (Watts 1983) which, in part, gave rise to the notion of a 'New International Economic Order' (NIEO) aimed at improving the position of the developing world in the global economy (Barratt-Brown 1987).<sup>163</sup> This new economic order was to be achieved by the guarantee of stable and fair prices for Third World raw materials, free access to Northern markets, an end to subsidies and trade policies biased in favour of the developed world, alleviation of debt and so forth. These policy changes were to be developed during a series of negotiating rounds referred to as the Uruguay round (1986-1994). This round also gave rise to an international organisation dedicated to administering the rules of world trade – the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which superseded the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). It was arguably the most powerful period for Third World governments in terms of their ability to influence the international agenda. The establishment of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) as a tool for stabilisation of commodity prices is a reflection of this relative power (Rajagopal 2000).

In this context states were perceived as the most appropriate and effective basis for redistributing resources, providing those resources were made available to them. From this perspective it was logical to think in terms of sufficient global supplies and price stabilisation as the primary concerns of Third World governments.

However over the last three or four decades both the priorities of food security and the language used have changed significantly. In 2001 the FAO declared:

---

<sup>163</sup> Discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.



Food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets the dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO 2001)

This more recent definition is more wide-ranging and to a considerable extent reflects the growth in influence of NGOs and activists in the food policy-making community. Perhaps the most important effect is that their growing influence has allowed the agents involved in policy making to include non-state actors. The most significant shift has been from a concentration on production and trade based issues towards a broader set of concerns that include a variety of rights based issues. It is also relevant that this period in the evolution of defining 'food security' coincided with what critics regard as a breakaway from the commitment to a full meeting of human rights to the 'watered down version of the Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs)<sup>164</sup> (Patel 2009). The authors of the UNDHR had intended rights, such as the right to food, to be implemented universally and with all due haste. Whereas, from a critical perspective, the MDGs are a set of realistically achievable goals with a more elastic time frame. The early 2000s were also a time when institutions such as the FAO, which were created to eradicate hunger, were looking increasingly irrelevant in the core policy making with regard to food production and consumption priorities. (Martinez-Torres & Rosset 2010) Thus the expansion of the definition of food security within the FAO reflects both a progressive change in its approach to understanding food security but, equally, its failure as a guiding principle in shaping contemporary international food policy.

From a critical perspective the basis on which food is, or is not, made available by the international community has shifted away from institutions that might have prioritised issues of food security (certainly according to the latter definition) to a position that defers to the mechanisms of the market. The market, of course, is driven by an altogether different set of priorities than those which favour and safeguard food security. The definition of food security has clearly broadened in scope and has shifted from being simply concerned with issues of production and distribution of food to a

---

<sup>164</sup> See Appendix 5.

whole variety of concerns around nutrition, social control and public health. In terms of this analysis it is relevant to ascertain the extent to which this broadening in scope was a direct result of the evolution of Food Sovereignty.

As stated, La Via Campesina introduced the concept of Food Sovereignty as a policy framework and discourse in 1996 at the World Food Summit, principally as a response to the inclusion of agriculture within the world trading system through the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA).<sup>165</sup> The trade rules agreed in the AoA were not significantly different from the policy recommendations given previously by the World Bank and the IMF. The key difference was that the rules for trade now became fixed in a binding international agreement which member countries had to adhere to; otherwise they could face penalties or sanctions through the dispute settlement procedure. Most importantly for this analysis, trade policy rules became increasingly political since they set not only the terms for tariffs, but also stringent conditions and regulations for national policies. From food safety regulations to intellectual property protection, from agricultural subsidies to price support for basic staple foods, the WTO regulations came to deeply affect national policy frameworks.

If we consider again the 2001 definition of food security (FAO 2001), what is critical is that this definition does not in anyway address the social or political control of the global, or even local, food system. It is entirely possible, for example, for people to be food secure within a brutal dictatorship, an occupied territory or a refugee camp totally dependent on food aid. From a state centred perspective, the absence of specifying how food security should come about is an entirely rational position to take. Obviously, the introduction of any kind of commitment to a particular set of internal political arrangements would have made agreement on defining food security considerably more difficult.

However, having evolved, largely due to negative outcomes in food security, partly as a result of structural adjustment (SA) and other policies, La Via Campesina's position was entirely different and specifically challenged the prevailing approaches to food security.<sup>166</sup> From the outset La Via Campesina's position was that the inclusion of

---

<sup>165</sup> The AoA was agreed during the Uruguay round of trade talks (1986-1994) with the intention of reducing domestic state support for agriculture, improving market access for agricultural imports and reducing subsidies provided to agricultural exports.

<sup>166</sup> See Chapter 4 for negative impact of structural adjustment programmes on food security.

internal political arrangements was a necessary component of food security. Indeed Food Sovereignty was deemed a necessary precondition for food security.

Long-term food security depends on those who produce food and care for the natural environment. As the stewards of food producing resources we hold the following principles as the necessary foundation for achieving food security. . . . Food is a basic human right. This right can only be realized in a system where Food Sovereignty is guaranteed. Food Sovereignty is the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productive diversity. We have the right to produce our own food in our own territory. Food Sovereignty is a precondition to genuine food security. (La Via Campesina 1996)

The crucial point is that questions were being raised about the *context* of food security, not just the *content*. By definition, this poses questions about the power relations that dominate decision making with regard to how food security should be attained. Thus, the introduction of the notion of Food Sovereignty recognised for the first time that the power politics of the global food system need to feature explicitly in the discussions of food security. The Food Sovereignty framework also applies a rights-based approach; it includes the rights of access of smallholder farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk to food-producing resources as well as the right to food and availability of just markets. It is written more from a rural perspective, where most food insecurity exists, and can be seen as a new blueprint for rural development policies. Unlike food security, which is a set of goals for food and nutrition policies, the Food Sovereignty framework is formulated as an alternative policy proposition to liberalised industrial agriculture and it combines elements from different policy areas into one framework.

In view of the fact that Food Sovereignty, as a concept, emerged during a period often thought of as the epitome of US hegemony (McMichael 2008), and the triumph of liberal capitalism (Fukuyama 1992), it would be easy to assume that the chances of any real success would have been minimal. However, given States' reluctance to discuss the means by which food security was to be achieved (FAO 2003), it made absolute sense for the Food Sovereignty movement to adopt language that States had already committed themselves to (Patel 2009). Thus the language of Food Sovereignty

fits neatly into the existing international discourse by making rights and democracy its central tenets. These concepts are, after all, the cornerstones of liberal democracy, the political system of choice in most of the developed world.

## **2. Origins of Food Sovereignty as a social and political movement.**

This next section looks at some of the key factors behind the development of Food Sovereignty over the last decade and a half and looks at how this process is continuing to evolve. As stated, the concept of Food Sovereignty is most closely associated with the organisation known as La Via Campesina. Over recent decades local, regional, then national movements against neoliberal policies were spilling over national borders and were rapidly developing into transnational networks (Desmarais 2007). Thus it was in 1992 that peasant and family farmers' organisations from Central America, North America, the Caribbean and Europe met in Managua, Nicaragua at the second congress of the National Union of Farmers and Cattle Ranchers (UNAG) and the idea of la Via Campesina came to fruition (Edelman 1998). This was followed up in 1993, when more than 70 peasant and farm leaders from various countries met in Mons, Belgium, to develop a strategy with which to challenge the negative impact on their communities as a result of a neoliberal international economic agenda. Over the next decade they and millions of peasants and small-scale farmers around the world used La Via Campesina to forge a powerful and radical force of opposition. La Via Campesina is now an international alliance of peasant organisations, family farmers and workers, indigenous people, landless peasants and rural women and youth, committed to collective action. By 2008, the regional components of La Via Campesina were North America (including Mexico), South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, South Asia, East and South East Asia and most recently, two regions of Africa, grouped as Africa 1 and Africa 2. In August 2011 the first ever European Forum for Food Sovereignty took place in Krems, Austria.<sup>167</sup>

This global farmers movement is still in the process of developing Food Sovereignty, conceived as an alternative proposal for restructuring food production and consumption at the local, national and global level. Unlike the top down approach, associated with the failed attempts of international institutions such as the IMF and the WTO, the concept of Food Sovereignty proposes that every country and people

---

<sup>167</sup> <http://www.nyelenieurope.net>

have the right to establish their own policies with regard to their food and agriculture system, providing these policies do not harm developing countries.<sup>168</sup> This concept, since it was launched to the general public at the World Food Summit in 1996, has become a global social movement with the clear objective of promoting alternatives to neo-liberal policies for achieving food security. Its evolution can be traced from 1996 onwards by a growing list of publications, declarations and statements that have continually elaborated and refined the Food Sovereignty framework.<sup>169</sup>

An in-depth study of the dynamics and strategies of La Via Campesina has already been undertaken<sup>170</sup> but the key points of its development are worth mentioning for two reasons. Firstly, from a political perspective, it is crucial to understand the circumstances that produced both the capacity and the will to challenge multinational agribusiness corporations and international institutions whose power and influence increasingly dictate national government food policy. Secondly, understanding the origins of this movement in a Latin American context can provide a platform from which to proceed, at a later stage in this thesis, with the feasibility and challenges to a Food Sovereignty model for East Africa. What is of great importance in the conceptualisation of La Via Campesina is the way in which its members view the movement. In the words of a representative of its International Secretariat it evolved as ‘a struggle to find a space to occupy. Small farmers needed their own voice thus they had to become politicised and effective at the international level’.<sup>171</sup>

### *The driving forces*

Throughout history, advocates of trade liberalisation have always maintained that it will bring unprecedented prosperity via the so-called ‘trickle-down effect’. Thus, over recent decades, countries of the global South have been persuaded to open up their markets to the global North by reducing man made barriers to the flow of goods and services. This liberalisation of trade was pursued under the umbrella term of structural adjustment. However, there is much empirical evidence to show that the predicted benefits to the global South, through the pursuit of structural adjustments policies,

---

<sup>168</sup> One could imagine the application of Rawls’ difference principle in this context (Rawls 1971).

<sup>169</sup> See Appendix 4. Also, see Windfuhr & Jonsén (2005:47-4) for a comprehensive overview and analysis of the core documents on Food Sovereignty.

<sup>170</sup> Annette Desmarais provides a vivid portrayal in ‘La Via Campesina: Globalisation and the power of the Peasants (2007).

<sup>171</sup> In a statement given by Nico Verhagen at the UK Food Group 2011 Autumn Conference, London.

have not always materialised.<sup>172</sup>

In fact three decades of neo-liberal structural adjustments in much of the developing world (characterised by budget cutting, privatisations and de-regulated markets) have, in many cases, seriously undermined national food production capacity.<sup>173</sup> The current situation, in the global food system, is that many countries have neither sufficient food reserves nor sufficient production capacity and are dependent on imports affected by increasingly volatile prices (Crow 2008). The second dimension of power and the recognition of the importance of agenda setting is as relevant to trade as it is to any other area of politics and international relations, i.e. how decisions are made, who controls the agenda, how disagreements are resolved, how rules are enforced and by whom, and so on (Lukes 2005). The response to these structural inequities, particularly in Latin America, has been the advance of Food Sovereignty as a new agricultural framework, with La Via Campesina as the driving force behind the movement. The capacity of this movement to bridge so many diverse geographical and cultural divides is both surprising and impressive. We can now consider how this powerful movement has arisen.

#### *Evolutionary phases of Food Sovereignty*

Researchers looking at the history of La Via Campesina have identified five phases in its birth and evolution: The first phase took place during the 1980s up to 1992. During this period several national rural movements felt the impact of similar global policies on local and national conditions caused by structural adjustments; the second phase (1992-1999) was marked by the consolidation of continental networks in Latin America and the birth and structuring of La Via Campesina as a global movement; the third phase (2000-2004) essentially consisted of La Via Campesina successfully becoming a key player on the international stage, illustrated by the growth in international awareness of Food Sovereignty as a political concept;<sup>174</sup> the fourth phase (2004-2008) was marked by the growth and internal strengthening of the movement, including establishing seven discrete regions and setting up regional secretariats;<sup>175</sup>

---

<sup>172</sup> See Chapter 4 for a critical assessment of structural adjustment policies and Chapter 6 for the reduced role of national governments in agricultural policy making.

<sup>173</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>174</sup> See Appendix 4.

<sup>175</sup> The two regions of Africa 1 & 2 have been set up since 2008.

more recently, phase 5 (late 2008-present date) the movement has taken on and prioritised gender issues and defined itself more clearly in opposition to transnational corporations (TNCs). The 5<sup>th</sup> conference held in Maputo, Mozambique, in October 2008 declared for the first time that capitalism was the ultimate source of the problems faced by the rural world and TNCs were the worst enemy of peasants and farmers around the world (Via Campesina 2008). More radically, it was declared that all forms of violence faced by women in society, be they physical, social, economic or through inequity of power are also present in rural societies, and by definition, rural organisations. Thus the decision was taken to end the silence on these issues and make a commitment to achieving true gender parity in all spaces and areas of debate, discussion, analysis and decision-making undertaken in the Food Sovereignty arena.

Particular emphasis is now given to La Via Campesina's fight to gain legitimacy for the Food Sovereignty paradigm, to its internal structure, and to the ways in which the (re)construction of a shared peasant identity is a crucial lynchpin that holds the struggle together despite widely different internal cultures. The most recent stage is understood as a response to recent changes in the world and reflects a maturing political-economic analysis (Martinez-Torres & Rosset 2010:149-175).<sup>176</sup> Above all, the movement has become increasingly focused and radicalised by structuring itself to effectively battle against the dominant agro-economic model. There has been a marked shift in emphasis towards propositions of how to change the food system, whilst still resisting the dominance of industrial food production.

It is not surprising that the La Via Campesina originated in Latin America since Latin America is the region of the world with the most unequal distribution of land and income, and the region that experienced the sharpest decline of living standards during the 'lost decade' of the 1980s as neoliberal economic policies hit Latin America (Martinez-Torres & Rosset 2010). As a result of this decline Latin America underwent a continent-wide process of peasant civil society networking throughout the 1980s. This began with the Continental Conference on Agrarian Reform and Peasant Movements held in Managua in 1981, which brought together revolutionary peasant organisations, national peasant organisations and independent peasant organisations,

---

<sup>176</sup> See Martinez-Torres and Rosset, for an in-depth review in 'La Via Campesina: The evolution of a movement', *Journal of peasant Studies* Volume 3, 2010, Pages 249-175.

beginning a process of exchanges of experiences that led to an embryonic Latin American peasant movement (Sevilla Guzman & Martinez-Alier 2006). Continental peasant meetings then took place every year until 1989, when a similar process was begun in Colombia in preparation for the ‘500 Years of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, Peasant and Popular Resistance Continental Campaign’. As part of this Campaign, continental conferences were then held every year until 1992 (Edelman 2003).

Drawing on the powerful symbolism of the quincentennial of the arrival of Columbus in the Americas, and in opposition to the big celebrations planned by governments, the Declaration of Quito after a ‘500 Years of Indian Resistance’ meeting in 1990 outlined the basis of what was becoming a transnational peasant movement. The participants expressed a collective concern for the destruction of nature, with what Stefano Varese (1996: 60) calls the “moral management of the cosmos” or “moral ecology”:

We do not own nature ... it is not a commodity ... it is an integral part of our life; it is our past, present, and future. We believe that this meaning of humanity and of the environment is not only valid for our communities of Indoamerican people. We believe that this form of life is an option and a light for the people of the world oppressed by a system which dominates people and nature. (Declaration of Quito, quoted in Varese 1996, 69)

According to Varese

the “ecological cosmology” of rural communities, based essentially on the notion and practice of individual usufruct<sup>177</sup> of collective property and the primacy of use value, resisted (with different degrees of success) the intrusion of a cosmology based on exchange value that corresponded to the capitalist market economy (Varese 1996, 62).

Referring back to the “moral economy” of James Scott (1977), Varese argues that even while indigenous and peasant families participate in capitalist market relations that are external to their communities, they maintain and reproduce non-capitalist

---

<sup>177</sup> The right to use and derive profit from a piece of property belonging to another, provided the property itself remains undiminished and uninjured in any way.



relations on the inside. In this moral economy, community economic relations are based on the logic of reciprocity and production for subsistence. Along the same lines, Marc Edelman (2005) argues that the transnational peasant movement is bringing the 'moral economy' directly into the global debate over the future of agriculture, counterposing it to the dominant 'market economy' paradigm. In other words, drawing up the battle lines between the dominant agricultural model and the model of Food Sovereignty. The table below separates out the key features of these opposing models and helps to conceptualise this battle between the discourses of economic rationalism and green rationalism based on agroecology.<sup>178</sup>

---

<sup>178</sup> Agroecology has been defined as the discipline that provides the basic ecological principles for how to study, design and manage agroecosystems that are both productive and natural resource conserving, and that are also culturally sensitive, socially just and economically viable (Altieri 1995).

**Table 1. Dominant model versus Food Sovereignty model**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Dominant model based on economic rationalism</b>	<b>Food Sovereignty based on green rationalism</b>
Trade	Free trade in everything	Food and agriculture exempt from trade agreements
Production priority	Agroexports	Food for local markets
Crop prices	'What the market dictates' (leave the mechanisms that create both low crop prices and speculative food price hikes intact)	Fair prices that cover costs of production and allow farmers and farm workers a life with dignity
Market access	Access to foreign markets	Access to local markets; an end to the displacement of farmers from their own markets by agribusiness
Subsidies	While prohibited in the Third World, many subsidies are allowed in the US and Europe, but are paid only to the largest farmers	Subsidies are ok that do not damage other countries via dumping (i.e. grant subsidies only to family farmers for direct marketing, price/income support, soil conservation, conversion to sustainable farming, research, etc.)
Food	Chiefly a commodity; in practice, this means processed, contaminated food that is full of fat, sugar, high fructose corn syrup and toxic residues	A human right: specifically, should be healthy, nutritious, affordable, culturally appropriate, and locally produced
Being able to produce	An option for the economically efficient	A right of rural peoples
Hunger	Due to low productivity	Problem of access and distribution due to poverty and inequality
Food security	Achieved by importing food	Greatest when food production is in the hands of the hungry, or when produced locally
Control over productive resources (land, water, forests)	Privatised	Local, community controlled
Access to land	Via the market	Via genuine agrarian reform
Seeds	Patentable commodity	Common heritage of humanity, held in trust by rural communities and cultures; 'no patents on life'
Rural credit and investment	From private banks and corporations	From the public sector, designed to support family agriculture
Dumping	Not an issue	Must be prohibited
Monopoly	Not an issue	The root of most problems
Overproduction	No such thing, by definition	Drives prices down and farmers into poverty; we need supply management policies in US and EU
Farming technology	Industrial, monoculture, Green Revolution, chemical-intensive; uses GMOs	Agroecology, sustainable farming methods, no GMOs
Farmers	Anachronism; the inefficient will disappear	Guardians of culture and crop germplasm; stewards of productive resources; repositories of knowledge; internal market and building block of broad-based, inclusive economic development
Urban consumers	Workers to be paid as little as possible	Need living wages
Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)	The wave of the future	Bad for health and the environment; an unnecessary technology
Another world (alternatives)	Not possible/not of interest	

Adapted from Rosset 2006b:6.

*The politics of representation as the rationale for Food Sovereignty*

La Via Campesina was, to a great extent, responding to the politics of representation in as much as the neoliberal policies of the 1970s and 1980s all too often left out the voices of the peasants and the farm workers (Uvin 1994, McMichael 2008). Thus it is within a context of lack of representation and rolling back of state protection that La Via Campesina emerged. As governments were radically downsizing, services aimed at providing safety nets in food provision dried up.<sup>179</sup> The privatisation trend of neoliberalism affected the foreign assistance and funding policies of international donors, who increasingly cut aid to governments and passed it instead to NGOs (Conroy et al. 1996). These changing global economic and political processes have produced new actors, at supranational, international and local levels, 'that are increasingly appropriating state authority from above and below' (Duffield 2001: 70). Donors thus encouraged the growth of organisations that were able to make claims to represent a constituency in the global South (Chandler 2006). From a critical perspective, these organisations have been able to 'deliver' the peasantry and comply with the structures of 'accountability', 'transparency' and 'participation' that have emerged in response to the criticisms received by the international financial institutions. This 'delivery' has been the key to the survival of many of these NGOs. (Patel 2007, 78-9)

This tendency of NGOs to speak 'on behalf of peasants' led one Via Campesina leader to state in 1996 that, 'To date, in all global debates on agrarian policy, the peasant movement has been absent: we have not had a voice. The main reason for the very existence of the Via Campesina is to be that voice and to speak out for the creation of a more just society' (Paul Nicholson, cited in Desmarais 2002, 96).

It is for this reason that La Via Campesina, from the very beginning, clearly differentiated itself from NGOs and will not allow the membership of organisations that are not true, grassroots-based peasant organisations. It has also separated itself from foundations and aid agencies, by refusing to accept resources that come with compromising conditions attached. In addition it does not permit any kind of external interference in its internal decisions in order to guarantee the independence and autonomy which are so critical to its being (Martinez-Torres & Rosset 2010). In many

---

<sup>179</sup> See Chapter 4.

ways the political tactics of La Via Campesina are more ‘outsider’ than ‘insider’ and err towards protest rather than lobbying.<sup>180</sup> That is not to say that it does not engage with insider institutions such as the FAO but it has developed its own fairly effective strategies. Its typical strategy is to occupy or defend political space and then move the debate beyond the technical realm (of food security, for example) and into the moral realm of rights and wrongs. This has proven to be an effective strategy that can be illustrated by the impact La via Campesina has had on the profile of the Food Sovereignty movement over very recent years. Added to this is the recognition by the movement that gender inequalities are not only a principle source of injustice but also a limitation to the success of the movement. The relationship between capitalism, patriarchy, machismo and neo-liberalism and the detrimental impact on women peasants and farmers has become a central feature of the struggle. Representation, in terms of gender issues, is now implicit in the construction of a new model; ‘if we do not create new gender relations, we will not be able to build a new society’ (La Via Campesina 2008). It is perhaps not unrelated that the FAO has also officially taken on-board the gender issues related to food insecurity. The FAO State of Food and Agriculture 2010–11 makes the “business case” for addressing gender issues in agriculture and rural employment. It argues that the agriculture sector is under-performing in many developing countries, in part because women do not have equal access to the resources and opportunities they need to be more productive.<sup>181</sup>

### **3. The scope for institutional reform (the levers).**

Of the seven principles of Food Sovereignty identified in the previous section there are two key areas of reform which are both crucial to Food Sovereignty and central to the argument developed throughout the chapters in this thesis. These are the issues of land reform and agricultural trade reforms, enshrined in principles 2 and 4 of the Food Sovereignty framework.<sup>182</sup> In terms of the IPC four priority areas, or pillars (the right to food; access to productive resources; mainstreaming of agroecological production; trade and local markets) the pillars relating to access to productive resources and trade and local markets are most relevant here. This section looks at land and trade reforms

---

<sup>180</sup> See Jordan & Maloney 2007 for a discussion on the classification and typologies of interest groups.

<sup>181</sup> Available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2082e00.pdf> Accessed 04/01/12.

<sup>182</sup> See Appendix 3.

in a general context and will return to them in a more specific context of Ethiopia and Kenya in Chapter 7.

#### *Land reform from above*

Small farmers are known to be a key source of food for the world's working poor (Murphy 2006). Their displacement from the land and their replacement with policies that convert food into commodities (to be purchased by the global minority with purchasing power) is being challenged from many directions (Albritton 2009; Davis 2006; McMichael 2008; Patel 2007). For those who are seriously looking at reforming the current agricultural model, it is widely accepted that land reform is a key element in any future sustainable development. It is understood that severe inequality in land tenure retards economic growth, impedes poverty alleviation and curtails efforts to improve soil sustainability (Deininger et al 2003).

Whilst the World Bank and other institutions including governments and aid agencies have taken the lead in promoting and sometimes financing comprehensive reforms of land tenure, these policies are largely failing to address the underlying causes of food insecurity. Most of these reforms have been carried out within the existing neo-liberal policy environment and, as such, have not led to real positive change (Borras 2005). One of the key reasons for this failure is that market-based solutions tend to depoliticise the problem of landlessness, which can only be resolved by structural changes. Accordingly, these structural changes can only be addressed in the sphere of politics as opposed to the sphere of the market (Rosset 2006a).

According to Rosset et al (2011), only two contemporary governments in Latin America, or elsewhere, can be said to have genuinely made a commitment to land reforms which include a transition to a model supporting family farms and cooperative agriculture. These countries are Cuba and Venezuela.<sup>183</sup> Whilst Cuba's original land reform took place in the 1960's, work by Funes (2002) shows how a second period of reform allowed Cuba to escape from a food crisis in the 1990s and provides, to date, the closest example of a real transition from an agroexport model, (based on export crops produced under conditions of monoculture and natural resource extraction), to a Food Sovereignty model in keeping with the vision of *la via Campesina*. Four key

---

<sup>183</sup> See Rosset et al (2011) for an analysis of Cuban agricultural policy and production over the last two decades.

factors can be identified as facilitating its success: 1. Access to land by the rural majority was achieved in two separate stages. Firstly, the expropriation of land from landlords had taken place post revolution, enabling the break up of state farms into smaller cooperatives and individual production units in the second phase. 2. Cuba had the de-facto protection from food dumping provided by the trade embargo from the United States. This provided a positive condition in that higher prices for local farmers provided the economic incentives and hence the viability of agriculture to survive the crisis. 3. There was state support for the transition to the new agricultural model through credit availability, access to research and education and so forth. 4. A highly organised rural sector, which allowed for rapid change to occur and the dissemination of both accumulated peasant knowledge and modern agroecological technology from scientific institutions (Funes 2002). The results in Venezuela have been more uneven and less definite<sup>184</sup> but there are lessons to be learnt from both these examples with regard to developing an alternative agricultural model in East Africa.<sup>185</sup> An observation worth making is that both these transitions have included state and civic involvement.

#### *The empirical case for land reform from below*

It has been noted that 'In every Latin American case where land redistribution benefiting the rural poor took place, the State played a decisive role' though it was also noted 'in every case where reform was denied or deformed, the State also played a critical role' (Barraclough 1999:33) As a result of this latter observation the last two decades have seen an increase in well-organised movements of landless peasants and rural workers with the aim of challenging or even side-stepping state policies on land issues. Today movements around the world are engaged in activities such as land occupation to pressurise governments to respond. Landless movements are bringing land reform to national and international debates with examples in Brazil, Bolivia, Honduras, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, South Africa and Zimbabwe, to name but a few (Rosset 2006b: 9).

What these movements all have in common is their challenge to government inaction or policy failure with regard to food insecurity by resolving to take control themselves.

---

<sup>184</sup> See Wilpert 2010 or visit [www.venezuela.foodsovereignty.com](http://www.venezuela.foodsovereignty.com).

<sup>185</sup> See Chapter 7.

The landless workers movement (MST) of Brazil is probably the best-known example of this type of organised movement. Founded in 1985 MST organises landless workers and uses the ‘social function of land’ clause in the Brazilian constitution to legalise their claims to occupy idle lands (Wright & Wolford 2003). Land reforms in Brazil provide a good illustration of how the creation of a small farm economy is not only good for local economic development, but is also more effective as a social policy to prevent the rural poor from migrating to overcrowded cities that cannot provide meaningful living conditions or livelihoods. Thus, it can be argued that land reforms hold the potential to not only address food insecurity but also chronic underdevelopment in many developing countries. Because small farms use more labour and less capital, small farms can absorb more people into gainful employment and reverse the patterns of migration from rural areas to burgeoning cities (Davis 2006). Furthermore productivity gains have been widely documented as a result of shifting to small-scale, more labour intensive modes of production. Research shows that small farms almost always produce more agricultural output per unit of land than large farms and they do so more efficiently (Rosset 1999; Shiva 2000). This is widely recognised within agricultural economics as the ‘inverse relationship between farm size and output’ (Rosset 2006b: 12).<sup>186</sup> Brazil offers a good example as it has a total of 5.2 million farms and 4.4 million of these are less than 10 hectares. These smaller farms occupy only 24% of total farmland yet they manage to produce more than half of Brazil’s food. Furthermore, the smaller farms employ more labour than agribusiness, providing jobs for 75% of those employed in agriculture (Araujo 2009). It is largely because of the crops produced by small farmers that Brazil is self sufficient in food and, unlike most other countries in the global South, it was not adversely affected by the world food crises in 2008.<sup>187</sup>

Thus there is good evidence to suggest that redistributive land reform is not likely to reduce productivity of food; in fact the reverse may well be achieved. If you add to this the observation that 80% of untilled arable land is in Africa and 50% of the population there are less than 15 years old (Moyo 2010), then small-scale labour

---

<sup>186</sup> There are, of course, those who strongly disagree and argue that large-scale commercial farming needs to be encouraged, especially on Africa. See Paul Collier in *Foreign Affairs* November/December 2008.

<sup>187</sup> This is not to say that Brazil’s model of farming is sustainable in the long-term. MST continues to campaign for agrarian reform and the adoption of agroecology as the dominant farming method.

intensive agriculture may well be the most successful and efficient model for future agricultural production on the African continent.<sup>188</sup> Indeed one of the key aims of Food Sovereignty is to reinvigorate the role of small farmers and peasants. This group actually produce half of the world's food therefore they are not an anachronism that can be continually overlooked in the agriculture policy process. Thus, if the focus of policy makers was shifted to who is producing food, this would include small food producers who may require investment in agricultural education and research and not just the TNCs. West Africa can serve as a useful example here; West Africa produces excess cereals including sorghum, millet, maize and rice, not as a result of industrial sized farming, but through small-scale producers. Calls for West African Food Sovereignty are more organised and advanced than East Africa, mainly as a result of the establishment of ROPPA (Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa) but this situation is slowly changing.<sup>189</sup> ROPPA is active in finding ways that small farmers can resist the industrial model and is carrying out research to show that small farmers can provide enough food for the region. Their focus on monitoring small farms is crucial because much of the global small-scale production is not included in international food monitoring, thus its contribution not acknowledged or supported.

It must be acknowledged that land reforms have not always been successful, but a key feature of successful land reforms appears to be the way that farm families are perceived. In successful reforms, small farmers are viewed as key actors to be mobilised in pursuit of national economic development. In failed reforms, they have typically been viewed as indigents in need of charitable assistance. This is a crucial aspect in terms of the likelihood of Food Sovereignty successfully replacing the current dominant model. Small farms, and those who farm them, must be conceived as crucial players in achieving food self-sufficiency, not as obstacles to economic progress.<sup>190</sup> Ethiopia offers both an opportunity and a challenge for a Food Sovereignty

---

<sup>188</sup> This view is not universally accepted and, as we will see in Chapter 7, both the Ethiopian and Kenyan governments are still directing policy towards large-scale industrialised farming often through attracting foreign direct investment.

<sup>189</sup> ROPPA stands for Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest and is based in Burkina Faso. See [www.roppa.info](http://www.roppa.info).

<sup>190</sup> The Amish and Mennonite communities in the Eastern US offer an interesting example. These small farmers reject much of modern technology and operate as co-operative enterprises in Pennsylvania. This county is the most productive farm county east of the Mississippi river (D'Souza & Ikerd 1996).  
*Footnote continued on the next page*



framework as a means of overcoming the current level of food insecurity and will be explored in Chapter 7.

The considerable land reforms after the Second World War demonstrate both success and failure. Extensive research by Sobhan (1993) has shown that when quality land has been redistributed to the poor and the power of rural oligarchs diminished, the result has invariably been poverty reduction and improved human welfare. In contrast, countries with reforms that gave only poor quality land to beneficiaries and failed to address existing rural power structures, failed to make any real progress in reducing rural poverty and hunger.<sup>191</sup> This latter scenario is evident in much of post-colonial Africa and is particularly applicable to communities in Northeastern Kenya. Despite its current political instability, land reforms that began in Zimbabwe, but were prematurely ended, showed that beneficiaries were substantially better off than others (Deiniger et al 2000).<sup>192</sup> The potential of such reforms, at present, remains largely unfulfilled and grassroots movements remain most prevalent in South America. With the growth of the global reach of Food Sovereignty movement, however, this is very likely to change as the developments in West Africa indicate.<sup>193</sup> The geographical gap in land reform both in terms of policy making and as a driver of social movements clearly provides an opportunity for further exploration. Accordingly, this thesis, is essentially interested in the ways this alternative model could, with the right support mechanisms, be transported to East Africa with specific regard to Kenya and Ethiopia.<sup>194</sup>

*Food Sovereignty in an African context through trade reforms.*

According to the definition of Food Sovereignty issued in 2002, the section that deals specifically with the issue of trade says:

---

This is in direct contrast to the extreme negative impact on rural farms and communities by the growth of large-scale industrial agriculture across the US. See Walter Goldschmidt's classic comparative study of areas in California dominated by large corporate farms with those still characterised by smaller family farms (Goldschmidt 1978).

<sup>191</sup> Besley & Burgess (2001) carried out similar research in individual States in India and arrived at similar conclusions.

<sup>192</sup> See for example the Lancaster House agreements based on a willing seller/willing buyer premise constituted in 1980. For full text [www.zwnews.co.lancasterhouse](http://www.zwnews.co.lancasterhouse) Accessed 10/08/08. Also *Crossing Continents: Farming Zimbabwe*, BBC Radio 4 broadcast 5th December 2011

<sup>193</sup> The first European-wide Food Sovereignty forum, for example, took place in Krems, Austria, August 2011. broadcast

<sup>194</sup> See Chapter 7.

'Food Sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of people to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production'. (Peoples Food Sovereignty network 2002)<sup>195</sup>

This later definition (in its entirety) is perhaps emblematic of the diversity of opinions, positions, issues and priorities of Food Sovereignty as a movement. It is a fairly cautious definition, which incorporates the right to define food policy whilst acknowledging that Food Sovereignty, in any real sense, could not exist in a world without trade. Above all it could be thought of as a definition written through compromise and in committee, not unlike the UNDHR of 1948. In terms of trade policies, the demand from the IPC is for

“...a radical change in the rules that govern food and agriculture at the international level, removing these from the WTO and challenging bilateral and regional trade agreements and policies, based on the neoliberal model of economic development which reduces farmers, fishers, food and farming to focus on tradeable commodities.” (World Forum for Food Sovereignty, 2007).<sup>196</sup>

In terms of production methods, the objective is to “...promote the use of locally-controlled, diverse, small-scale agroecological production methods and artisanal fisheries in all regions of the world.” (World Forum for Food Sovereignty, 2007).

The Food Sovereignty framework is based on the reality that current international trade practices and trade rules are not working in favour of smallholder farmers. While the opening up of markets in developed countries is a key demand of many development NGOs, the Food Sovereignty framework is asking for the right of nations and peoples to restrict trade, if this is needed to protect smallholder farmers and other rural marginalised communities against dumping and unfair competition. The focus of Food Sovereignty is to guarantee trading conditions that are not threatening to smallholder farmers. There are many ways that the current trading system could be reformed to protect the developing industries, particularly in

---

<sup>195</sup> Quoted in Windfuhr, M & Jonsén, J (2005) p1.

<sup>196</sup> See <http://www.nyeleni.org/> Accessed 04/10/12.

agriculture, from the threat of cheap imports from the advanced industrial nations. In terms of a practical approach, the first step could simply be to develop policies to ensure that prices fully reflect social and environmental costs of food production (McMichael 2008). Additionally, the capital invested in perverse subsidies<sup>197</sup> for agriculture in OECD countries (estimated at more than \$US 300 billion per year, a quarter of this in the US alone) could be invested in support of small farmers in rural communities in Third World countries (Myers and Kent 2001). From a public choice perspective, the benefits to the developed world would be realised through the ability to proceed with liberalisation between themselves and a reduction in projects aimed at relieving poverty or, as Gallagher puts it, ‘morality working in tandem with enlightened self-interest’ Gallagher (2011:7). This proposal was recognised by the EU when in 2001 it unilaterally opened up its markets to the poorest countries and removed almost all tariffs and trade restrictions. The EU recognised that its members would benefit from lower prices and product diversity at very little cost, whilst the poorer countries would benefit enormously.<sup>198</sup> Though critics have pointed to the fact that there has been little real trade expansion as a result of the ‘Everything but Arms’ initiative (EBA) the idea remains a powerful one, full of potential. The obvious problem with this initiative is that it is still wholly situated within a market led system but a framework of Food Sovereignty demands something far more radical.

The possibilities and potential benefits of Food Sovereignty must also be assessed within the context of the current control of transnational corporations (TNCs) over agricultural policies. International institutions, at least as they are currently constituted, fail to hold powerful nations and TNCs to account. This is due, in part, to the fact that one of the key principles of WTO agreements is that governments give equal treatment to foreign and domestic companies, and this principle is applied in areas of domestic policy, including agriculture. This is a critical obstacle that the Food Sovereignty framework would attempt to overcome through the pillar of trade and food. This pillar aims to promote policies which tackle the effects of subsidised

---

<sup>197</sup> A term used to describe subsidies that do the opposite of what they were intended to do. See Myers & Kent (2001).

<sup>198</sup> Though known as the ‘Everything but Arms initiative’ (EBA) its critics have referred to it as ‘Everything but Farms’ as it has done little to address many of the problems faced by developing countries as a result of EU agricultural policy. The average European cow gets a subsidy of \$2 a day, whilst more than half the people in the developing world live on less than that. [www.worldhunger.org](http://www.worldhunger.org)

exports, food dumping, artificially low agricultural prices and other negative elements of the agricultural trade model. The power of the TNCs and big businesses have enabled them to lobby the WTO to draw up rules in their favour such as the controversial TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) agreements. TRIPS provide monopoly privileges over what was once common property and thus facilitate the control over genetic material and life forms such as seeds and livestock breeds. These systems not only prevent the free exchange of these seeds and livestock breeds, but also allow corporations to expropriate farmers' knowledge of food production and prevent farmers from sharing this. Today TNCs own whole sequences of genes in, for example, soya. (Windfuhr & Jonsén 2005:8) This means that they are able to control more and more of the production cycle and farmers have to purchase licenses in order to continue farming. Intellectual property rights agreements are a clear obstacle to the spread of knowledge and technology among smallholder farmers and to their access to seeds and livestock breeds. The WTO's Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) requires all members of the WTO to implement plant variety protection legislation, through patents or other IPR systems, at the same level as the most developed countries. Historically a nation's patent legislation system is gradually implemented in line with the country's industrialisation and development of science and technology. The fact that developing countries lack the resources to establish a patent system as advanced as the rich countries is clearly reflected in the distribution of the patent applications on plant and animal resources. Whereas more than 90% of genetic resources for food and agriculture are from biotopes in the South, corporations in developed countries claim 98% of the patents on genes and living organisms (Windfuhr & Jonsén 2005:9) It is also reported that the world's largest agribusiness corporation, Cargill, initially drafted the US's position on agriculture, which then became the WTO's position on agriculture (Curtis 2001: 90). Understandably, the WTO is often perceived as the organising body of the global economy on behalf of the rich developed world or global North.<sup>199</sup>

It has been proposed, however, that the World Bank could provide a model for the

---

<sup>199</sup> The inequity of the situation was supposed to be addressed in the subsequent rounds of trade talks since Seattle in 1999. However, it is widely believed that talks in Doha 2001, Cancun 2003, and Hong Kong 2005 have done little, in real terms, to enhance development prospects or redress the imbalances of previous rounds (Shah 2006).

WTO. At present the WTO is simply a place of bargaining where the poorest countries have no demonstrable power at all. The WTO is not like other international organisations such as the World Bank, the IMF or the UN in that it does not transfer any resources to the developing countries. The important point, however, is that it could. It could, for example, offer unreciprocated trade offers, like a gift, at the start of each round. The evolution of the World Bank, from a mutual assistance organisation to its additional role as an international development association could, in this instance, provide a useful model (Collier 2007: 171-172). The claim that current global food production and consumption, is instituted largely for the benefit of the rich and powerful nations, and not for the benefit of the world's poorest, is empirically difficult to refute (see World Bank 1999).<sup>200</sup> It is worth noting that it is not just radical writers who make these condemnations (Curtis 2003; George 1991, 1994, 1996; McMichael 2008); numerous United Nations reports have also documented the unequal and undesirable effects of WTO agreements. Thus the issue of responsibility has been recognised in an international institutional context. For example, the UN sub-commission on the promotion and protection of human rights has been scathing about the WTO's effect on developing countries and has stated:

The assumptions on which the rules of the WTO are based are grossly unfair and even prejudiced. Those rules reflect an agenda that serves only to promote dominant corporatist interests that already monopolise the arena of international trade (UN 2000).<sup>201</sup>

Arguably, the issue of trade poses the greatest challenge to Food Sovereignty as a coherent and viable concept and is the most obvious area in which it can be accused of inconsistency.<sup>202</sup> None the less, the centrality of it demands that advocates of Food Sovereignty continue in the search for policies which tackle the effects of subsidised exports, food dumping, artificially low agricultural prices and other negative elements of the agricultural trade model.

---

<sup>200</sup> Though economist Xavier Sala-i-Martin claims that 2.5 billion people have seen their standard of living rise as a result of economic liberalisation. See [www.columbia.edu/~xs23/home](http://www.columbia.edu/~xs23/home) Accessed 11/09/2007.

<sup>201</sup> See McMichael 2008:169-190 for a discussion on possible area of reform within the WTO.

<sup>202</sup> See Patel 2009 for a discussion on how best to address these inconsistencies by the explicit use of rights-based language.

**Concluding comments**

This debate is very often framed in terms of a clash of economic development models for the rural world (Rosset 2006b: 4). The contrast lies between the dominant industrial model of the current GFS, versus the Food Sovereignty model. Food Sovereignty can be viewed as an international response to agriculture becoming commercialised on a global scale, which is a defining feature of the current food security model. It was argued in the previous chapter that the dominant model has, in many ways, increased global food insecurity. With regard to the provision of food, key actors in the GFS, especially international financial institutions and TNCs, very often supplant and over-rule the priorities and policies of developing countries. An overview of the literature on Food Sovereignty clearly shows that it is not just radical writers or anti-big-business protesters who make these observations. Increasingly, economists and UN reports have documented the undesirable effects of WTO agreements and IMF structural adjustment programmes (Collier 2007; Easterly 2006; FAO 2003; IAASTD 2009).<sup>203</sup> However, the prioritisation of food self-reliance, over and above trade, is obviously problematic in terms of the current WTO regime, which still favours international trade as the key to food security but that is not to say that this position could not change. Food Sovereignty is a broad church and encompasses not just the political aspect of rights but includes climate change, trade justice, gender issues and the power of TNCs and supermarkets. It advocates a wide range of sustainable development objectives right down to recognising the particular needs of fishing villages, women and forest dwellers. This of course can be perceived as its strength; Food Sovereignty is a 'big tent' which allows different groups to organise themselves behind a specific programme. Furthermore this broad approach illustrates very well how Food Sovereignty is ideologically opposed to liberal ideology because collective interests are considered, unequivocally, more important than individual ones.

At present Food Sovereignty is still very much a grassroots movement, portrayed as a people-centred resistance against the commercial domination of agriculture. Civil society is seen as a key driver of Food Sovereignty but the fact remains that in many African states civil society is weak. This fact, coupled with the East African political

---

<sup>203</sup> See Chapter 4.

structures, may well prove to be an obstacle, certainly in the short-term. We will return to the potential contradictions and obstacles to Food Sovereignty when it is applied 'hypothetically' to Kenya and Ethiopia in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

## **CHAPTER 4 – LIBERAL ECONOMIC THEORIES AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT**

Under nourishment, starvation and famine are influenced by the working of an entire economy and society - not just food production and agricultural activities. It is crucial to take adequate note of the economic and social interdependences that govern the incidence of hunger in the contemporary world (Sen 1981: 162).

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the ongoing importance of liberal economic theory on famine analysis and food insecurity policy. Liberal economic models have featured both as solutions to global food insecurity and more recently, as theories of causation. Sen's 'entitlement theory' is discussed in the context of an explanatory theory of famine and structural adjustment is discussed as a set of economic policies that have led to greater vulnerability to famine. The Food Sovereignty movement can be understood, in part, as a response to the failure of liberal economic theory, in both its explanatory and practical policy modes with regard to food insecurity. A key instrument of liberal economics is known under the umbrella term of 'structural adjustment' and has been widely imposed on much of the Third World in recent decades. The medium- to long-term effects of the structural adjustment programs, not only on the economy, but also on society and the practice of politics became the subject of a major theoretical debate involving two broad schools of thought. For the purpose of this discussion, these schools will be referred to as the neo-liberal political economy and the radical political economy schools (Olukoshi 1999). The differing position articulated by both schools is, in many respects, a reflection of their understanding of the sources of the African food crises and the role of the post-colonial state in the developmental process.

Part 1 of this chapter begins with a brief look at the classical economic approaches to famine, which have influenced the neo-liberal political economy followed by a critique of the modern micro-economic analysis of famine. This section recognises the important contribution of Amartya Sen and his focus on individual exchange entitlements, known as 'the entitlement approach' (Sen 1981). There are, however,



limits to Sen's analysis, (Fine 2010) and this chapter argues that structural adjustment programmes have made it more problematic. This first section also introduces a more controversial aspect of the economic theories, where famine analysis is understood in terms of economic winners and losers (Keen 1994a). This public choice analysis fits within a neo-liberal political economy. The focus from this perspective is on who actually benefits from the occurrence of famine or food insecurity, rather than the perception that it is an economic failure of some kind. The relevance of this perspective is in how it relates to the beneficiaries of the current global food system, discussed in Chapter 2 and the issue of responsibility for overcoming food insecurity, which is considered more fully in Chapter 6.

Part 2 of this chapter explores the global economic context of food insecurity from a radical political economy perspective. Food insecurity is considered from a macro-economic perspective, with a particular emphasis on the way it has been redefined in relation to 'development', specifically, economic development. This has led to the pursuit of deeper integration in global markets for the least 'developed' countries. The focus is on structural adjustment policies and the impact that these economic reforms have had on the withdrawal of state support for agriculture in much of the Third World over recent decades (Devereux 2007(ed); McMichael 2008). The term 'structural adjustment' (SA) describes both development strategies, i.e. a set of policy prescriptions, and a lending instrument of the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI).<sup>204</sup> In the former instance, SA consists of programme lending, medium-term loans not linked to specific investments or projects made in return for macro-economic policy reforms negotiated with the lender. The implementation of such reforms constitutes the 'condition' for the loan of funds, hence the term 'conditionality'.<sup>205</sup> The key characteristics of SA are the wholesale adoption of neo-classical liberalism which includes a firm belief in the virtues of the free market, the benefits of the trickle down effect and the merits of export orientated growth (Uvin 1994: 231).

This chapter concludes that structural adjustment has increased food insecurity in East Africa.

---

<sup>204</sup> The Bretton Woods Institutions are the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They were set up at a meeting of 43 countries in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA in July 1944. Their aims were to help rebuild the shattered post-war economy and to promote international economic cooperation.

<sup>205</sup> See Programme Aid in Chapter 6.

## 1. Micro-economic perspectives

### *Early Economic Theories*

Famines have always raised questions about whether economic and political institutions help to protect people from starvation or, indeed, make matters worse. Economists have always contributed to this debate and have been highly influential in public policy with regard to famine and food insecurity (Ravallion 1996). Theories developed by Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill and Thomas Malthus in support of a laissez-faire attitude with respect to food markets, for example, were instrumental in the approach to famines in the British colonies during the nineteenth Century (Gray 1991). These early economic analyses tended to focus on supply side factors and made the assumption that people starve because of a local, national, or regional shortage of food. These theories are often referred to as food availability decline (FAD) theories. They tended to view food scarcities and subsequent hunger as relatively isolated problems that could be corrected by the economic incentives of pricing systems and free-market allocation. The main failure of this approach was the way it relied on measures of aggregate food availability, which completely overlooked the complexity of famine causation and its effects (Sen 1981). The relevance of this critique is in the way it has resurfaced as a critique of SA and the orthodox economic pre-occupation with aggregate food availability.

As centuries passed domestic and international transport links improved and agriculture became more productive and market orientated. Governments in Western Europe sought to free themselves from their old obligations of feeding populations and regulating markets. In Britain, for example, the Corn Laws were repealed in 1814-15 and finally abandoned in 1846; market forces became the sole regulator of this staple commodity. The triumph of laissez-faire economics and the belief in free trade had a profound effect on the role of the State in terms of the supply and marketing of grain. For centuries the state rulers or monarch had been considered as the ultimate provider (through a notion of their duty rather than through any concept of people's rights), and although this expectation was by no means always fulfilled it had never been so overtly denied as it was by the early Nineteenth Century. In '*Wealth of Nations*', written in 1776, Adam Smith was highly critical of the way governments in the past had (as he saw it) been held to ransom by public pressure and had intervened

in the food supply to uphold public order. He viewed the grain traders and merchants not as predators who exploited the disadvantaged poor but rather as a group whose position reflected that of the community at large. He rejected the theory of the 'just price' and argued that the merchants and dealers made very little during good harvests due to a glut in corn, and only during poor harvests could they reap the benefit of their enterprise. The intervention of the state or even worse the intervention of the mob through food seizures and demands for cheaper food robbed the merchants of their legitimate income and discouraged the influx of food supplies from elsewhere. From this perspective, without prices being allowed to rise, thus giving incentives to merchants to import grain from elsewhere, what may have begun as a scarcity, would eventually become a famine. Smith was unequivocal in his belief that the unrestricted and unlimited freedom of the corn trade was not only 'the best palliative of the inconveniences of dearth' but the 'only effectual preventative of a famine' (quoted in Arnold 1988:110). In Malthusian terms, it was the recklessness and profligacy of the poor which were likely to turn scarcity into a famine not the operation of a naturally self-correcting free market. The resurgence of this belief in the unrivalled benefits of a free market was the basis of the neo-liberal political economy framework and epitomised by the dominance of structural adjustment as a preferred strategy during the 1980s and 1990s.

The transition from moral economy<sup>206</sup> to political economy, however, has never passed without upheaval (Powelson 2000). In Western Europe, for example food riots in the late eighteenth century, aimed at reasserting the concept of the just price, are well documented (Thompson 1971). According to Arnold (1988: 111) 'Bread or Blood' was a slogan still bandied about the English countryside as late as the 1830s. In other parts of the world, food riots have occurred much more recently. In recent decades riots have occurred in Brazil, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt (Warnock 1993). These acts of rebellion were essentially against escalating food prices that were, in many cases, a result of structural adjustments imposed by international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the IMF and

---

<sup>206</sup> Moral economy is used in many contexts referring to the interplay of cultural mores and economic activity. It refers, in this context, to the economies of Europe before the rise of classical economics when a variety of formal and informal regulations prevented greed from overcoming morality. It includes notions of collective ownership of resources, such as water, and common grazing land notions that are finding a resurgence within a Food Sovereignty framework.

the World Bank, in part as way to collect interest on loans. The riots were frequently referred to as the 'IMF riots' in recognition of the fact that the terms for repayment of foreign debt were often set by the International Monetary Fund (McMichael 2008:136). A report for the IMF by Rabah Arezki and Markus Brückner in March 2011 shows that increases in food prices significantly increase the incidence of intra-state conflict. In particular they demonstrate that for the Low Income Countries increases in the international food prices significantly increase the incidence of anti-government demonstrations, riots, and civil conflict.<sup>207</sup> Recent food riots have occurred in Guinea, Mauritania, Mexico, Senegal, Yemen, and Haiti to name but a few.

History shows that whatever its merits or demerits, in countries such as England, laissez-faire and the prioritisation of free trade evolved over time in response to the country's changing economy. The balance between social needs and economic freedom was addressed by the increasing role of the State and, most importantly, the development of a robust welfare state. However, the application of these economic doctrines elsewhere, imposed from above as it were, without sufficient attention paid to the social costs, had profound and adverse repercussions in terms of food security. The colonised countries of Ireland and India offer two prime examples of how the adherence to an economic policy, during times of desperate need, resulted in huge loss of life (O'Grada 1999; Sen 1981).

It is evident that, historically, a combination of Malthusian theories of population and natural checks, and the economic theory of Adam Smith, encouraged an exceptionally negative and irresponsible attitude amongst governments towards famine and its alleviation. This is principally because, in the past, economic perspectives of food insecurity focused on two narrow parameters: aggregate food availability, commonly known as food availability decline (FAD), and population growth.<sup>208</sup> As can be seen in much of the current media coverage of the current East African food crises many of these classic nineteenth-century debates persist in the views of 'experts' and 'non experts' alike.<sup>209</sup>

---

<sup>207</sup> <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2011/wp1162.pdf> Accessed 14/10/11.

<sup>208</sup> See Brown & Kane 1995; Brown 2001.

<sup>209</sup> At the time of writing (October 2011) the common perception of the East African food crises is that there are 'too many mouths to feed' and insufficient rainfall.

*The entitlement approach.*

During the 1980s a new body of literature emerged, that used the tools of economic analysis to shed a different sort of light on the causes and persistence of famine and what could be done about it. The main distinguishing feature of this literature was an emphasis on understanding the position of individuals in famine vulnerable settings and how their circumstances interact with other economy-wide variables. This is most relevant to this discussion because of the concern with the impact of structural adjustment and the way that economic policies imposed from outside have negatively affected internal food security. More explicitly, in what ways structural adjustment programmes have affected individual ‘entitlements’ and access to food resources. This departure from traditional supply-side economics, i.e. seeing famine as the outcome of a decline in aggregate food availability or disruption in the production and flow of food, is most associated with the work of Amartya Sen. His seminal book, *Poverty and Famines* (1981), was an original study of the Great Bengal Famine of 1943 together with reappraisals of the famines in the 1970s, in Bangladesh, the Sahel and Ethiopia. Later studies have confirmed the value of Sen’s micro-level account and reveal that FAD played only a minor part in the causation of recent famines in Ethiopia (1999-2000; 2005), Niger (2000-2001) and Malawi (2001).<sup>210</sup>

Unlike the earlier economic theories that focused purely on income or effective demand for food, Sen introduced the concept of ‘entitlement’ to food’.<sup>211</sup> Most people experience a range of sources of entitlement to food expressed by Sen as

A persons ability to command food - indeed to command any commodity he wishes to acquire or retain – depends on the entitlement relations that govern possession and use in that society. It depends on what he owns, what exchange possibilities are offered to him, what is given to him free, and what is taken away from him (Sen 1981: 154-155).

In Sen’s analysis the four main categories of entitlement relations that exist in private ownership market economies are:

---

<sup>210</sup> See Devereux & Tiba (2007) for an analysis of 21<sup>st</sup> century ‘free-market famines’.

<sup>211</sup> Sen uses ‘entitlement’ in purely descriptive rather than prescriptive terms. (1981: 2). He is careful to distinguish his use of the word in contrast to Robert Nozick’s normative interpretation in his ‘Entitlement theory of Justice’ (Nozick 1973).

1. Trade-based entitlement, which describes what one obtains through trading something one owns with a willing party.
2. Production-based entitlement, which describes the right to own what one produces using one's own or hired resources.
3. Own-labour entitlement, which describes ownership of one's labour power and thus any trade or production-based entitlements derived from the sale of one's labour power.
4. Inheritance and transfer entitlement, which refers to the right to own what is willingly given by others or perhaps inherited after their death.<sup>212</sup>

Thus 'entitlements' have two components, that which is owned by a person, i.e. his or her endowment, and that which can be obtained by exchanging some of that endowment for other commodities. According to this basic entitlement approach a person is reduced to starvation if some change either in his endowment (e.g. alienation of land or loss of labour power due to ill health) or in his exchange entitlement mapping (e.g., fall in wages, rise in food prices, loss of employment, drop in the price of the goods he buys and sells) makes it no longer possible for him to acquire any commodity bundle with enough food. (Sen 1981: 8).

In the market economy that now dominates the global food system, we are, at least technically, free to exchange what we own for other commodities through trading, production, or indeed a combination of the two. Sen uses the term 'exchange entitlement' to describe the set of all the alternative bundles of commodities that one can acquire in exchange for what one owns (Sen 1981: 3). Thus, given the endowments, there are various ways of converting them into goods and services. Some endowments, such as money can be directly traded into goods. Others have to be put into a production process, seeds or ploughs for example, so they can yield output that can be converted into another good. Labour power has a dual status in this scheme: it can be directly sold for wages, which can then be converted into other goods and it can also be engaged into a production process (along with other inputs), which will yield output, which again can be sold. Land, as an endowment, also provides various ways of obtaining other goods. It can be sold outright and the sum

---

<sup>212</sup> Sen acknowledges that there are other, more complex, entitlement relations that may vary from society to society; the ownership of slaves or bonded labour, for example, or differences in private ownership of the 'means of production' between socialist and capitalist economies.

gained used to live off or it could be rented out and the rent then used as an income. Alternatively, it could be given to a sharecropper for half the output, or the owner could cultivate it himself or herself, with or without hired help. Thus with the ownership of one asset, land, there are various possibilities, each of which will convert into a basket of consumption goods.

An individual's entitlement set collapses for one of two reasons: their endowments shrink; or their exchange entitlements are reduced, resulting in a decline in their 'terms of trade' with the market for food. Typically, the two components of entitlement failure work hand in hand to create conditions of food insecurity. This has had very obvious adverse effects on the Kenyan population and their levels of food insecurity in recent times.

Sen's entitlement approach has had enormous impact on famine studies by shifting the focus from supply-side analyses of food to one of demand failure. In the process it has emphasised that crudely aggregated generalisations, such as availability of food per capita, overlook the crucial aspect of unequal distribution.<sup>213</sup> Equally, by focusing on the individual or group access to food rather than misleading aggregations of an entire region or country, this approach is sensitive to how different occupational groups may be affected and so avoids treating whole societies as if they were an homogenous entity. Sen's account thus explains why, even when the overall ratio of food to population is relatively high, particular occupational groups may starve because of their inability to establish command over enough food.<sup>214</sup> Most importantly, Sen's analysis can help explain how the global food system, as it is currently constituted, can impact negatively on particular entitlement sets. This is a critical point for advocates of Food Sovereignty who demand that the control over food systems should be in the hands of local people with an emphasis on the right of people to define their own agricultural and food policies.<sup>215</sup>

Other economists (Ravallion 1987, 1996) have shown how the impact of prices and income changes can be highly diverse even amongst poor people. Those with chronically poor endowments will obviously be particularly vulnerable to famine.

---

<sup>213</sup> Research suggesting that the effects of famine are rarely shared equally among whole populations is discussed in the political context of famine in Chapter 6.

<sup>214</sup> Sen, 1981, demonstrates how artisans and casual agricultural labourers are often disproportionately affected for example.

<sup>215</sup> See Chapters 3 and 7.

Peasants with enough land to be net producers of food will gain from higher food prices but landless labourers will clearly lose out. Thus, whatever the macroeconomic dimensions of food shortage, the microeconomic incidence of starvation depends on how individual households are placed in terms of their endowments and, through these endowments, in their exchange entitlements.<sup>216</sup> Ravallion's research on individual entitlements links to the importance placed on land rights, for all, within the Food Sovereignty framework.

Ravallion suggests that the 'single most important relative price determining the prospects of starvation in most famine vulnerable economies is the food grain purchasing power of the wage rate for unskilled labour, which is more often than not the wage for casual agricultural labour' (Ravallion 1996: 14). This reduction in the purchasing power of the landless labourer can therefore keep prices low, even in times of food shortage. However, this is not the current situation in famine vulnerable countries in the horn of Africa in 2011. Since 2008 there has been a huge volatility in commodity prices including most basic foods (FAO 2011).

Unlike the so-called FAD approach, which viewed famine as a result of a market failure to supply sufficient food to those who need it, the entitlement approach sees famine as a predictable consequence of normal market processes. Given that markets respond to purchasing power rather than to needs, no major disruption of the economy is necessary or required for famine to occur. Famines, therefore, need not imply market failure, though it is accepted that markets in famine prone, traditional agricultural economies are almost certainly incomplete markets with scope for 'Pareto improvements' (Ravallion 1996: 21).<sup>217</sup>

Ravallion's analysis of the role of the market in the 1974-75 famine in Bangladesh was early proof of the danger of relying on market allocation of food during famines because markets tend to exacerbate food inequalities. In normal times, we may tolerate a degree of market inequity or failure because the costs of avoiding it

---

<sup>216</sup> David Keen's work on the Sudanese famine of 1983-1988 offers an interesting challenge to this hypothesis because it was the marginalised Dinka people who were most adversely affected. However, it was the Dinka's wealth not poverty that made them vulnerable to famine because they lacked any political redress, i.e. it was their lack of political power, rather than any economic entitlement (Keen, 1994).

<sup>217</sup> Named after economist Vilfredo Pareto when a movement from one alternative allocation to another that can make at least one individual better off, without making any other individual worse off, is called a 'Pareto improvement'. An allocation of resources is 'Pareto efficient' or 'Pareto optimal' when no further Pareto improvements can be made.



outweigh the gains. In the case of food crises, however, those same features of the market can magnify adverse external shocks with devastating outcomes. For example, ‘panic buying’ occurs in all markets if shortages are predicted.<sup>218</sup> Thus, prices rose dramatically in the lean months prior to the main winter harvest (1974/5) and in fact doubled between March and October 1974. This resulted in a contraction in command over food for those with little in the way of personal endowment to fall back on (Ravallion 1996: 22). The harvest when it came was in reality only 5% less than the previous level, which had been unusually high; but the consequences were disastrous and were exacerbated by government policies and principal aid donors. Thus the failure of the food grain market stemmed from both domestic and international public action failures. Three decades later the 2001-2002-food crisis in Malawi, which cost between 47,000 and 85,000 lives, displayed depressingly similar characteristics. The food crisis of 2001/2002 followed two bumper harvests, and the ‘failed harvest’ of 2001 was actually 6% above the 10-year average (Devereux and Tiba, 2007). Importantly, however, the “new famine” thinking shifts the burden of explanation from analysis of production failures and entitlement failures to understanding response failures (Devereux (ed) 2007).

The key point is that these entitlement failures occur not because there is a real shortage of food, but because there is a price rise that results in hoarding, speculation and a failure to move food to the areas where it is needed.<sup>219</sup> The fact that there are well-documented examples of food being exported from areas hit by famine, both historically and in the present tense, emphasises the weakness of the FAD approach, lends weight to the explanatory power of the entitlement approach and demands a greater understanding of the response failures.

Sen’s entitlement approach provides a robust challenge to the neo-Malthusian explanations of world hunger, which are by comparison analytically weak. For example, the enduring ‘Malthusian Pessimism’, reflected in the view that there are too many mouths to feed, has resulted in much policy being aimed at simply reducing the

---

<sup>218</sup> For example on March 25<sup>th</sup> 2008, the president of the Philippines ordered government investigators to track down and punish hoarders who were jeopardising rice supplies and exacerbating food shortages. See Beaumont (2008) the Observer Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup> 2008.

<sup>219</sup> The combination of these factors has been analysed by Keen in terms of the economic benefits of hunger (Keen 1994). The fact that some clearly profit from such dire conditions may be unpalatable but it fits within public choice theory.

fertility of the poor rather than addressing underlying causes of famine, such as poverty and political powerlessness. At the same time however, 'Malthusian optimism' has resulted in a failure to anticipate the occurrence of famines because of its analytical focus on figures of food per capita. Thus a delayed response from government and aid agencies has led to fatal consequences for millions of people (Sen 2001). A failure to respond to the food crisis in Ethiopia meant that Emperor Haile Selassie and his regime were ultimately held responsible for the famine of 1973/4, which claimed 200,000 deaths. He was overthrown a few months later. Similarly, by reputedly ignoring the famine of 1984/5, in case it took away the sheen of the tenth anniversary of the socialist Derg junta's accession to power and the creation of the Worker's Party of Ethiopia, Mengistu Haile Mariam signed the beginning of its end (Lefort 2009). Whether or not the failure to prevent famine in 2008 will trigger a similar movement against Zenawi's current rule in Ethiopia remains to be seen.

The key point is this: if food supply per capita is taken as evidence that food consumption is rising accordingly, then much needed evasive action is unlikely to be taken. Empirical evidence and the theoretical approaches of Sen and Ravallion demonstrate that starvation may occur when food availability per head is constant, or even rising; it is the distribution of access to that food which is vital (Devereux & Tiba 2007).

#### *Limits of the entitlement approach*

Predictably the entitlement approach is not without its critics and some have argued that it added little to what was already known about famine causation.<sup>220</sup> A crucial point for the arguments developed in this thesis, concerning the global food system, is that Sen paid insufficient attention to whether edible or non-edible crops are grown. In the case of the former, a portion of the output can be directly consumed and the market price does not enter the equation. For non-edible crops however, there has to be a sale before there can be a purchase. This has a significant impact on one's 'entitlement set'. This is of enormous importance in terms of the growth of agribusiness and the concentration of cash crops in many Third World countries. Those involved in the production of non-edible crops are clearly more vulnerable to hunger than those growing edible ones. Kenya offers a relevant example. The

---

<sup>220</sup> See for example Fine (2001,2010); Rangasami (1985); Srinivasan (1988).

revenues derived from exports of traditional agricultural products such as coffee and tea were stagnant or declining in the 1990s. In the case of coffee, for example, both the volume and price per tonne of exports from Kenya to the EU fell by about 30 per cent in the 1990s, resulting in an overall decline of revenue from coffee exports to this market of 60 per cent between the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the twenty-first century (Humphrey 2008). Kenya's recent concentration on fresh fruit and flowers has been a response to this declining market.<sup>221</sup> The unfortunate reality, of course, is that Kenya is now increasingly dependent on imported food with prices continually rising and having more than doubled over the last 3 years.<sup>222</sup>

More generally, Sen can be criticised for his methodological individualism, in that he overlooks the roles of local, national and global actors in famine situations. In the context of this thesis this is the most critical oversight, since Sen's account fails to adequately situate famine and food insecurity within the context of the global food system or the political and economic structures both within and beyond famine-prone communities. In other words Sen's model of analysis takes as given the existing distribution of wealth at individual or household level, rather than questioning how and why assets and incomes came to be unequally distributed (Fine 1997). The impact of structural adjustment on Sen's entitlement framework also makes aspects of his theory problematic. More specifically, the entitlements Sen emphasises may be unclear, particularly with regard to private property rights. Societies traditionally based on communal land ownership, for example, are not easily reconciled with his model. This is particularly true of nomadic societies and especially pertinent to many parts of East Africa where hunger and vulnerability to famine is most prevalent. The position of nomads in northern Kenya offers a contemporary example of how certain aspects of the entitlement approach are not particularly relevant. Issues of land tenure and land rights, which are often customary rather than legally enshrined, are particularly problematic in terms of establishing 'entitlements'. This aspect is becoming even more relevant with the increase in land acquisition in East Africa by foreign governments; so-called 'land grabbing'.<sup>223</sup>

In addition the effects of war can completely disrupt established entitlements systems,

---

<sup>221</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>222</sup> See 'Food and Fuel Crisis May Lead to Instability' available at [www.menafn](http://www.menafn) Accessed 14/10/11.

<sup>223</sup> See Chapter 7.

thus undermining elements of the theory's explanatory power. The forced relocation of entire communities during the 1998-2000 Ethiopian/Eritrean war, for example, is a case in point. The breakdown of accepted moral and ethical codes, as a result of conflict, have devastating and well-documented consequences. Acts of looting or pillaging or abandonment of women and children by men called upon to fight, can result in the reduction or indeed total collapse of the entitlement system on which Sen bases his theory. This is an important critical observation and perhaps the most substantive. For other famine theorists, conflict assumes a far greater importance than Sen allows in his analysis (de Waal 1989, 2005; Keen 1994a).<sup>224</sup>

Thirdly, and relatedly, the entitlement approach can be criticised for paying insufficient attention to the scale of death caused by factors not relating to food entitlements. De Waal's 'health crisis model', for example, which focuses on the indiscriminate nature of disease, weakens the explanatory power of entitlements and the hypothesis that famine mortality is inversely correlated to individual entitlements or income (de Waal 1989). Keen's work in Sudan is relevant here in the way his understanding of the Dinka's wealth and increased vulnerability contradicts Sen's theory. This insight underlines the importance of the broader political environment within which individual entitlements are set.

It is clear that disagreements between the theoretical approach of 'entitlements' and the empirical observations of the 'coping strategies' literature (Jodha 1975; Rangasami 1985) reflect, to a great extent, the contrasting perceptions of what famine actually is. It can be said that Sen's entitlement theory reflects the idea that people are plunged into famine, by a catastrophic event whereas those who have used household consumption data view famine as a process, rather than an event. Crucially from this sociological perspective it is an event during which a number of adjustments and coping strategies are made which the entitlement approach overlooks.<sup>225</sup>

Desai (1988) suggests that a major omission in Sen's work is his insufficient attention to the dynamics of famine situations. From this perspective the state of the overall economy/ecology, within which a trigger factor such as a drought may occur, is highly

---

<sup>224</sup> See Chapter 6.

<sup>225</sup> These strategies can include the acceptance of slavery, conversion to other religions or permanent migration, the latter being the most applicable both to the Irish famines in the 1840s and to contemporary African famines where millions continue to live in permanent refugee camps.

relevant. If the economy is already weakened by previous episodes it will obviously have limited reserves for coping with such a crisis. It is also very likely that, if there is no quick and effective relief, one year's crisis will affect next year's output. This is particularly true in the case of livestock where, if many cattle die during a famine, restocking may take several years due to the usual gestation periods. This is highly relevant to the current situation in East Africa where severe drought conditions are having devastating consequences for certain vulnerable communities. For example famine has now been declared in five separate regions in Somalia (FAO 2011) and both Kenya and Ethiopia are experiencing serious food crises.

A second dynamic in contemporary famine analysis is the interaction between different socio-economic groups. The assets of these different groups, their ability to save and the opportunities for investment open to them during normal times, dictate to a great extent how long they can last during times of shortage. Those with adequate reserves of grain assume positions of social power and, indeed, may benefit from famine conditions (Keen 1994b). When famine is over, those who had to sell all their assets start again in a position of increased vulnerability while those who were prosperous to begin with start from an even stronger position (Devereux 2007).

#### *Economic benefits of food insecurity*

Following on from this it would be useful to introduce a concept of particular relevance for understanding some of the potential obstacles to promoting Food Sovereignty in an African context.<sup>226</sup> David Keen has shown that certain groups enjoy positive economic benefits during times of famine, and his perspective works well in linking an economic analysis of food insecurity with the political analysis in Chapter 6. So where as Sen emphasised the economic nature of famine in terms of the failure of liberal economics to protect individual entitlements, Keen argues that in certain instances famine promised and to some extent delivered important economic and military benefits. Keen cites the 1983-1988 Sudanese famine as evidence to support his theory and he demonstrates that this famine was also linked with sexual oppression and religious indoctrination (Keen 1994b: 111). One need not dismiss Sen's link between poverty and famine to realise that, in certain cases of famine, particular groups are victimised. In the case of the Sudan, it has been the inability of

---

<sup>226</sup> See Chapter 7.

certain groups to secure effective representation within the Sudanese state, rather than their lack of assets, that has exposed them to famine. In other words it is a lack of political power not a lack of economic entitlements that has led to famine in some areas. As will be seen in Chapter 6 there are important parallels with marginalised groups in both Kenya and Ethiopia and their levels of food insecurity. Work by Devereux demonstrates how pastoralists in the Somali region of Ethiopia are in the paradoxical position of being wealthier than highland farmers in Ethiopia but politically excluded, geographically marginalised, and intensely vulnerable to livelihood shocks (Devereux 2007).

Studies of the 2001-2002 Malawi famine also lend weight to the idea that famines provide opportunity as well as catastrophe. The key point for this chapter is that although the abolition of food security policies as a result of SA's, led to a weakened institutional response to the famine, nonetheless there were many economic beneficiaries. In Malawi, as in many other cases, famine was considered to have been an avoidable tragedy from which many profited (Devereux & Tiba 2007).

## **2. Macro-economic theories**

This section situates the conceptualisation of famine within the wider context of extreme poverty and perceived lack of economic development. There are two general concepts of poverty that are relevant to this discussion: absolute poverty which specifies the levels of absolute deprivation on a widely accepted basis; and food poverty which is based on the minimum nutrient requirements needed for healthy growth and maintenance of the human body. Neo-liberal political economy/public choice theories are important because of the way they have influenced both the response of the international community and its financial institutions, and promoted a free market rationale. In particular a preoccupation with 'economic development' has led to a single-minded approach of imposing and enlarging a capitalist market doctrine. From a radical political economy perspective, the consolidation of a world economy resulted in a US led model of development culminating in the debt regime of the 1980s. This regime imposed financial constraints via structural adjustment (SA) undermining economic nationalism and the 'political dismantling of the Third World' (McMichael 2008:117). This 'political dismantling' is of most importance in the area of government policy and agriculture because of how national government withdrawal

from agriculture and food policy has been linked to increased food insecurity. One of the earliest critics in this area of research is Susan George who presented her analysis of the effects of global capitalism on the poorest countries in *How The Other Half Dies* (1976). Her work has remained influential over more than three decades and thus many of her key criticisms are addressed within a Food Sovereignty framework. George suggested that there are three basic paradigms in the literature on hunger (George 1991).<sup>227</sup> The first is the previously mentioned ‘growth/trickle down model’. This has traditionally been the theoretical position adopted by the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) since the first World Food summit in Rome in 1974 and has recently had a renaissance (Easterly 2006). This model seeks to increase gross national product (GNP) through industrialisation, increased land use and investment in those sectors of society that are most modern and entrepreneurial. There is an inherent belief in the idea that the accumulated wealth of modernising elites will trickle down and so benefit the worse off. The model encourages the import of both foreign capital investment and technology and assumes that the development in the least economically developed countries will imitate the one that occurred in the now industrialised Western world.<sup>228</sup>

The logic of liberal political economy/public choice is one of short-term self-interest; the market solution to food insecurity, therefore, is to make agriculture more profitable. This can be achieved by increased production to provide extra food either through domestic production or trade. The larger the economic pie, so the theory advocates, the greater the prospects for the poor to escape absolute poverty. This view reflects the World Bank’s approach to food insecurity throughout the 1980s and 1990s when it supported the withdrawal of government from the business of food and promoted free markets to control supply and demand. It can also be said to be the theoretical basis of the food security paradigm. The following five principles guided this approach: a) less state activity, especially food subsidies for the poor; b) the freeing up of world markets; c) using price incentives in agriculture, stressing the advantages of cash crops for export; d) reduced emphasis on food self-sufficiency; e)

---

<sup>227</sup> George specifically uses the term ‘hunger’ in her work, but I will, where appropriate use my preferred term of ‘food insecurity’.

<sup>228</sup> Sachs concedes that this hasn’t happened yet hence his ‘clinical economic’ proposals to ensure that it can and it will. See Sachs 2005, also Collier 2007.

reduction in state spending on basic needs (Uvin, 1994). These economic initiatives are collectively known as structural adjustment policies and have become a central feature of the current global agricultural model.

Importantly for its advocates, this model presupposes that harmony either exists, or can do so, at the national and international level. In other words we live in a pluralist world of increased global interdependence and the present system is potentially beneficial to all nations through increased trade and cooperation.<sup>229</sup> Hence it is often referred to as the ‘optimistic perspective’ or more critically as a resurgence of nineteenth century utopian ideals based on a ‘harmony of interests’.<sup>230</sup> This position is summed up by the then US Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman, who declared at the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996 that ‘free and fair trade promotes global prosperity and plenty’ and ‘the private sector is the great untapped frontier in the world war on hunger’.<sup>231</sup> Though this liberal economic model had been generally recognised as failing, particularly in an African context, because it underplays the political nature of economic structures (Rono 2002), it has recently undergone a revival with a few important alterations. For example the negative impact of multinationals with regard to food production has been recognised, as has the need for increased participation of developing countries at all levels of the process (Mkandawire & Soludo 1999; Sachs 2005). The idea that markets exist and operate in a political vacuum is now less defensible than it was in the past, because of the recognition that markets are products of the prevailing political structures and bases of power (Stiglitz 2006).

The second of George’s paradigms often referred to in the literature as ‘dependency theory,’ suggests that the international system has a centre, i.e. the Western industrialised nations, with the U.S being the centre of the centre, the bulls eye on a dart board so to speak. On the periphery is the developing world. The former has consistently exploited the latter since colonial times and continues to do so (Wallerstein 1993). As was discussed in Chapter 2, this second model dominates the critical literature on the current global food system. Early exponents of this theory believed that the remedy to correct the ongoing imbalance of power was to be found in

---

<sup>229</sup> This vision relates to a pluralist theory of power, See Dahl 1961.

<sup>230</sup> See Gallagher 2011:Ch 1 for a discussion on this idea of ‘harmony of interests’.

<sup>231</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/x0736m/rep2/usa.htm>. Accessed 26/09/11.



the creation of a so-called New International Economic Order (NIEO) (Barratt-Brown 1987). This remedy was to be achieved by the guarantee of stable and fair prices for Third World raw materials, free access to Northern markets, an end to subsidies and trade policies biased in favour of the developed world, alleviation of debt and so forth. Campaigns such as Jubilee 2000 and the Millennium Development Goals could be considered as more recent examples of this kind of initiative.<sup>232</sup> This model, historically, has been the stance of virtually all Third World governments in international negotiations (the so-called Group of 77 in contrast with the G8) and many NGOs. Indeed, some contemporary African leaders continue with this stance and place full responsibility on ex-colonial powers for the state of their country's declining economic and political stability; Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe is an obvious example here.

George's third paradigm often referred to, as the radical political economy model is the one that fits best with the Food Sovereignty model. This model does not deny the need for a NIEO, but is more politicised by adopting a class analysis of the global system of production and consumption. From this radical political perspective, the world is not simplistically divided into rich/powerful and poor/powerless nations. Rather, all nations, including the rich ones, are characterised by having a dominating and a dominated class, albeit with further subdivisions in each (George 1991). From this perspective the NIEO is an incomplete solution to the problems of food insecurity because nothing guarantees that increased national revenues will benefit the worse off in any given national society.<sup>233</sup> Empirical research shows that an over-reliance on income-based development has made it possible to overlook the poorest of the poor (Sen 2010). In addition the NIEO is incomplete because it tends to apportion all the blame for inequality on the developed world and this is clearly not always the case. As we will see in chapter 6 many Third World governments can be held responsible for the unequal access and distribution of basic goods such as food to their own people. Thus, this third model goes further than demanding greater equality between states and calls for greater equality within states too. As will be made clear this more radical

---

<sup>232</sup> Also see the 'Everything but Arms' (EBA) initiative by the EU which encompasses some of these points.

<sup>233</sup> A hypothesis endorsed by Collier (2007) in his analysis of the 'bottom billion' even though he advocates more not less global integration to end food insecurity.

model is a much closer fit with the vision of human society and the responsive policy framework advocated by the Food Sovereignty model.

From a sociological perspective, what distinguishes this third model from the growth/trickle-down model is that it assumes the presence of conflict, not harmony. Third World elites, along with all other political elites will not give up a share of their wealth and privileges willingly and therefore the idea of benefits ‘trickling down’ is no more than a fallacy (Bayart 1993). In addition, rich nations will continue to exploit poor ones, but as a double blow to the poorest, they will also continue to support the often-corrupt elites in these developing countries in order to ensure the status quo.<sup>234</sup> The separation of the role of human agency from environmental factors, such as drought, is a crucial one, particularly in an East African context. It necessitates a political analysis to demonstrate responsibility with regards to food insecurity and will be explored in Chapter 6.<sup>235</sup>

#### *Economic development and the Millennium Development Goals*

From the comparison of the three approaches outlined above, one can conclude that the neo-liberal model, (incorporating the mistaken FAD approach) continues to dominate the international approach to food insecurity. However, within this context developmental economists have produced an enormous amount of work aimed at understanding and overcoming a myriad of global inequalities including food insecurity. Analyses of the ‘fourteenth century reality of the global poor’ (Collier 2007)<sup>236</sup> reveal a consensus in terms of the poor being stuck in a variety of traps though there are distinct differences in angles of emphasis on causal factors.<sup>237</sup> Whatever the differences it is now generally understood by development economists that, despite all efforts, the bottom billion of humanity, located in the Third World, has become poorer, both relatively and in absolute terms (Pogge 2003). The economic position of people in these societies, relative to the rest of the world, has been one of

---

<sup>234</sup> Although many African states fit within this framework of analysis, Angola is most conspicuous because, unlike many of its neighbours, it has been largely exempt from natural disasters but beset by conflict and food insecurity. It is recognised that this is largely a result of both European colonisation and cold war politics (Easterly 2006: 283-289).

<sup>235</sup> Take Ethiopia or Somalia for example, where political problems and instability have been compounded by periodic regional droughts.

<sup>236</sup> This refers to the comparison between the dire social and economic conditions experienced by the world’s poorest people today with those experienced by the majority of the poor in Western Europe in the fourteenth century.

<sup>237</sup> Collier (2007); (Easterly 2006); Sachs (2005).

massive and accelerating divergence. Collier offers the truly ghastly image of ‘a billion people stuck in a train slowly rolling backwards downhill’ (Collier 2007: 10). Economists have identified many reasons as to why this should be and these factors have been categorised and presented as essential traps to development (Collier 2007; Easterly 2006; Sachs 2005). Collier (2007), for example, applies four separate but often related traps to his analysis of African economic inequalities: the conflict trap; the natural resources trap; the trap of bad governance in a small country; and the trap of being landlocked with poor neighbours.<sup>238</sup> Some of these perceived obstacles to economic development are considered below. Some of these obstacles result from neo-liberal macro-economic theory whilst others are more independent of it in the respect that they result from being landlocked. In terms of advancing Food Sovereignty as an alternative framework for agriculture then the former must be afforded relative primacy.

#### *Innovation*

There is a huge difference between rich and poor countries and their tendency to innovate. Rich countries have large markets, which standard economic theory suggests, increases the incentive for innovation, bringing new technologies to the market, further raising productivity, and hence expanding the size of market. From this perspective one can clearly see a chain reaction which economists call endogenous growth. In the rich countries of North America, Western Europe and East Asia there is massive investment in research and development (R and D) leading to sales of patent protected products in the global market. These investments are not just left to the market though; rich governments are also heavily investing whereas in most poor countries the innovation process simply never gets started. The growing innovation gap over the last two centuries is given as one of the most fundamental reasons why rich and poor countries have diverged to such a degree (Sachs 2005). This is of particularly relevance with respect to food technologies and ownership of intellectual property rights that apply to patented seeds and grains. These issues are central to the second pillar of Food Sovereignty; access to productive resources.<sup>239</sup>

#### *Population/land ratios*

---

<sup>238</sup> These traps are considered in more detail in Chapter 6 on political determinants of famine.

<sup>239</sup> See Chapter 3.

In *The End of Poverty* (2005) Jeffrey Sachs,<sup>240</sup> claims that until two centuries ago just about everyone was poor, with the exception of a small minority of powerful rulers and large land-owners. The economic historian, Angus Maddison, puts the average income per person in Western Europe in 1820 at around 90% of the average income in Africa today, and life expectancy in Western Europe and Japan was about forty years (cited in Sachs 2005: 26). The past two centuries, however, have been a unique era in economic history, a period of modern economic growth and one, Sachs argues, in which both population and per capita income have come ‘unstuck’. By this he means they expanded at rates never seen before, world population increased by six-fold, and per capita income in the U.S twenty-five-fold, with Western European per capita income at fifteen-fold during this period (Sachs 2005:28). Importantly, however, total worldwide food production more than kept up with a booming world population, notwithstanding of course that vast numbers of people still go hungry today. By way of explanation, Sachs applies an alternative methodology, one he calls ‘clinical economics’.<sup>241</sup> Through the macro lens of clinical economics, Sachs rejects popular explanations of food insecurity, which often focus on the faults of the poor (i.e. the Malthusian view that they have too many children) or view poverty purely as a result of corrupt leadership and backward cultures that obstruct modern economic development. Rather, something as complex as a country’s economic system has too many facets to presume that only one thing can go wrong. Problems occur in different parts of the economic machine and sometimes combine to bring the machine to a near halt.

#### *Top-down approach*

Much of the focus of macro-economic analysis on global disparities has been on the failure of the developed countries attempts to improve the position of the least developed countries. Easterly (2006: Ch 2), for example, is highly critical of the big push, top-down approach advocated by Sachs and exemplified by the policy paradigm of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Some economists see many of the

---

<sup>240</sup> Sachs was head of the United Nations Millennium Project to reduce global poverty, hunger and disease 2002-2006.

<sup>241</sup> Sachs introduces an interesting analogy between good clinical medicine and the direction that good development economics should be heading. His substantive argument is that development economics needs to become much more like modern medicine, ‘a profession of rigor, insight, and practicality.’ (Sachs 2005: 74).

macro-economic policies of the past as playing a causal role (albeit unintentional) in keeping the least developed countries so impoverished and thus call for a rejection of such 'utopian goals' (Moyo 2010). Much of the criticism from development economists is directed at the aid and trade industry<sup>242</sup> but their criticisms have also been applied to structural adjustment policies and their link to increased food insecurity. Economists, such as Easterly, for example, advocate a move towards local, piecemeal innovations that will actually make the poor and hungry better off. Though the concept of Food Sovereignty does not feature at all in the work of the economists mentioned here, their suggestions and recommendations for a new direction in policy actually fit very well within a Food Sovereignty framework.

It can be said that lack of economic development is very often viewed as the principal cause of poverty and thus food poverty in development literature. This perspective can be conceptualised as follows.<sup>243</sup>

The key problem for many of the poorest countries is that poverty itself becomes a trap; when poverty is extreme the poor simply do not have the ability to change things by themselves. Poverty, caused by lack of capital per person, is often manifested in the following ways: Poor rural villages lack transport both in terms of vehicles and good road networks, power generators and irrigation systems. So-called, 'human capital' is very low; people are hungry, diseased and struggling for survival. Natural capital is depleted, trees have been cut down and soil nutrients are often exhausted. In these conditions the requirement is for more capital, physical, human and natural but this requires saving and investment. When people are extremely poor there is simply no capacity to save. There is, in economic terms, no margin of income above survival that can be invested in the future. This is why the poorest of the poor, usually the rural poor, are most prone to becoming trapped within low or negative economic growth rates. From this perspective, the inability to save is crucial in preventing the poor from freeing themselves from their current predicament. (Sachs 2005: 56-57).<sup>244</sup> This approach sums up the 'development project', which has been deeply criticised (McMichael 2008).<sup>245</sup>

---

<sup>242</sup> This relates directly to the fourth pillar of Food Sovereignty.

<sup>243</sup> This conceptualisation is broadly in keeping with the work of Sachs (2005).

<sup>244</sup> William Easterly rejects this hypothesis though. See Easterly 2006:Ch 2.

<sup>245</sup> See Chapter 2.

However, even if the explanation of the poverty trap is accepted it does not explain why some impoverished countries are trapped and some are not. Among many economists and others in the development field there has been the realisation, over the last decade, that the answer to this often lies in the physical geography (Collier 2007). It has been noted that Americans often believe that they generated their wealth all by themselves, overlooking the fact that they inherited a vast continent rich in natural resources, fertile lands and an agreeable climate. In addition the continent has navigable rivers and miles of coastline providing a perfect foundation for water based trade (McMichael 2008). Many poor countries, especially those in Africa, are not so blessed. Landlocked countries incur high transport costs and lack the natural advantages of rivers, coastlines and natural harbours. Collier's work on the relationship between geography and economic development showed that 38% of people living in 'the bottom billion' are landlocked (Collier 2007: 54). Therefore a country's geographical position offers a better (albeit partial) explanation of the persistence of food insecurity in certain cases, such as Ethiopia and Niger, than culture or birth rate (Devereux 2009b).

Critics, of course, are quick to point out those European successful economies such as Switzerland, Austria and Luxemburg are also landlocked, thus geography alone does not necessarily condemn a country to poverty and slow economic growth.<sup>246</sup> In these countries agreeable climates and navigable rivers also play an important part. However the relevance of geographical positioning in African development has perhaps been, until now, seriously underplayed, but as the analysis of vulnerability to food insecurity becomes more sophisticated, this is changing. The key point is that the geographical factor could be included in directing policy that is more country specific. Research conducted by the World Bank focused on transportation costs around the world and discovered that costs for those in landlocked countries were significantly higher than elsewhere (Collier 2007: 54). Landlocked countries are to a great degree dependent on the transport infrastructure of their surrounding countries. They are, in Collier's words, 'hostages to their neighbours' (ibid: 55). The obvious consequence of this is that poor countries, surrounded by poorly developed countries, have

---

<sup>246</sup> It should be noted that landlocked European countries do not have transport networks created purely for colonial exploitation of natural resources, which is often the case in African countries.

considerable obstacles to integration into global markets. Relatively high transport costs, for example, can preclude poor countries from developing manufacturing, which, to date, is considered the most powerful tool for rapid development.<sup>247</sup> These obstacles are important because they demonstrate some of the flaws in the unquestioning pursuit of free market solutions to situations of food insecurity.

It is fair to say that some of these concrete obstacles may well be insurmountable in a local context, but this is arguably not the case in a global context if policy making were to focus on protecting human rights and reducing global economic inequality. As stated, being landlocked, *per se*, is not the problem, but it is when combined with other factors. One evidently important factor is the kind of neighbours surrounding a country. Switzerland, for example, has Germany, Italy, France and Austria, all with well-developed infrastructures and fully functioning markets. African landlocked countries are not so fortunate. Ethiopia for example has Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan and Eritrea, countries that have for decades had combinations of stagnant economies, civil conflicts, border invasions and, in the case of Somalia, total state collapse.

In terms of economic development it is relevant that there are other opportunities open to landlocked countries. Botswana, for example, has benefited enormously from its large natural resource surplus. More importantly, the fact that it has managed this resource well, and enjoyed a stable government, has enabled it to overcome many of the problems normally associated with being landlocked.<sup>248</sup> As stated, over 30% of Africa's population lives in landlocked, resource scarce countries. In the rest of the developing world only 1% of the population live in this situation (Collier 2007: 57).<sup>249</sup> Other kinds of geographical disadvantages are also at play in terms of economic development. Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia suffer arid conditions, are prone to prolonged droughts and low agricultural productivity. In addition, Sub-Saharan Africa also has the misfortune of ideal conditions for mosquito breeding, making it the

---

<sup>247</sup> The argument for promoting agriculture as a tool for development is a cornerstone of Food Sovereignty and is discussed in relation to Kenya and Ethiopia in Chapter 7.

<sup>248</sup> The opposite problem of resource rich countries, the so-called 'resource curse', and the link to famine vulnerability is well understood. See Collier 2007; Easterly 2006; Pogge 2003.

<sup>249</sup> A good case could be made that such places should never have become countries in the first place, but colonisation ensured that they did and their current problems and vulnerability to hunger are very much part of that ongoing legacy.

epicentre of malaria and other killer diseases, a point emphasised by Sachs (2005).<sup>250</sup> What is really important here, and a critical point in favour of developing the concept of Food Sovereignty, is that none of these conditions per se need be fatal to economic development. What it does mean is that some countries need investment to overcome these adversities, which other, more fortunate, countries have not needed to make. In other words policy needs to be directed towards making the playing field more level before imposing an economic model that has been designed to work in developed countries. Put plainly, policy development and implementation needs to be sensitive to local circumstances. Transport infrastructures can be built, linking land locked countries with coastal countries. Tropical disease can be controlled, land can be irrigated and local agricultural productivity can be boosted. The crux of the matter, though, is rather obvious - these improvements are costly and these costs need to be met.

Even if the economy is not completely impoverished, the government may lack the resources to pay for the infrastructure on which the necessary economic growth depends. Governments are crucial to any investment in public goods and services such as primary health care, transport power grids and suchlike. There are many reasons why governments may lack the financial means to provide these public goods some of which are wholly internal (corruption, mismanagement and so forth) but others stem from an economic policy environment imposed externally.

Firstly, the population may be so poor that taxation may not be feasible. Secondly, the government may be inept or corrupt and therefore not capable of utilising an efficient tax system. Furthermore, when governments survive on 'rents' from natural resource wealth they often fail to develop a tax system at all, which has serious repercussions in terms of accountability. Accountability and transparency are key criteria of democratic governance. Thirdly, the government may be saddled with enormous debt carried over from earlier decades and previous regimes, therefore any tax revenue that is collected may have to be used to service the debt rather than to finance new investments (AFRODAD 2005; Stiglitz 2006).<sup>251</sup>

Cultural or religious norms may also be an obstacle to economic development.

---

<sup>250</sup> See research supported by the Bill Gates Foundation on the links between malaria and lack of development. At [www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org) Accessed 28/10/08.

<sup>251</sup> See Chapter 6.



Repression of women for example may leave half the population without education or legal and political rights, in effect preventing half the population from contributing to overall economic development. The central role of women, both to the economy in general and agriculture in particular has become a key feature of the Food Sovereignty movement. Equality and justice are corner stones of Food Sovereignty and a feminist perspective has become entrenched in its core ideals. Gender inequality can also delay or prevent the demographic transition from high to low fertility.<sup>252</sup> Similarly, cultural boundaries may apply to religious or ethnic minorities, excluding them from schooling, healthcare, employment all of which are crucial factors in measurements of development as per the United Nations Human Development Index.

Arguably, the most important feature of modern geo-politics, and the way it relates to food, is trade. As was discussed in Chapter 2 on the global food system, the barriers erected, by rich developed countries, can seriously impede a poorer country's chances of achieving economic development. Perhaps the most obvious example here, (as discussed in the previous chapter) is that subsidies paid to EU and US farmers severely handicap farmers in the developing world who are unable to compete on the world market.<sup>253</sup>

### **3. Structural adjustment and increased vulnerability**

This last part of the chapter focuses on the macro economic policy of structural adjustment and how the implementation of these policies has increased food insecurity and vulnerability to famine. For this discussion the imposition of structural adjustment by International Financial Institutions (IFIs) provides an important link between the economic causes of food insecurity and the way that food aid has developed to compensate for these economic failures, discussed in the next chapter. The overlap between economic and political consequences of SA is considerable but for the purposes of this thesis SA will be separated along two lines: the first, which is the role of the IFIs will be discussed in this chapter; the second is the impact on governments' control of agricultural policy and will be discussed in Chapter 6.

As stated earlier, in order to facilitate economic development during the 1980s the

---

<sup>252</sup> See Livi-Bacci (1994) for a discussion of the demographic transition in the developed world and the expectation of it extending to the developing world.

<sup>253</sup> See report of Kenyan Government with regard to progress made in the MDGs (2005) at [www.planipolls.iiep.unesco](http://www.planipolls.iiep.unesco) Accessed 10/10/11.

dominant strategy became one of structural adjustment which emphasised the need for economic liberalisation and state withdrawal from agriculture along with all other sectors of the economy. Because of the central role of IFIs this neo-liberal policy has also been referred to as the World Bank's 'political economy' (Olukoshi 1999). The speed with which SA spread as the dominant economic strategy is indicated by the signing of IMF agreements with 85 developing countries between 1980 and 1990 and the World Bank gave 220 adjustment loans to 63 countries in the same period. (Uvin 1994: 232). By 1990 SA financing accounted for more than 25% of World Bank lending, a considerable rise from nothing in 1980 (World Bank 1990).

This so-called 'rolling back the state' as a key component of structural adjustment (most associated, domestically, with the Reagan administration in the US and the Thatcher government in the UK) was, on the face of it, aimed at increased productivity.<sup>254</sup> In much of the Third World, it was specifically aimed at increasing agricultural produce to stimulate economic growth. This did include food but, crucially, it was directed at food for export. The most controversial aspect of SA for this discussion is how the constraints that international institutions imposed on Third World states affected their ability to solve issues of domestic food insecurity for themselves. The Food Sovereignty framework is very much a response to the resulting decline of control over food issues at a national and regional level. In Malawi, for example, most government mechanisms for dealing with food insecurity were dismantled under liberal reforms imposed by the World Bank and other agencies during the 1980s and 90s (Devereux 2009).<sup>255</sup> The same policy outcome applied to Kenya (Rono 2002) and Ethiopia (Riddell & Robinson 1992). Thus the most critical of commentators have argued that the neo-liberal paradox is that 'free' markets exclude and/or starve populations displaced and dispossessed by their implementation (Patel & Delwiche 2002). Research on the famine in Malawi in 2001 reinforces this connection between liberal economic policies and famine vulnerability (Devereux & Tiba 2007). Indeed the current food crisis in the horn of Africa has been exacerbated by the volatility of food prices on world markets and the absence of government food

---

<sup>254</sup> See 'The Coming Boom: Economic, Political and Social by Herman Kahn (1983) written in praise of Reagan's political agenda.

<sup>255</sup> These coping mechanisms included grain stores, fertilizer and seed subsidies, smallholder credit organisations and price banding on staple foods such as maize.

stocks and adequate safety net programmes.<sup>256</sup> Although it is recognised that many grain-marketing boards were inefficient and in some cases corrupt, it has been argued that their abolition through structural adjustments has increased famine vulnerability. Therefore reform of these institutions, rather than abolition, would have been a far more effective approach to food insecurity (Paul & Wahlberg 2008).

Over a decade ago questions raised by structural adjustment programmes within the framework of the World Bank's 'political economy' were many and varied (Olukoshi 1999). Attempts to understand the negative aspects of SA in an East African context generated questions such as: Can economic adjustment occur without a simultaneous program of political and administrative reforms? Which sections of the state elite can be expected to be reliable allies in the quest for market-led reforms?<sup>257</sup> How might technocrats be "insulated" from undesirable interest group pressures that might compromise the integrity of the adjustment package? What capacities exist locally for initiating or grasping orthodox market reforms? What lessons can be learnt about the timing, phasing, and sequencing of reform policy implementation? Which regime types are best suited for structural adjustment implementation? How might the "winners" from structural adjustment be supported to constitute a local resource for the program and how might "losers" be compensated or out-manoeuvred in order to prevent them from obstructing the implementation of the program?<sup>258</sup>

The purpose of including these questions here is not to answer them in any definitive sense,<sup>259</sup> but to emphasise the centrality of politics to the process of economic development and that the structural adjustment framework for economic reform should, itself, be open to a more critical analysis. This lack of analysis has been one of the key failures in the application of these economic programmes in the Third world in recent decades. As stated by Olukoshi (1999) 'There is nothing sacrosanct or settled about the neo-liberal structural adjustment model; persistence with it in the framework of popular disaffection may, in fact, compound Africa's crisis of governance.'<sup>260</sup> This questions the underlying assumption that informs the World Bank's "political

<sup>256</sup> See [fao.org/crisis/horn-africa](http://fao.org/crisis/horn-africa) Accessed 26/09/11.

<sup>257</sup> This is especially pertinent to those who have analysed SA in Africa from a neo-patrimonial perspective. See for example Bayart (2000).

<sup>258</sup> Some of these questions are addressed in the next chapter.

<sup>259</sup> See Mkandawire & Soludo 1999 for a distinctly African perspective on structural adjustment programmes which addresses many of these questions.

<sup>260</sup> Interesting parallels can be drawn with the current economic and political crisis in Greece in 2011.

economy” and the thinking of the public choice theorists that the problem in Africa today is not so much with an orthodox economic reform model, which is both “rational” and aims to restore “rationality” to African economies, but with the framework for politics and governance which is essentially “irrational” and “dysfunctional” on account of all-pervading “neo-patrimonial” structures and processes built into the post-colonial state form (Bayart 2000).

What Africa needs is not so much “good” governance defined in narrow technocratic, functionalist terms that are meant to further the goals of an adjustment model that is as controversial as it is contested but a system of democratic governance in which political actors have the space to freely and openly debate, negotiate, and design an economic reform package that is integral to the construction of a new social contract. As has been noted even “good” policies introduced in ignorance of local conditions inevitably fail and may even make things worse (Mkandawire & Soludo 1999).

This serious drawback can be more fully understood within the agricultural framework that would be developed through Food Sovereignty. Food self-sufficiency using as much local material and human resources as possible, for example, would not be overlooked or overridden by greater economic integration.<sup>261</sup> Most importantly, Food Sovereignty demands a fundamental reassessment of power and control over all aspects of agriculture and food systems. These are political issues, and are addressed in the following chapters: Chapter 5 explores the politics of food aid; Chapter 6 considers the obstacles and potential for state and government control of food issues; and chapter 7 assesses the feasibility of Food Sovereignty in an East African context.

#### *Kenya as an example.*

Research by Manundu (1997) offers an insight into both the statistical evidence of structural adjustment programmes in Kenya and the perception of the population with regard to the negative impacts. From the late 1980’s onwards Kenya experienced economic instability due to fluctuating prices on the country’s major exports, high population growth and increasing debt. This resulted in a decline in GDP, wide spread poverty and food shortages. It was within this context that the implementation of structural adjustment programmes began. In contrast to the ‘golden years’ of the first

---

<sup>261</sup> A position that is still clearly at odds with the World Bank approach to food security that has dominated for the last two decades.

two decades after independence the period 1980-1990 is sometimes referred to as 'the lost decade' due to the severe external and internal challenges that Kenya faced. (Rono 2002).

Manundu's work (1997) showed that SA led to increasing household poverty, and hence food insecurity in both relative and absolute terms for the rural and the urban poor.<sup>262</sup> Manundu's countrywide research records the extent of both poverty rates in 1994. Generally speaking the rates are very similar or higher for food poverty in the data he presents. His data on the perception of Kenyan households on changes in the poverty situation in 1994 compared to 5 years earlier reveals that 77% considered that their poverty situation had worsened, 15% that their situation had not changed and only 8% perceived that their poverty situation had improved (Manundu 1997). A 2005, report on the progress of the MDGs in Kenya, showed that in 2003, 56 per cent of the population were still living below the poverty line with a projection that, at the current trend, 65.9 per cent of the Kenyan population would be living below the poverty line by 2015 (Millennium Development Goals in Kenya 2005). These findings add weight to the widespread claims that structural adjustment has aggravated poverty in Kenya.

In terms of SA impact on Kenyan agriculture two points are most relevant and discussed in more detail elsewhere in this thesis. One is the liberalisation of markets so local products have been subjected to competition from imported ones, which are often subsidised commodities. Secondly government investment in agriculture has seriously declined over recent decades and has been skewed in favour of support for export crops such as flowers. If we apply Sen's entitlement theory, those involved in the production of non-edible crops are clearly more vulnerable to hunger than those growing edible ones. In terms of regional investment pastoralists in the livestock areas of the rift valley and Northern Kenya, for example, have not seen any investment. The result has been growing economic disparity between regions, reflected in the pattern of food insecurity in a current context. The peoples of Northern Kenya, for example, are more adversely affected by the present food crisis than the central region.<sup>263</sup>

---

<sup>262</sup> For example the Nairobi household budget survey of 1974, calculated about 15% of urban households were below the absolute poverty line. By 1994 this had risen to about 30%.

<sup>263</sup> See Chapter 6 for a discussion on the political context of regional disparities in Kenya.

*Structural adjustment in Ethiopia*

As previously stated Ethiopia's recent past is characterised partly by socialism, civil war, recurrence of drought, and economic mismanagement. Its economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, with 80% of its population living in rural areas being employed in the agriculture sector. The dynamics of population growth, low productivity, compounded with some of the aforementioned factors, have been perceived as major obstacles to economic growth and poverty reduction.

Thus over the last two decades a series of economic reform programs have been introduced to facilitate Ethiopia's transition from a command to a market oriented-system. The stated intention of these reforms has been one of restoring macroeconomic stability and creating a favourable international business environment. Structural adjustment was the first of these reform programmes and was introduced in 1992. The SA programme was initially aimed at stabilising the economy and breaking with the order of central planning. The SA programme was extended in 1996 to include the objectives of bringing a faster rate of growth of national income, lower inflation, increased openness, and improvement in investment.

In 1999, the new orientation towards poverty reduction in Ethiopia was indicated by the introduction of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). The PRGF became a new conditionality to receive loans from the IMF and a reference for other donors and creditors to support developing countries economies. The first PRGF in Ethiopia was approved in 2001 for about US\$110 million (AFRODAD 2005).<sup>264</sup>

Real GDP growth during the 1990's and 2001/02-2004/05 averaged 5%. However, critically for this debate, the performance of agriculture was very poor during this period. The adjustment programs were intended to restore growth and efficiency and, most importantly, rationalise the role of the state. Public expenditure was strengthened and made to focus on building the human and physical capacity of the economy. Accordingly, key Sector Development Programs (SDPs), including education, health, road, and agricultural extension programmes were formulated and implemented. Resource allocation favouring vulnerable groups/regions was further reinforced and managing sector development programs were emphasised. Moreover, other policies, such as the National Policy of Ethiopian Women and the National Environment

---

<sup>264</sup> Available at [www.afrodad.org](http://www.afrodad.org) Accessed 04/01/12

Policy, were brought into focus by way of mainstreaming the concerns of women and environmental issues in the development process. While implementing SA, Ethiopia developed an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) in 2000 and launched the full-PRSP known as Ethiopia's sustainable Development and Poverty reduction Program (SDPRP) in 2002 aimed at securing economic growth averaging 7% a year in order to reduce poverty by half in 2015. In October 2005, the second phase of the PRSP process, a Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP), was put into action as a guiding strategic framework for the five-year period 2005-2010. The PASDEP carried forward important strategic directions pursued under the SDPRP related to human development, rural development, food security, and capacity building but also embodied some important new directions including particular emphasis on greater commercialisation of agriculture and the private sector and a scaling-up of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goal.<sup>265</sup>

Agriculture remains the mainstay of the Ethiopian economy. However, as the data already produced in this thesis shows, little progress has been made towards achieving the government's objectives on agriculture and food security. With only minor exceptions, the same policy intentions were restated during each of the annual arrangements under the Fund-supported programs. The principal objective of the government's agricultural policy, since the start of the reform programme, was to ensure food security through increased production, employment and income, and to increase foreign exchange earnings through increased exports. Yet agricultural productivity remained broadly unchanged during the program period, production remained extremely vulnerable to recurring droughts, and food insecurity remained a critical problem (with around five million people requiring food aid, even in a "normal" year) (AFRODAD 2005).

According to the Citizens Report Card (CRC)<sup>266</sup> published by PANE (Poverty Action Network Ethiopia) 2005, roughly one fifth of the farmers included in the survey had had to borrow money for agriculture and related activities thus increasing their personal debt. It also indicates the negative impact due to the absence of formal

---

<sup>265</sup> See Chapter 7 for a more in-depth discussion.

<sup>266</sup> The CRC reflects the results of a survey conducted in rural areas of 3 regions (Oromiya, Tigray and SNNPR) and one urban area (Dire Dawa). See AFRODAD 2005.

commercial support. More than half of the farmers included in the survey reported loss of crops and cattle and agricultural extension services scored the lowest rate of satisfaction in the sectors covered by the survey (it included social services such as education and health, roads, employment and labour markets).

It is fair to say that the SA programmes have had a mixed result in Ethiopia. Poverty and social impact analysis (PSIA) was meant to provide information on the trade-offs among different policy options for achieving both growth and reducing poverty. It was also meant to assess the timing and sequencing of possible reforms, estimate the risks involved, and consider appropriate compensatory and complementary measures. However, PSIA is currently at its early stage in Ethiopia and, as such, has not been as effective in measuring the impact of SA and subsequent reforms in Ethiopia as it could have been.

However, the research that has been conducted shows that structural adjustment programmes based on the classical economic theory that output, employment and prices (including wages, interest rates and exchange rates) are best determined by the free play of market forces have not delivered. Prices are not necessarily the most effective instruments for the efficient allocation of resources. In most of the developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, realities have proved the other way round. Countries adopting the structural adjustment programme have been compelled to move towards freer markets without being in a position to take full advantages of available market opportunities. To this end, because of the low capacity to adjust their supply, programmed countries such as Ethiopia have largely failed to enjoy the expected results. Despite being able to prop up its export supply, in keeping with the framework of the SA programme, Ethiopia has been negatively affected by the significant fall in the price of coffee export prices. We will return to the issue of Ethiopia and its current plans for agricultural reforms in Chapter 7.

### **Concluding comments**

There is no doubt that, at the time of publication, Sen's micro-economic contribution to famine analysis was a vital one. Despite its shortcomings his early work moved the presumption of famine causation from production to distribution and consumption, and, specifically, placed household purchasing power at the centre of much subsequent research. In one sense Sen's analysis succeeded in shifting the debate away



from mono-causal arguments about famine and showed that droughts and other extreme climatic events are neither necessary nor sufficient to cause famines. In addition, famines have occurred with and without FAD, with and without food grain prices rising, and with and without natural disasters. Most importantly, for the argument developed in this thesis, Sen's empirical work can be used to illustrate the deficiencies of liberal economic theory and the shortcomings of extreme liberalisation. His focus on rights and entitlements lends weight to the central concept of Food Sovereignty and its potential as an alternative to the market-led model of agriculture. This chapter refutes the idea of neutrality in the economic sphere, and argues that the developed world, along with political elites in the developing world, benefits from the current economic system, which includes the global food system. Furthermore, the imposition of structural adjustment programmes has increased food insecurity in East Africa. By linking foreign economic policies with increased famine vulnerability this discussion can now move towards the question of responsibility, which a more benign economic theory (the trickle down approach) overlooks.

It is clear that economic development is dependent on a supportive and development oriented government. Governments must not only invest in infrastructure projects that benefit the whole population, rather than the few, as have occurred in Kenya and Ethiopia, but they must, according to liberal economic theory create an environment that will attract private investment as well (Sachs 2005, Stiglitz 2006, Collier 2007).

However the findings in this chapter fit very well with the concept of Food Sovereignty. Specifically, in terms of food security, the best hope for the Third World may not be in greater integration in the global food system, but greater independence from it. There are convincing arguments for the benefits of global free trade, but they do not take account of the negative impact of the instability of markets, the volatility of prices nor the centrality of food to human well-being. The conclusion reached in this chapter is that certain liberal economic policies have had a long lasting negative impact on famine vulnerability and demonstrate an over-reliance on market responses to, what is in essence, a political problem.

## **CHAPTER 5 – FROM FOOD AID TOWARDS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY**

Hungry men listen only to those who have a piece of bread. Food is a tool. It is a weapon in the US negotiating kit (Earl Butz, US Secretary of Agriculture, 1971-76 cited in Patel 2007: 91).

Food: A Basic Human Right – Everyone must have access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain a healthy life with full human dignity. Each nation should declare that access to food is a constitutional right and guarantee the development of the primary sector to ensure the concrete realization of this fundamental right (Principle 1 of the Food Sovereignty framework).

The purpose of this chapter is to understand how food aid fits within a framework of Food Sovereignty in an African context. Specifically, food aid is analysed in terms of how it promotes or negates the concept of food as a basic human right. (Principle 1 of Food Sovereignty). It makes explicit the link between the evolution of food aid as compensation for economic reforms and the conditionalities attached to the adoption of free market principle discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter also seeks to make explicit the conceptual and empirical links between food aid and Food Sovereignty. This includes understanding the extent to which food aid undermines Food Sovereignty. This chapter explores food aid as a method of dealing with both persistent hunger and sudden catastrophic famine. Domestic food aid programmes within developed countries are not part of this discussion rather the focus is on international food aid such as flows of food or cash to purchase food from richer countries to poorer countries.<sup>267</sup> Part 1 provides an overview of the different types of food aid and how this aid is classified, financed and delivered. Part 2 offers a brief history of food aid and illustrates how food aid has evolved over time within the context of the global food system (GFS). The discussion includes various donor

---

<sup>267</sup> There are extensive food aid programmes within the US for example such as school feeding programmes and food vouchers but they are not included in this discussion on food aid.

countries, such as Britain and the founder members of the EU, but its primary focus is on the United States for three important reasons.<sup>268</sup> Firstly, the US has the longest history of food aid; secondly it has, at present, the greatest amount, both actual and potential, of food to dispose of; and lastly, it has been unique in its unwillingness to institute reforms that would promote long-term agricultural recovery and thus see the balance of benefit tip in favour of the recipient countries of US aid. This is a key variable in the potential obstacles to developing Food Sovereignty in an African context, as discussed in chapter 7.

Part 3 supports the argument that despite some successes, especially the growth in cash transfers, food aid, if ill conceived, can in fact exacerbate famine vulnerability in the long run. Numerous elements, including the politicisation of aid, farm subsidies, donor conditionalities and unintended consequences such as recipient dependency, make it impossible not to question at least some of the current functions of food aid in the fight against famine. Part 4 offers a critique of various proposals for the reform of food aid organisation and delivery, thereby directing international responses to famine towards permanent prevention policies. This reorganisation of food aid will be considered through the framework of Food Sovereignty. It is argued that donor countries could overcome most food aid challenges if they were to prioritise the needs of the hungry, rather than national strategic or commercial interests.

### **1. Defining food aid**

For many decades food aid has played a key role in the response to extreme hunger in both natural and man-made disasters. Interest in this subject, however, extends way beyond the realms of academia or those directly involved with its implementation. Civil society, indigenous peoples and new social movements, are the prime movers behind a newly emerging Food Sovereignty policy framework<sup>269</sup> and food aid is an important factor within this concept. Food aid is an emotive issue emphasising the need to move beyond the myths and rhetoric that inform divided opinion on this issue and concentrate on the facts. A great deal has been written about food aid but the issue has been clouded by analyses that are either highly technical or decidedly polemical

---

<sup>268</sup> See SOFI 2005 for tables of comparison of donors in the global food aid system.

<sup>269</sup> See Chapter 3.

(Barrett & Maxwell 2005).<sup>270</sup> Food aid is a complex, often contradictory and highly contentious area of the famine debate, but this contention relates more to its functions and outcomes than its definition. In the context of the WTO negotiations on agriculture (1999) the FAO offered this general description: ‘Food aid is the provision of food commodities by one country to another, free of charge or under highly concessional terms, to assist the country in meeting its food needs’.<sup>271</sup>

Shaw and Clay give a more detailed description,

Food aid is aid supplied as food commodities on grant or concessional terms. It includes donations of food commodities by government, intergovernmental organisations (particularly the World Food Programme) and private voluntary or non governmental organisations; monetary grants tied to food purchases; and sales and loans of food commodities on credit terms with a repayment period of three years or more. It does not include the larger transactions in the ‘grey area’ between aid and trade of export enhancement and subsidy programmes. (Shaw & Clay 1993 Ch 1: 1)

It is, however, this ‘grey area’ that is crucial to this thesis both because of the central role attributed to structural adjustment programmes<sup>272</sup> and the change in policy direction advocated by those who wish to reform the current food aid system to be more compatible with the Food Sovereignty framework.

### *Types of food aid*

Although there are some superficial differences in the definitions found in the food aid literature there are three general categories that denote the most common types of food aid.

The first type is Relief or Emergency food aid which is generally considered the most targeted type of food aid, in that it attempts to deliver to all those in need and exclude those not in need.<sup>273</sup> Emergency aid is a response to sudden natural disasters, such as

---

<sup>270</sup> Barrett & Maxwell (2005) have made a valuable contribution to understanding contemporary food aid in their book *‘Food Aid After Fifty Years: Recasting Its Role’*. This chapter benefits from the research and analysis they have produced.

<sup>271</sup> Available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y3733e/y3733e06.htm> Accessed 04/07/11

<sup>272</sup> See Chapter 4

<sup>273</sup> Food aid experts agree that targeted food aid is the most desirable, with the least adverse effect on local production, providing it is short-term (Barrett and Maxwell 2005).

the 2004 Asian Tsunami or 2008 Chinese Earthquake, or shortfalls in production due to drought, pest or disease as in Niger in 2005. It is also a response to manmade disasters such as war or civil strife; recent examples of delivery of emergency food aid include Angola, Ethiopia and the Sudan. Emergency food aid is almost always free and is provided both bilaterally and multilaterally with NGOs assuming a more prominent role in the last two decades. Since the 1980s, emergency food has taken up an increasing proportion of food aid and by 2005 it amounted to half the US food aid budget (IATP 2005).<sup>274</sup> In 1991, 26% of global food aid deliveries went to emergencies; in 2005 it was 64% (Wahlberg 2008a: 3). This increase in emergency funds is partly because conflicts have resulted in millions of refugees and displaced persons existing in makeshift camps in protracted relief situations with examples in Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and the Sudan.

In response to the global food price crisis, in June 2008, the U.S. Congress provided \$770 million to USAID as part of the President's Food Security Response Initiative (PFSRI) for international disaster and development assistance to address the needs of food-insecure populations worldwide. Of the total, \$590 million represented funding for emergency humanitarian programming through USAID Office for Foreign Disaster assistance (USAID/OFDA) and USAID Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP), with remaining funding designated for development assistance through USAID Bureau of Sub-Saharan Africa (USAID/AFR) and Bureau of Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (USAID/EGAT). Much of the tension in the debate centres on getting adequate levels of food deployed to the most needy places using funds that are meant for temporary situations not permanent ones.

The second type of food aid is Project food aid. This type of aid is non-emergency and usually targeted at specific vulnerable groups. It aims to transfer income to the impoverished to satisfy their minimum nutritional needs in normal years. This type of food aid is provided on a grant basis for specific groups (normally, but not exclusively the rural poor) and for specific development objectives. The World Food Programme (WFP) is the major provider of this aid but other providers include international organisations, national governments and NGOs. Objectives of project food aid include:

---

<sup>274</sup> This is attributed to food emergencies in Africa mainly as a result of war.

- Improving the nutrition and health of mothers and pre-school children through local health care centres;
- Increasing access to education through primary-school provision for children and training programmes for adults;
- Increasing employment through food for work programmes, typically labour intensive infrastructure building and community developments;
- Providing practical help to poor households during land resettlements or changes to systems of farming-supported market reforms and price stabilization, through mechanisms such as establishing (or in some instances re-establishing) food reserves.

In theory, funds saved from governments' budgets through this kind of aid are used to expand and improve other social services. Project food commodities are sold principally in three ways. Firstly, to designated beneficiaries, project workers or members of cooperatives, often at subsidised prices (organisations such as Oxfam, Action Aid and Save the Children fund (SCF) have led the way in these types of enterprises). Secondly, as part of a project: for example reconstituted milk produced with food aid commodities in dairy development schemes. Thirdly, some goods can be sold on the open market, and the money then used to purchase local materials for the food aid project thus generating more employment and higher incomes. This process is referred to as monetization. It is usually practiced by large US funded NGOs and is highly controversial. Monetization of project food aid increased from 10% in the late 1980s to over 30% in less than two decades (FAO 2006). The FAO and many others have urged organisations to stop monetizing project food because of its distorting effects on local markets.

The third type of food aid is Programme food aid. This category is provided as a grant or loan on so-called 'soft repayment terms' and, unlike the previous two categories, it does not target the most needy groups. The main aim is to bridge the gap between demand at existing income levels and the supply of domestic food products and commercial imports, thus reducing pressure on food prices or additional demands for imports. It is provided on a bi-lateral basis. In 2006 the largest participants were the US, the EU and Japan (Wahlberg 2008a)

Programme food aid was designed, in theory, as a macroeconomic resource allowing recipient countries to increase development expenditures without inflation or balance

of payment problems. During periods of economic crisis or periods of structural adjustment, programme food aid (food always procured in the donor country) was designed to help protect development expenditures that would otherwise have to be cut. The fact that food is often sold below market price is deeply controversial and has had harmful long-term effects on food security. Although this type of aid is declining, it still provokes intense criticism, and the recommendation is that all non-targeted food aid, including programme aid, should be completely eliminated (FAO 2005).<sup>275</sup> In practice, it needs to be said that the distinction between project and programme aid has become increasingly blurred. Funds from programme food sales have been targeted for project type activities and project food aid may be used to support sector-wide programmes. What they have in common, however, is that they can both be perceived as in some way compensating for liberal economic policy failures.<sup>276</sup>

#### *Food aid from developing countries*

In addition to food aid from the developed to the developing world, there are also a variety of arrangements for the transfer of food produced in the developing countries: firstly, there are *triangular transactions* in which a donor buys food in one developing country for use as food aid in another developing country. Secondly, there are *trilateral operations* in which a donor commodity is exchanged for a different one in a developing country, which is then used for food aid in yet another developing country. Donors can also make local purchases in a developing country for use as food aid in that same country. Lastly, exchange arrangements can be made, involving swapping one commodity for another: for example, swapping wheat which is provided by a donor for use in an urban area, with a local commodity such as maize, which is then used as food aid.

Traditionally these methods have provided a relatively small but growing proportion of food aid; this type of aid, however, is increasingly popular amongst many of those involved in the food aid business. Government safety-net programmes involving combinations of food distributions, cash transfers, school feeding programmes and nutritional supplements are increasingly understood as the most desirable and

---

<sup>275</sup> See Mousseau 2005: part II for a helpful discussion on the fluctuation in volume and share of these categories between 1990-2004.

<sup>276</sup> See Chapter 4.

effective protection (in the short-term) for food insecure populations.<sup>277</sup> Though there are constraints on larger scale operations the attractions of this kind of aid are numerous. At the most basic level, this type of aid increases cost effectiveness and speeds up the delivery of aid when and where it is needed. In addition, it can stimulate agricultural production and trade in the developing world and has the advantage of being integrated in the structure of local markets, thus it benefits local economies. The universal call from those who farm in the developing world is to focus on aid and assistance to small and subsistence farmers enabling them to protect their food self sufficiency. In the case of pastoralists, for example, protection of fishing, pastoral and subsistence agriculture would support the most productive and sustainable food system. These longer-term goals are embedded within the framework of Food Sovereignty, with particular relevance to principle 4, which calls for the reorganisation of food trade.<sup>278</sup> The reform of food aid policy must be considered as an essential factor in food trade reform. At a more profound level though, this type of aid could help change the widely held perception of developing countries, which still tends to be one of victimhood, with the developed world viewed as some sort of rescue service.<sup>279</sup>

#### *The key players in food aid*

The main institutions involved in the business of food aid differ in terms of their financing and preferred modes of operation, and attract more or less criticism. Though there is an abundance of agencies involved, the following five will serve for illustrative purposes. They have been highlighted because they are considered to be of major importance in the power relations of food provision (Mousseau 2005). The five agencies considered are: the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal (CSSD) the Food Aid Convention (FAC), and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

The FAO is a specialised agency of the UN involved in international efforts to defeat

---

<sup>277</sup> See Devereux (2009a) for the desirability of moving from 'safety-nets' to 'social-protection' in the long-term.

<sup>278</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>279</sup> There is a fascinating research report by VSO, entitled 'The live aid legacy' that looks at the developing world through British eyes and reveals the stereotyped, one-dimensional views of life and people in the developing world. Available at [www.vso.org.uk/Images/liveaid\\_legacy](http://www.vso.org.uk/Images/liveaid_legacy) Accessed 10/08/06.



hunger in both the developed and the developing world. It was founded in 1945 and demonstrates in figures and policies the number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition. The Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) is the FAO's flagship initiative for achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the hungry in the world by 2015. In 1999 this figure stood at 800 million, thus the target was 400 million by 2015. However, this figure had increased to 852 million in 2006 (SOFI 2006) with an estimate of 1.02 billion undernourished people worldwide, in 2009 (SOFI 2009). This figure fell to 925 million in 2010 (SOFI 2010). The FAO's strategic framework (2000-2015) outlined its ambition to develop a rights based approach to food security and build a food secure world for present and future generations.<sup>280</sup> However noble, the obvious failure of this vision to deliver on food insecurity, demands a different approach and one that is being developed within the Food Sovereignty movement.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the world's largest humanitarian agency and provides food, on average each year, to 92 million people in 75 different countries.<sup>281</sup> In 2011 it aims to distribute nearly 4 million metric tons of food to victims of natural disasters and economic failures. The WFP is the food aid branch of the UN. It was first conceived at the 1961 FAO conference and established in 1963 on an experimental basis. In 1965 the programme was extended indefinitely. WFP operations are funded by donations from world governments, corporations and private donors. 60% of all food aid from the WFP is from the US and this is all food aid in kind, which critics argue is a result of subsidised US agricultural surpluses. It is, therefore, viewed as the dumping of subsidised food aid in kind and is overly influenced by the US. The other 40% comes from funds that are often earmarked for specific countries or operations, so this means the WFP cannot easily direct funds to where they are most needed. Criticisms of the inefficiencies of the WFP have not gone entirely unheeded and some donors have a clear policy of making food aid effective without disturbing local agriculture and trade policies. This so-called untied food aid is usually in the form of cash and the EU has the most progressive policies with regard to food aid and the WFP at this time.<sup>282</sup> According to the WFP they are scaling up their

---

<sup>280</sup> See [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

<sup>281</sup> See [www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)

<sup>282</sup> See Mousseau (2005) for a positive comparative analysis of EU food aid policy compared with US.

use of cash transfers and vouchers and have begun using innovative ways to deliver assistance such as scratch cards or e-vouchers delivered by text.<sup>283</sup> Pilot schemes of the ‘cash for change’ programme of the WFP have demonstrated that cash transfers make more sense on many levels. Burkina Faso was the first full-scale food voucher operation in Africa and there are now between 30-40 in operation across the continent. Whilst acknowledging that these changes do not represent a ‘silver bullet’ able to resolve the structural causes of famine that are central to this thesis they have proved to be more cost efficient than traditional methods of food aid.<sup>284</sup>

The Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal (CSSD) and the Food Aid Convention (FAC) are the two key institutions that govern food aid at the international level. The CSSD was established in 1954 under the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to monitor donors’ disposal of agricultural surpluses. Comprised of 41 member states, including donor and recipient countries, its role is to monitor the adherence to a set of Principles of Surplus Disposal, a code of conduct for food aid transactions. The CSSD’s primary function is to ensure that food aid does not encroach on commercial imports and local production in recipient countries. The CSSD is based in Washington D.C. rather than at the FAO Headquarters in Rome. Its location, its name and its focus on surplus disposal clearly reflect the concerns of competing food exporting countries around the use of food aid in an open economy rather than on hunger in recipient countries. Critics point to the fact that its main function is to avoid the displacement of commercial imports by food aid and thus it does not constitute an instrument favouring an adequate use of food aid to fight hunger (Mousseau 2005:8).

The Food Aid Convention (FAC) was established in 1967 under the auspices of the International Grain Council to improve the predictability of food aid flows. The FAC aims at ensuring a minimum availability of quality food aid to satisfy emergency requirements and development in the developing countries. This aid should be available on the basis of need, irrespective of fluctuations in world food prices and supply. Importantly, the FAC contains clauses on best practices and aims to provide food aid only when it is the most effective and appropriate type of assistance.

---

<sup>283</sup> The applicability of this type of aid in rural regions in Africa is high questionable.

<sup>284</sup> <http://www.wfp.org/aid-professionals/podcast/cash-vouchers-something-else-toolbox>. Accessed 26/09/11.

Furthermore, it targets women and children as the most needy in terms of hunger, and it attempts to avoid harmful effects on local production and the eating habits of the recipients. In 1999 FAC 'value commitments' rather than 'volume commitments' were introduced and this favours both cash and triangulation transactions (See above section on types of food aid).<sup>285</sup> Critics argue that the current level set for food aid donors is too low to be meaningful and the FAC has no enforcement capacity to hold signatories accountable to their commitments. It is also argued that membership should be extended to include new critical actors in the global food system. (Mousseau 2005:8) This is of increasing relevance in a post SA context when so many more people are now famine vulnerable because of the fluctuation in global food prices (FAO 2011).

In 2005 the UN General Assembly created the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) as a response to the lack of funding, slow delivery and uneven distribution of resources of hunger emergency relief. CERF aims to speed up delivery of humanitarian aid, and to make funding less dependent on donor's strategic interests, as countries cannot tie their contributions to specific programmes. It should, in theory, be able to respond on a basis of need and no other factor. Some NGOs, however, complain that it has in fact not provided additional funding but diverted money away from existing humanitarian commitments.<sup>286</sup> Furthermore it has created another level of bureaucracy within the UN system that has slowed down and complicated the process of emergency relief. Whilst acknowledging these criticisms, it is argued here that the CERF provides a framework for developing a more flexible and proactive approach to food aid and one that would fit more closely within a Food Sovereignty framework.

## **2. A brief history of food aid**

The current food aid system is not new but it evolved, principally, throughout the twentieth century. There is, however, an earlier well documented example of food aid from the early nineteenth century. It occurred in 1812 when the US congress approved a budget of \$50,000 worth of food to help victims of an earthquake in Venezuela.

---

<sup>285</sup> In certain circumstances the UN high commission for refugees (UNHCR) is a key player in food aid delivery particularly in conflict zones.

<sup>286</sup> See Save the Children: Exclusion of NGO's: The Fundamental Flaw of the CERF (January 29, 2007).

Rather than an act of charity, however, this aid to Venezuela has been understood as ‘an economic instrument in the service of a political goal’ (George 1991: 192). In other words, it was an act driven by self-interested not humanitarian motives. In this instance, the aid was given as an act of covert support for an indigenous uprising against colonial Spain (which happened to fail).

The relevance of this early example is that this first congressional act can be perceived as setting a pattern that has continued ever since; that is the US tying its food aid policy to further its own political agenda and/or expansion of its own commercial markets.<sup>287</sup> There is an abundance of research to support this assertion tracing the development of aid back to the First World War (Barrett & Maxwell 2005; Cathie 1982). War provided the US with the opportunity to export its surplus grain since most European farmers were actively involved in fighting. Its original neutrality meant that the US was happy to supply to all sides and it successfully bypassed Britain’s objections by supplying Germany through Belgium. Because of Herbert Hoover’s previous experience with Germany at the end of World War I, in 1946 President Harry S. Truman selected the former president to tour Germany to ascertain the food status of the occupied nation. As a result of this tour post Second World War, Hoover’s relief efforts substantially increased and included a widespread school meals programme. This food aid no doubt relieved the distress of a great many who were suffering the effects of war and all its associated deprivations. However, Hoover himself admitted that while the overt interest was relief of famine, the administration was also concerned about the forces moving in the world, especially communism and the possible impact upon the US (Hoover 1952). Clearly, famine relief was inextricably linked to the preservation of one political ideology, capitalism, and protection from its opposite, communism. Enormous amounts of US grain surpluses continued to be shipped to Europe until 1954 when reconstruction was largely completed and Europe was once again a viable trading partner for the US.

Economic reality, however, meant that that new markets for US surpluses needed to be found. Up until this time US policy had been to sell surplus food in return for gold or hard currency, and the cash receipts were then used partly to provide for the destitute. However most of the world’s currencies could not be considered ‘hard’,

---

<sup>287</sup> See Wallerstein 2007, for example, for a recent critical political analysis of US aid to Ethiopia.

hence a new policy emerged which exchanged food for local, non-convertible currencies, which were then deposited in a US bank account in the relevant country's central bank. This was the catalyst for Public Law 480 (PL480, also known as the Food for Peace law) passed by Congress in 1954. Its stated purposes were clear and as we will see they are now the focus of a growing movement calling for reforms of US food aid (McMichael 2008: Ch 3).

PL480 was quite specifically an act to increase the consumption of US agricultural products abroad, improve foreign relations and US influence and to expand and develop export markets for other US products. By 1959 there were four major sections or 'titles' of PL480: Title I provided for the sale of agricultural surplus to 'friendly nations' paid for in local currency. Title II concerned urgent famine relief and donations to 'friendly nations'. The common perception is that this is the basis of most modern food aid, i.e. that it is a gift, with no strings attached, whereas this is not in fact the case. Title III concerned the exchange of strategic raw materials for food. In its early days this mainly involved raw materials for the US atomic industry, though latterly, in countries such as Iraq (prior to the 2003 invasion) it was used in exchange for oil. Title IV (added in 1959) concerned long-term food supply contracts between the US and recipients to be paid in dollars over a period of up to twenty years, with interest.

What is crucial to understand is that by 1971, all Title I sales had been switched to title IV sales, that is to say they had to be paid for in US dollars. Title I, somewhat confusingly, is still the term used and the term Title IV sales no longer exists. The economic logic of such a switch is fairly obvious: as the US commercial export markets expanded, the disposal of surplus food, in order to maintain high prices domestically, was no longer the main priority as the recipient countries were actually buying food. Thus the US moved, very successfully, from aid to trade, to its own economic advantage. In other words entering into the 'grey area' referred to in the definition of Shaw and Clay mentioned in the previous section.

According to a report entitled 'Strategic Plan for 2006-2010' from the Food for Peace Office (May 2005),<sup>288</sup> the 1990 Farm Bill made enhancing food security in the developing world the overriding objective for the PL480 food assistance programmes.

---

<sup>288</sup> Now incorporated into the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, (DCHA).

The Title II programme, i.e. emergency relief, now represents the largest single resource of the US government available to focus on food insecurity internationally. As its title suggests the 91-page document laid out the strategic plan for 2006-2010 outlining the background and the changes to PL480 since 1990 and its new strategic direction and objectives.<sup>289</sup> It is a comprehensive and wide ranging document, focusing on a single strategic objective to reduce food insecurity in vulnerable populations. The aim is to continue to use Title II food resources to contribute to its vision of ‘a world free of hunger and poverty, where people live in dignity, peace and security’ (Strategic Plan for 2006-2010: 2).

However, this noble vision of the Food for Peace office is, by no means, universally accepted. Indeed one such report published in July 2005 from the Minnesota based Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)<sup>290</sup> is severely critical of current US policy and the authors call for a major overhaul of food aid programmes. Indeed the report endorses what some critics have argued for many years; that some donors are greater beneficiaries of food aid than the supposed recipients (Curtis 2003; George 1996; Keen 1994a; McMichael 2008).

*Who benefits? Some motivations behind food aid*

The food aid debate has, traditionally, been understood in terms of a combination of the political and economic self-interest of governments, with a sprinkling of humanitarian goodwill gestures by individuals through charities and NGOs. A more recent perspective, gaining academic recognition, is the view that international security is the new rationale for food aid (Klare 2002). This indicates that, quite apart from humanitarian considerations, there are compelling strategic reasons, (oil, Islam and terrorism, for example) for preventing countries in Asia, the Middle-East and Africa from slipping into further poverty and conflict. This new security paradigm is perhaps most relevant to Kenya and Ethiopia as both countries are widely acknowledged as being important allies in the Western countries ‘War on Terror’. The implications that this policy context may have for the viability of developing a Food Sovereignty framework in these countries is an interesting and relevant one and will

---

<sup>289</sup> Available at [www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/ffp](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp) Accessed 15/04/08

<sup>290</sup> ‘US food Aid: Time to get it right. July 2005. Full report available at <http://www.iatp.org/> Accessed 20/09/06.

be considered in the final chapter. In order to assess the relevance of this new security paradigm a brief elucidation of the three traditional motivating factors is helpful. Motivating factors have had a clear impact on the political analysis of food aid to date, in particular in the way some of these factors have supported food aid policies that do not advantage small-scale farmers or meet local needs. There has, however, over the last decade, been a fundamental development in aid programming which has seen a shift from food aid and “safety nets” to cash transfers and “social protection” (Devereux 2009). This dramatic shift in emphasis will be discussed further on in this chapter.

### ***Economic self-interest***

From the 1970s onwards the vast majority of critical food aid literature cites economic self-interest as the primary objective of food aid and is manifested in two general ways. Firstly, there is the surplus disposal function, which both reduces storage costs and increases home market prices by removing stock that would have a depressing effect. Secondly, food aid has been shown to have long-term positive effects for commercial exports, because donated food can bring about a change in the tastes of recipients and thus opens up potential markets (Cathie 1989). The well-documented changes in diets in Southeast Asian countries such as South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines support this position, but it is less obvious in an African context. Politicians and policy makers regularly stress the effectiveness of the market creating function of food aid, hence food aid is often given a high priority by farmers’ unions and lobbyists and the ministries of agriculture in the donor States. Indeed Ronald Reagan on the anniversary of 40 years of PL480 stated that

Eight of our top ten agricultural markets are former recipients of Food for Peace Aid...And this has not only been good for the American farmer and the American economy; it’s been good for our international relations (cited in Uvin, 1994: 297).

Critics are quick to point out, however, the uneven effect of this kind of self-interested policy making. It has been calculated that for every dollar of aid given to one group of developing countries by the EU and the US, \$2.75 of economic damage is done to others in the developing world (Benn 2004). For example the EU gave Mozambique £136 million in aid in 2004, which is far less than Mozambique could have made

through sugar production, if the EU reformed subsidies and opened its markets, fully, to developing countries.<sup>291</sup> This structural inequity in the global food system is one of the key areas that the adoption of a Food Sovereignty framework would address, in part, through the principle of reorganising food trade.<sup>292</sup>

*Political self-interest (or the Kissinger doctrine)*

Historically, political self-interest is generally considered to be the second most important motive behind food aid and it can be used as both reward and punishment to induce recipient countries to comply with the foreign policy objectives of the donor country. Evidence for a political motivation over recent decades is fairly clear; at the end of the 1960s Vietnam, South Korea, Cambodia and Taiwan were the major recipients of US food aid, leading to many cynics referring to PL480 as ‘food for war’, rather than ‘food for peace’. Tensions caused by the Cold War and high oil prices during the 1970s resulted in much talk about ‘food power’ amongst policy makers in the US (George 1991). Thus, just as the Ministries of Agriculture are perceived to be pursuing the economic self-interest of the donors, the Foreign Ministries, through the promotion of food aid, are pursuing their political self-interest. Historically, the greatest recipients of aid were those with political regimes that were approved of by the donors. Changes in international aid to Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, over recent decades, are a more contemporary illustration of this politicisation of aid (Wallerstein 2007). Food aid to support friendly countries during the Cold War was generally part of a larger package of assistance including direct financial assistance and other forms of aid, notably military aid, aimed at strengthening friendly governments. Somalia and Ethiopia, for example, have at varying times been on the receiving end of aid from both the US and the former USSR, with the super-powers switching support from one country to the other as the political climate changed. Since the elimination of the Eastern Block, the use of food aid in US foreign policy has evolved in certain countries. It is now more geared towards shorter-term objectives, for example, as a bargaining tool in negotiations as in the case of North Korea, or as a temporary support of political or military objectives in the ‘war against terror’ (Mousseau 2005). US support for the 2007 Ethiopian invasion of Somalia under President Zenawi is

---

<sup>291</sup> See Benn, H. ‘Trade and Justice: Time to choose’. 26<sup>th</sup> July 2004: 5, [www.opendemocracy.net](http://www.opendemocracy.net).

<sup>292</sup> See principle 4 in Appendix 3.



illustrative here (Wallerstein 2007). The Ethiopian regime, certainly at present, is considered a key ally in the 'war on terror' whereas the failing and splintered political regime in Somalia is not. However, this is not set in stone and policy can change according to the changing political environment. . The political use of food aid has thus shifted in an interesting way. Formerly, food aid was provided as direct economic support to the governments of friendly states. It is now provided with new objectives to potentially 'unfriendly' countries or 'rogue states,' under the control of WFP and NGOs.<sup>293</sup>

### ***Humanitarianism***

Generally speaking, humanitarianism is the third preference in food aid donation, and one seen by most analysts as secondary in relation to the above realist or self-interested motives. Public support for food aid is demonstrated both by responses to emergency appeals (Live Aid in 1984 and Live 8 in 2006, for example) and, at a policy making level, through governmental development departments and the numerous NGOs such as AAH, Oxfam, CAFOD, Care, Save the Children, and War on Want, which function both as active charities and effective lobby groups. Most importantly, from a political analysis, those driven by a humanitarian agenda have been portrayed in the past as the least powerful group (George 1996). This lack of political power is endorsed by Gallagher (2011) who argues that the Ethiopian famines of the 1980s attracted huge public sympathy but did not generate any real interest at state level. Wars and famines in Ethiopia, Somalia and Angola, for example, did nothing to change a realist approach to food aid policy. From a more radical perspective the perceived decline of state and national power over food issues have led to the voluntary ceding of governmental sovereignty and an increase in the power of MNCs and NGOs (Chandler 2006). The extent of food insecurity in the world legitimates NGOs' calls for more food aid and increased support of their efforts. Their actions undoubtedly create positive results in the short term by providing immediate assistance to the most poor and the hungry. But NGO requests for more aid deepen the political role they play as an alternative to government involvement in the poorest countries. NGOs also ignore that the fight against food insecurity cannot be won by their actions alone. Success will also require fundamental

---

<sup>293</sup> See Mousseau (2005) for a more critical view of current US policy.

policy shifts, which to date, is only seriously advocated by members of the Food Sovereignty network. . This fundamental change in the role and remit of NGOs forms the basis of the following, nascent, perspective on the new motivating factors that drive food aid policy.

***Food aid and security: the new paradigm?***

This recent perspective on food aid, though also based on a notion of self-interest, is self-interest motivated by concerns for national security rather than boosting national economies or supporting a political ideology in the traditional sense of capitalism versus communism. It has been argued, for example, that the US has responded more favourably to food crises in Ethiopia than the Sudan, in the last few years because, strategically, US policy makers believe that Ethiopia is a more important ally in the 'war on terrorism'. Recent research indicates that vital strategic interests of donor countries are of paramount importance in determining their levels of response (Olsen et al 2003). From this standpoint NGOs, UN agencies and private companies are perceived as a new locus of power and authority, through which metropolitan states can assert their political influence (Duffield 2001). Documented changes in governance in what Duffield refers to as the 'border lands', defined as weak and contested states, are of great importance for a political analysis not least because of how they impact on the possibilities for democratisation. Indeed, how these changes are impacting on development within these states is important in general terms but within this discussion it is most important with regards to food insecurity and the democratic control of food systems. Of particular interest is the view that aid has evolved from being a quick fix, to having the appearance of permanence. Indeed one could argue that the complexity of modern famines and the deep-seated nature of the problems encountered have resulted in a growing tendency amongst international agencies to develop indefinite programmes (Chandler 2005). This relationship between security and the future of food provision is an important and powerful one, reflected in the growing discourse on networks of international aid and notions of global governance (Duffield 2001; Kaplan 2003).<sup>294</sup>

However, this view of food aid, as a coalition of economic and foreign policy interests in the donor countries, aided and abetted by NGOs, is not universally accepted. The

---

<sup>294</sup> Critics in much of the contemporary literature refer to the global power structure as post-modern imperialism. See McMichael 2008 for example.

different accounts of donor motivation illustrate, very clearly, how politicised this debate has become. It is fair to say that much of the criticism of food aid does not take into account the changes that have been made in recent years. Indeed almost two decades ago Peter Uvin argued against the ‘classical interpretation’ of political and economic self-interest of food aid because he believed both assumptions to be incomplete and counter-factual. He argued that food aid fulfils no surplus disposal function because the quantities donated are too small, between 5-10% of donating countries’ stock, and the costs are too high to have a significant effect on export stocks or budgets (Uvin 1994: 135). This change is mainly due to an increasing share of food aid now being given in the form of triangular aid, whereby food is acquired from another developing country and shipped to the beneficiary country, or local purchases where the donor acquires food commodities in the benefiting country itself. This practice is in fact very costly and thus casts some doubt, at least, on the purely self-interested elements of donor motives (Clay & Benson, 1991). According to the WFP, a growing proportion of food aid is now coming from developing and middle income countries and the WFP is actively encouraging this phenomenon.<sup>295</sup> It may well be the case that the surplus disposal function held true in the first fifteen years of massive US food aid when it accounted for up to 25% of its agricultural exports. The same could be said in the early years of the EU when it was donating large surpluses of dairy produce. As mentioned earlier, however, fundamental developments in aid programming and the move from food aid and safety nets towards cash transfers and social protection indicates that this function is no longer the motivation behind food aid that it once was.

Therefore whilst acknowledging that there is cooperation between US policy makers and private companies, particularly TNCs, to use food aid for the advantage of the latter, it is important that things should be kept in perspective and a balanced analysis of food aid pursued. As all political scientists know, any policy, whatever its *raison d’être*, is likely to be influenced by interest groups in an attempt to further their own perceived interests.<sup>296</sup> What is crucial is the need for all parties involved in food aid to

---

<sup>295</sup> See statement by John Powell, Executive Director of the WFP at Food Aid Seminar, WTO, Geneva, Switzerland, May 17th 2005, available at [www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org) Accessed 24/09/09.

<sup>296</sup> This is particularly true in the US because of a weak party structure. Individual representatives are more open to lobbying of interest groups in the policy making process, than in other political systems.

identify which aspects of food aid are achieving the desired outcomes, because some clearly are,<sup>297</sup> and which aspects are in need of major reforms. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the shift from a dominant paradigm of food security to one of Food Sovereignty could be the most appropriate vehicle for these reforms.

*The changing food aid regime.*

In the chief example of US food aid, referred to in this discussion, food aid was originally based on US preferences dominant at the time and these were clearly preferences of a commercial and foreign policy nature. It has been described as a marriage of convenience between food surpluses and foreign policy considerations, enshrined in 1954 by the PL480 (Cathie 1989: 19). However, international food policy has changed significantly over the last two decades and there is a broad consensus that it has become more developmental in nature. For example, the authors of the MDGs explicitly recognised the interdependence between hunger, poverty reduction, growth and long-term sustainable development. Furthermore, emphasis is now also on the concept that development (in a Western liberal context) is dependent on democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights and security. Arguably food aid, now more than ever before, is viewed as an important element in a strategy of world security while the smaller but most visible part, emergency aid, has become more humanitarian in its nature.<sup>298</sup>

This recent period could be considered a watershed in the history of food aid, and the evolution of a new model on which aid was based. Rather than aid being a convenient method of surplus disposal dominated by the US, as it had been at an earlier stage, an emerging consensus developed which recognised the need for forward planning of, and increased multilateral sharing of, total global food aid (Clay and Singer 1985; Shaw & Clay 1993; Riddell 2007).<sup>299</sup>

This divergence between the dominant explanation of self-interest and the

---

<sup>297</sup> See Devereux (ed) 2007.

<sup>298</sup> Though obviously, it could be argued that this is still self-interest but motivated by security rather than economic factors.

<sup>299</sup> For example in 1975 the US Congress tightened up on the requirements of food aid to increase the benefits to recipient countries. Congress stipulated that three quarters of food aid should go to the poorest countries and the use of counter-funds for military purposes was abolished. Title III 'food for development' was added to PL480 in 1979. In addition, during the 1980s amendments were passed requiring assurances from the secretary of agriculture that food aid would not be a disincentive to domestic production or marketing in recipient countries (Clay & Shaw 1993:Ch 17).

contemporary food aid outcome can be partially explained by the fact that much of the influential literature was based on the position of the US before 1975. This is certainly true of one of the most influential books for development scholars, Susan George's *How the Other Half Dies* first published in 1976. It has been argued that, until fairly recently, developments since this time have not been sufficiently analysed by political economists (Barrett & Maxwell 2005; Uvin 1996). This lack of analysis may well reflect the domination of a realist perspective in international relations or public choice theory in political science. A realist perspective accepts, without question, that self-interest is the driving force behind all state behaviour. Thus any other motive has, by and large, been dismissed or simply not pursued with sufficient rigour.

The landscape, however, has changed and multilateral institutions, norms and procedures increasingly govern food aid. Certainly, on the face of it, the objectives of donor countries have changed from foreign policy interests to development/humanitarian preferences. This can be illustrated by the fact that 85% of food aid now goes to Sub-Saharan Africa, where needs are high and donors' economic interests are relatively low (SOFI 2005). What is infinitely more important than a philosophical debate on donor motivation is whether these changes in food aid policy have been effective in reducing the number of people affected by hunger. Empirically the answer is a definitive 'no' and it is for this reason that an alternative framework of food provision is imperative.

To understand why famine vulnerability is increasing, and to direct policy towards a more successful outcome, two areas of contention are relevant: firstly the criticisms of U.S Food Aid in a contemporary context must be fully understood; and secondly, in what ways, specifically, can food aid actually do more harm than good. The question of whether food aid increases vulnerability to famine is a serious and important one; not least because of the way food aid could or should fit into a Food Sovereignty paradigm. These two areas of contention are considered in the next section of this chapter.

### **3. How food aid increases vulnerability to famine**

Thirty years after Susan George first published *How the Other Half Dies*, her analysis is endorsed by some contemporary research. George claimed that the main beneficiaries of the US food aid system were: agribusiness companies bidding on food

aid contracts; US shipping companies transporting the food internationally; and private voluntary organisations (PVOs as they are called in the US) relying on the sales of food aid in developing countries to generate funds for other work (Barrett & Maxwell 2005; Murphy & McAfee 2005; Patel 2007).<sup>300</sup> This tripartite system is referred to as an 'iron triangle' because of the perceived stranglehold it has on food aid reform and from its critics' perspective it has hijacked the entire US system of food aid.<sup>301</sup>

Empirically, it is difficult to disagree with the claim that the US practice of sending food for resale or distribution in countries facing hunger is inefficient, expensive and slow, not least because fifty cents of every dollar allocated by the US government is not spent on food but on getting the food to developing countries. Furthermore, these transactions occur mostly with a delay of five months (Murphy & McAfee 2005: 10/31). It seems evident, therefore, that the US, in keeping with almost all other major food aid donors, should move towards aid programmes based on cash, which can then be used to buy food produced locally. The US has been heavily criticised by other countries within the WTO for the continuation of practices, which most others have abandoned.<sup>302</sup> Reform of the monetization of food aid, which generates development dollars for PVOs, but at enormous expense to the detriment of local producers and traders, should be made a priority. The 2008 farm bill included a provision to use \$25 million as a pilot project for local and regional purchase. But this is only about 1 percent of the U.S. food aid budget, far less than what is needed to demonstrably improve the efficiency of food aid. In addition, export credits provided to US agribusinesses result in the continuation food dumping (selling food overseas for less than the cost of production) albeit on a lesser scale than in the past. The ongoing result is a subsidised sale that creates unfair competition for local farmers and commercial traders.<sup>303</sup>

The EU proposed at the WTO in Hong Kong in December 2005 that all food aid

---

<sup>300</sup> This practice is known as monetization. South Korea is the only other country that sells part of its food aid, to North Korea, rather than giving it away.

<sup>301</sup> See report authored by Sophia Murphy director of the Trade Program at the IATP Minneapolis and Kathleen McAfee University of California –Berkeley. Available at <http://11/www.iatp.org/>.

<sup>302</sup> See FAS online for a clear description of PL480, title 1 at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/excredits/foodAid/pl480brief.html>

<sup>303</sup> See MDGs in Kenya: Needs and Costs. Government of Kenya (2005) for negative impact of food dumping. Available at <http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/> Accessed 07/08/11.

should be cash based and untied from requests that originate from the donor country. However, large donors of in-kind food, notably the US, disagreed. Indeed currently fifty percent of all US food aid is still tied (World Hunger Report 2011).<sup>304</sup> The politics of US food aid, particularly successive administrations' reluctance to reform aid in line with internationally recognised best practices, relates to who benefits from the existing global food system.<sup>305</sup> Although their goals and methods differ greatly, the three interest groups mentioned above cooperate to perpetuate food aid programmes and use the same 'myths' to rationalise current food aid policy (Barrett & Maxwell 2005).

In the US, agribusiness companies bid on food aid contracts offered by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Farm Service Agency (FSA), and US law requires that a minimum of 75% of US food aid be sourced, fortified, processed and packaged in the US.<sup>306</sup> There are only a few firms allowed to bid on the procurement contracts and the arena is dominated by a very few, large corporations. This is illustrated by the fact that in 2003 one third of all US food aid shipments were awarded to just two companies, Cargill and Archer-Daniels Midland (ADM). Agribusiness in the US is tightly concentrated: three companies (Cargill, ADM and Zen Noh) export over 80% of US corn and 60% of US soybeans; three firms (Cargill, ADM and Conagra) virtually monopolise flour milling; three firms, (Bunge, Cargill and ADM) operate 71% of the US soybean crushing business; and three firms (Cargill, ADM and Cenex Harvest States) dominate the export facilities crucial to the shipping out of grain. The vested interests that these major players have in the continuation of current US food aid policy are self-evident (Murphy & McAfee 2005). The second group, and perhaps the greatest beneficiaries of the food aid status quo, are the shipping companies as US law states that ships bearing the US flag must transport 75% of all food aid. This percentage was increased from 50% in the 1985 farm legislation, most tellingly, against the wishes of USDA, USAID and many farm groups. During the period 2000-2002, nearly 40% of total food aid program costs were paid to US shipping companies (Barrett & Maxwell 2005: 248). This statistic becomes more meaningful if one takes into account that during 1999-2000 US bulk carriers

---

<sup>304</sup> <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/92495/icode/> Accessed 10/08/11.

<sup>305</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>306</sup> Statistics are all taken from the IATP report 2005 unless otherwise indicated.

cost 77.7% more than foreign bulk carriers, transporting the same commodities over the same routes (Ibid 2005: 95).

The PVOs make up the third component of the 'iron triangle' and there are eight main players in the field: these are the Adventist Development and Relief Agency International; Africare; CARE; Catholic Relief Services (CRS); Food for the Hungry International; Project Concern International; Technoserve; and World Vision. Together these eight NGOs had almost \$1.5 billion in gross revenues in 2001, and three of them (CARE, World Vision and CRS) account for almost four fifths of this total. It has been calculated that food aid was worth an average 30% of these organisations' gross revenues in 2001 (Ibid 2005: 87).

It must be said that the PVOs' interest in protecting the status quo, is both less obvious than both that of agribusiness and shipping, and even seems counter-intuitive. After all, the credibility of PVOs is to a great extent based on the perception that they, unlike governments, deliver help directly to those in need, and they do so whilst keeping operational costs to a minimum. Agencies pride themselves on the fact that they make a real difference to those leading impoverished lives, and are publicly committed to the eradication of hunger and poverty. This therefore makes their active lobbying to preserve the food aid status quo much more difficult to explain and justify than the other private companies whose *raison d'être* is to maximise profits rather than eradicate world hunger.

The 'catch 22' for these voluntary organisations may be their dependence on monetization, the relatively new, but rapidly expanding feature of project food aid.<sup>307</sup> Originally, limited monetization was allowed to enable NGOs to recoup the costs associated with food aid, transportation, storage and suchlike. Since 1990, however, monetization has become an increasingly important source of revenue for PVOs' funding of their long-term development work. It must be emphasised here that this problem is uniquely American, since other aid donor governments provide much of their food aid in the form of cash aid in the first place. Non-American NGOs, therefore, do not have the same need to sell food aid simply to cover their costs. Consequently, PVOs do have an incentive to lobby for the status quo in US food aid.

---

<sup>307</sup> The controversial sale of food aid on local markets, in developing countries, to generate funds for development projects.



Firstly, large sums of money are involved relative to NGO revenue from non-food aid sources. Secondly, food aid shipments can generate relatively large sums of money for relatively small administrative costs. Perhaps, most pertinently, the underlying motive is the fear that if the politically powerful players such as the agribusinesses and shipping companies lose their lucrative stake in the system, then perhaps US food aid will cease to exist at all (Wahlberg 2008a). Since the US contributes roughly 65% of the global total of food aid, the issue of how it conducts its business really does have an impact on the hungry (Murphy and McAfee 2005). It is imperative, therefore, that the US must cease spending vast amounts of money on an expensive, inefficient and often damaging type of food aid. From a utilitarian perspective, the US system of food aid would be easy to reform, without incurring huge costs to anyone but resulting in far greater benefits to those most in need.<sup>308</sup>

The key question for this thesis is in what ways food insecurity can be overcome by adopting a framework of Food Sovereignty? Food Sovereignty would enable current recipient countries of food aid to become more self sufficient in matters relating to agricultural production, income generation, infrastructure, access to markets and so on. What remains important in food aid analysis is the recognition of the differences between the single project approach and a composite or holistic approach. The former has been likened to applying cream to a spot without asking what caused the spot in the first place (Singer, Wood & Jennings, 1987: 174), while the latter involves utilising a number of food aid tools that are applied collectively to the overall problem of powerlessness, poverty and malnutrition (Lautze & Maxwell 2007).

### **The unintended consequences**

The unintended consequences of food aid have been identified in a variety of forms and have been understood for some time. Perhaps the most widely recognised, and therefore publicised, is the way in which ill-conceived food aid can adversely affect local markets and producers, rendering them unable to compete and totally dependent on food aid. Secondly, there is the issue of political corruption and the diverting of resources into offshore bank accounts rather than to the designated recipients (Collier

---

<sup>308</sup> See AAH 'The Geo-politics of Hunger (2001:Ch 32) for its successes in Sierra Leone, by adopting an innovative approach which aimed at re-establishing the means of production and self sufficiency for affected populations.

2007, Wrong 2009). Thirdly, and increasingly recognised over recent decades, is the negative and political role food aid can play in conflict and post-conflict situations. Countries such as Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo have all provided recent examples. As discussed in Chapter 6, during the 1980s conflicts the Ethiopian government used the promise of food aid to encourage peasants from rebel held areas to cross military lines and enter towns under government control (Clay and Holcombe 1985). The subsequent, forced, resettlement programmes were presented to the international community as a means of responding to the famine in the North. Many Tigrayans, however, viewed it as political and a military operation aimed specifically at depopulating the countryside in order to weaken the support for the TPLF (REST 1985).

The acts of the central Ethiopian Government were also influencing the strategic use of international relief. For example, it refused to guarantee safe passage of relief supplies to Tigray despite appeals from the UN and the ICRC. Such an agreement would have allowed relief transports to travel from towns across military lines to the worst affected rural areas. The Government's refusal, however, avoided giving de facto recognition of the TPLF's control of large parts of the countryside (Jansson et al 1987). Instead, people from TPLF areas were expected to enter the government towns to receive dry ration distributions. As mentioned, however, fear and harassment from government soldiers effectively discouraged this option, allowing the government to deny food aid to rebel areas by restricting the geographic scope of the relief programme. Thus the case of Tigray offers a classic example of a government's ability to control the flow of aid resources.

Furthermore, empirical research by Collier and Hoeffler suggests that large amounts of aid, including food aid, increase the likelihood of coups in poorly governed countries (Collier 2007: 123). Even if the military does not mount a coup d'état, governments still increase their military budgets pre-emptively, and some of these funds come from aid. In other words ill-conceived or miss-directed aid can sustain or encourage undemocratic forms of government. As noted by Mousseau (2005) the loss of sovereignty over food and agriculture implies a democratic deficit, as citizens are not given a voice in the determination of the policies affecting their lives and their future. There are also serious issues of accountability: relief and development agencies are only accountable to their donors, and not to the beneficiaries of their interventions.

When governments hand over the responsibility for food and agriculture to foreign bodies, they cannot be held responsible for what the international organisations do or do not accomplish. Thus attempts to restructure and redirect food aid have been taking place for some time and useful lessons have been drawn, some of which are discussed in the next section.

*The move from dependency to independence.*

One of the most enduring criticisms of food aid, from across the political spectrum, is that it creates dependency, trapping the recipient country in a number of ways with no realistic chance of them ever gaining food self-sufficiency. This can affect the country as a whole, or particular vulnerable communities in certain regions. Food aid dependency acts as a disincentive to agricultural production; as a break on development; and discourages governments from investing in the necessary structural reforms. In the long term, dependency can lead to a distortion of both traditional tastes and food preparations and even to certain ways of life; that of nomadic groups or pastoralists for example. This is certainly in evidence in Northern Kenya particularly in the Turkana region. Activists from within the Turkana community argue that while emergency aid is needed in some parts of Kenya in a current context (2011) solutions that will allow the Turkana to better cope with recurrent drought are infinitely more desirable. Boreholes and irrigation projects, for example, which take into account the livelihoods and rights of pastoralists lend much needed support to these communities. Enlightened and inclusive resource management can help pave the way for sustainable development, without creating communities of total dependency.<sup>309</sup>

Long-term dependency on food aid in kind, sold in local markets, presents different kinds of problems that lead to a downward spiral in a country's fortunes. National prices collapse, local food production falls and incentives to improve local infrastructures are disrupted. Also, food in kind takes a long time to arrive (anything between 3-6 months) and often food aid becomes available just as local producers are

---

<sup>309</sup> This argument was made at the UK Food Group 2011 Autumn Conference by Ikal Angelei. Angelei is a Turkana and Director of Friends of Lake Turkana (FoLT), a community association formed in 2008 in response to threats to the viability of the world's largest permanent desert lake in north-western Kenya and south-western Ethiopia from the construction of the GIBE III dam. FoLT membership consists of people from the Lake Turkana region, where an estimated 300,000 people rely in some way on the lake for their livelihood and survival. See [www.friendsoflaketurkana.org](http://www.friendsoflaketurkana.org).

able to reap the current seasons harvest.<sup>310</sup> For instance, in southern Africa, several countries affected by a failed harvest in spring 2002 were forced to ban relief food distributions one year later when NGOs were still distributing food at the time of the following harvest, i.e. depressing local prices at a time local food was again available. Logistical constraints had seriously delayed the procurement of food by NGOs and WFP and large quantities of food were still undistributed in April 2003, when the intervention was scheduled to end (Mousseau 2005). This means that food aid was competing with local food after a period of severe hunger, inflicting price collapses on local produce. Local producers suffer, falling further back into poverty and long-term dependency on food aid. In addition, aid competes with exports in providing much-needed foreign exchange and from a pro-free market perspective this worsens the very problem that the least developed countries need to put right. That is the creation of new, competitive, export activities. A study conducted by the Centre for Global Development, showed that aid had a zero effect on growth once it reached 8% of a recipient country's GDP, and after that it had a negative effect on growth (Easterly 2006: 44). This is potentially disastrous as there were already twenty-seven countries above this level in 2006, and if donors adopt the 'big push' proposals virtually all low-income countries will be above that level (ibid). These negative impacts of aid have directed the arguments for a rejection of the large-scale, top-down intervention that has dominated Western development aid for the last five decades. The alternative framework of Food Sovereignty promotes a series of smaller scale, localised interventions that may be subjected to rigorous evaluation (Riddell 2007).

It is important to realise that the functioning of food aid is not as clear-cut as the dependency proposition implies. Early research demonstrated that food aid *could*, but *need not* create relations of dependency (Singer, Wood & Jennings 1987).<sup>311</sup> Comparison between food aid projects in refugee camps in Angola and Somalia demonstrated that it is not food aid, per se, that creates dependency, but rather the socio-economic constraints under which recipients have to operate.<sup>312</sup> Although this

---

<sup>310</sup> During the 2007-2008 period of skyrocketing food prices, food aid was indispensable to mitigate much suffering, yet tens of millions who needed the aid went without. In Ethiopia, many died whilst waiting 6 months for U.S. food aid to arrive from North Dakota. See the Hunger Report 2011.

<sup>311</sup> From this perspective, food aid dependency arguments run alongside any arguments against the collective provision of goods.

<sup>312</sup> See Singer, Wood & Jennings 1987: 183 for a detailed comparison of these projects.

research was conducted in semi-permanent refugee camps, the findings could be scaled up to larger communities or indeed countries to demonstrate the importance of factors such as political context or land ownership.

Therefore, understanding food aid dependency in camps set up for refugees and displaced persons can be crucial in effectively directing reforms on a larger scale. It has often been said that these camps become victims of their own success inasmuch as combined food aid projects can actually turn the camps into safer, more sanitised and productive places to live in than the surrounding villages or towns.<sup>313</sup> Thus, phasing out of food aid becomes impossible and, in fact, demand for it grows. The Ugandan member of the Food Trade and Nutrition (FTN) coalition summed up this phenomenon in his statement at the World Food Day 2004: 'Food Aid is a necessary evil: it should only be given for short periods to overcome disasters' (FTN coalition and Wemos April 2005: 5/31). He was referring to the situation in Northern Uganda where people have lived in refugee camps for more than eighteen years, dependent on food aid, without education and without the possibility of developing their own country and livelihoods. Quite clearly these life chances have been denied to a whole generation, albeit as an unintended consequence of food aid.

From a political perspective, however, this situation cannot be understood in simplistic terms as the failure of a food aid system that creates dependency, but must also be understood as a failure of national governments to deal with the internal or external political problems that caused the influx of refugees in the first place. Although those involved in the delivery of aid are often loath to criticise national governments, for fairly obvious reasons, the failure of government policies to protect their own people needs to be addressed. The Sudan currently provides a tragic but classic example of this phenomenon, with millions either internally or externally displaced (Nilsson 2001). It is in this area that there is perhaps the greatest scope for national governments to be held accountable and the issue of political responsibility emphasised.<sup>314</sup>

In addition, the changing natures of international agencies, during recent years, may be

---

<sup>313</sup> This is the current situation in parts of Kenya, at present, where post-election violence in 2007 led to hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people in refugee camps.

<sup>314</sup> The succession of Southern Sudan from the North has done little to improve the ongoing issue of displaced populations in Sudan, particularly in Darfur.

seen as a desire to avoid accusations of paternalism and to work with, rather than on behalf of, those in need. This shift can be captured in what Anderson refers to as ‘the serial re-naming, over the past decade and a half, of the people for whom aid is intended, beginning with ‘victims’, then ‘recipients’, then ‘beneficiaries’, then ‘counterparts’, and now with ‘participants’, or sometimes, ‘clients’ (Anderson 2001: 292). Increasingly aid programmes are designed (at least in theory) to encourage local participation and build local capacity through all stages, from planning, delivery and the evaluation of aid. This is undoubtedly a desirable change in direction and one that could be reinforced by a strengthened commitment from international players such as the FAC, for example.<sup>315</sup> Although at present, the FAC has no enforcement capacity to hold signatories accountable to their commitments, it could be given that capacity, and membership could also be extended to include new critical actors in the global food system (Mousseau 2005). This is a key area where actors can be identified and their duties clearly specified, and where possible, legally enforced through an international court. This of course demands a reform of constitutional rights with regard to food and is an issue central to a Food Sovereignty framework.

*From disincentives to incentives.*

Recent developments in approaches to food aid have also identified how food aid can act as a disincentive, not just for local producers but also for national governments in recipient countries. In numerous cases food aid has been used to maintain the status quo and thus remove the challenge for governments to address the structural problems that may have caused the need for food aid in the first place. For instance, a government may be well aware that certain structural reforms are necessary to remedy certain food shortages or inequitable access to food, through land reform, for example. They may be, however, reluctant to take the necessary steps to rectify the situation, because it would be unpalatable to certain sections of the community, perhaps those on whose support the government depends. Thus food aid becomes a means of avoiding difficult decision-making, whilst at the same time ensuring that there is no public discontent, such as riots, due to food shortages. This is especially relevant in urban areas and it has been noted that a food aid dominated international response is often just enough to prevent regime change (Charlton 1997). This situation highlights

---

<sup>315</sup> See earlier section of this chapter ‘Key Players in Food Aid’.

the need for an increase in democratic control of food and most importantly agrarian reform, which is the second principle of Food Sovereignty.<sup>316</sup>

On a practical and institutional level it has been noted that a dependence on aid reduces a governments need to obtain revenue via taxation from its own population (Collier 2007; Sachs 2005). This prevents a serious obstacle to one of the key criteria of democracy, that of accountability. Governments that do not rely on their people for much of their funding can more easily renege on fulfilling their duties to provide for them. Somalia with its powerless central government that has existed on paper since 2004 offers a contemporary example here. Ways of decreasing both national and international obstacles to the process of democratisation are central to the Food Sovereignty basic principles and the seventh principle calls explicitly for democratic control of agricultural policies at all levels.

What is of great importance in the ongoing debate about the disincentives of food aid is that it increases awareness, amongst donors and recipients alike, of the need to avoid undesirable effects. The problems and limitations of aid can at least be exposed, and once understood, policies can be improved. The recent evidence that the growth of triangular aid directly supports farming in the developing world is one such policy area, which can be emphasised and expanded. The move towards cash transfers too, as a more effective and enabling policy development is to be welcomed and more fully adopted. For example the Productive Safety Net Programme, introduced in 2005, is delivering cash transfers to 8 million Ethiopians every month on a multi-annual basis, with the specific objective of breaking Ethiopia's dependence on food aid and vulnerability to famine by stimulating markets, savings and investment. Elsewhere in Africa, cash aid is displacing or complementing food aid, even in emergencies, and bringing fresh insights (and fresh challenges) into the aid debate (Devereux & White 2010).

It is also important to recognise the part played by African social/political movements. On the face of things, it would seem that much of the current interest in the subject of food aid reforms and governance emanates from the international donor agencies active in Africa. However, long before the donor community turned its attention to this question, numerous African groups and social forces had been involved in

---

<sup>316</sup> See Appendix 3 for the seven principles of Food Sovereignty.

struggles for the expansion of the political space on the continent as well as for the creation of structures of governance that would permit the will of the majority of the people to prevail (Mousseau 2005). Judging by its geographical expansion and the increasing awareness of at least the 'concept' of an alternative agricultural framework, the Food Sovereignty movement appears to be a fairly effective vehicle for bringing together these social and political movements concerned with issues of food.

#### **4. From food aid to Food Sovereignty.**

It is acknowledged from across the political spectrum that food aid must be refocused to play a more effective role if famine is to be eradicated in any permanent sense. Current debates primarily question not whether or not the developed world should give but how food aid could be more justly and effectively constituted. Indeed Peter Uvin made this observation more than two decades ago by suggesting that a strong anti-starvation regime exists, which is "quite universally shared" and is a "rare example of a consensual norm" (Uvin 1994:184). As stated, a key criticism remains against the inefficiency and poor cost effectiveness of a food aid system that largely uses food aid produced in the US and transported at high cost by US vessels. Critics of US policy are generally supportive of European policy that has moved towards providing cash for local purchases rather than food in kind essentially because this method leads to feeding more people at less cost (Lautze & Maxwell 2007).

However, the danger of focusing on the question of procurement alone runs the risk of overlooking the broader issue, which is the inadequate function of the food aid system. Prioritising local and triangular food purchases is a positive step towards helping the food insecure countries and their farmers but it does not address the fact that local procurement may benefit wealthier countries and international agribusiness firms. Further, it does not address the fact that procurement procedures with high-standards used by WFP, NGOs and donor countries tend to exclude small-scale farmers from agricultural business. It is worth noting here that marketing boards, before they were dismantled under structural adjustment, had the critical function of buying food products from all farmers, including small local ones (Moussaueu 2005, 2009). The fact remains, then, that despite more sensitive policy making in some quarters, various donor interests still, by and large, drive food aid policy. This chapter ends by introducing an area of institutional reform that has been occupying the food



aid debate for some time and might go some way towards making food aid more effective.

### **The potential of the FAO**

There is a significant amount of research, which continues to suggest that the food aid system, as it is currently constituted, is not designed for the permanent eradication of hunger but to serve the interests of exporting countries (Barrett & Maxwell 2005). Therefore, organisations such as the EU and the Cairns group<sup>317</sup> have supported the proposal for the WTO to oversee food aid. The rationale is that the WTO could impose rules to overcome the hidden subsidies and distortion to free trade caused by US food aid. As mentioned earlier the Food Aid Convention (FAC) currently lacks the means to force donors to meet their commitments or make them adhere to agreed guidelines, like not dumping subsidised food. The WTO therefore has been proposed as an effective and established forum to resolve these kinds of disputes. The essential problem, however, is that the WTO, by its very nature is driven and motivated by trade interests and competition. It is manifestly not driven by protecting rights to food or humanitarian concerns. Indeed organisations such as Oxfam and Save the Children echoed these sentiments and actively sought the WTO to enforce food aid practices, which avoided dumping, and displacement of commercial imports by food aid.<sup>318</sup> Although these aid agencies are clearly motivated by the belief that ‘fairer free trade’ will benefit the poorest farmers in developing countries, they, along with the aforementioned regional organisations, are overlooking three fundamental issues.

1. Many of the most food insecure countries are not food exporters and actually spend a large share of their funds on importing food.<sup>319</sup>
2. The food trade within the GFS is dominated by developed countries and only a few large developing countries such as South Africa and Brazil. Therefore it is these countries that are most affected by the displacement of commercial crops, not the most food insecure countries in Africa.
3. In both developed and developing countries the food trade is dominated by large international corporations and large-scale farmers More food trade

---

<sup>317</sup> A collation of 19 cereal exporting countries see [www.cairnsgroup.org](http://www.cairnsgroup.org).

<sup>318</sup> See [www.maketradefair.com](http://www.maketradefair.com)

<sup>319</sup> Kenya and Ethiopia, for example, count non-food items such as coffee and floriculture as their main exports.

between developing countries may well benefit these corporations but will not necessarily benefit small-scale farmers who produce half of the world's food but are often the most food insecure.

Because of these factors, it seems unlikely that the most food insecure countries would benefit from WTO regulation of food aid. It would more likely benefit business interests than lead to investment in small farms and development projects (Yego 2011).<sup>320</sup> The inequity of the global trading system is obviously not new and we can observe that this pattern of inequity has been repeated over recent decades. According to the UNDP Human Development Report the results of the 1986 Uruguay round of trade negotiations left Sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest region, \$1.2 billion a year worse off, with 70% of benefits going to the most developed countries (UNDP, 1997: Human Development to Eradicate Poverty). The consensus seems to be that the trade negotiations, which began in Uruguay in 1986 and ended in Marrakech in 1994, made an already unlevel playing field, even more so.<sup>321</sup> What the most food insecure people really need is an enforcement mechanism that ensures the right to food coupled with assistance to take democratic control of their own food systems as per principle 1 and 7 of Food Sovereignty.<sup>322</sup>

The Consultative sub-Committee on surplus disposal (CSSD) based in Washington D.C and designed to oversee surplus disposal is accused of being outdated and ineffective (Mousseau 2005). The FAC is embedded in the International Grain Council, which only represents the food exporting countries. Given their design, focus and functioning it would make sense to design institutions, which would better serve the needs of the worlds' food insecure. Accordingly there are calls for their replacement by an FAO body that would integrate food aid into a broader, development orientated food and agricultural programme. It is certainly the case that the FAO has not been a priority agency for donor countries over recent decades. By way of illustration the WFP has received ten times more financial support than the FAO. This, despite the fact that most analysts from the World Bank to Food Sovereignty activists now acknowledge what many farmers in the developing

---

<sup>320</sup> Stated by Helen Yego, National Secretary, Ngoma Campaign, Kenya at the 'Food Sovereignty Day' hosted by The All Party Parliamentary Group on Agroecology, House of Commons, London 18th October 2011.

<sup>321</sup> See Stiglitz 2006: 78 for a long list of objections to the outcomes of this trade round.

<sup>322</sup> See Appendix 3.

countries have been saying for years. Agriculture, particularly support for small farmers who continue to feed the majority of the population in the developing world must be placed at the centre of any solution to food insecurity and famine (Yego 2011).<sup>323</sup> Given the well-documented negative effects of food aid on local agriculture it does not make sense that they should be managed separately. An alternative framework for agriculture demands that local procurement of food aid must prioritise small-scale farmers. Thus the argument that has been developed throughout this thesis is that the eradication of famine requires not just the reform of food aid procurement policies but also a reform of the entire food system.<sup>324</sup>

The emergence of ‘social protection’ in the early 2000s as an arena within development policy can be considered as a positive step in this direction and one that is more in keeping with a Food Sovereignty framework than the food aid regime of the past. Whereas social safety nets have been dismissed as ‘residualist’ (providing last resort assistance for people left out of growth processes), social protection is a more holistic approach that could and should be mainstreamed into development policy (Devereux 2009a). As previously discussed, ‘safety nets’ are often implemented in paternalistic and stigmatising ways, whereas social protection can better respond to food needs. They do so by involving participating communities in the design, targeting and monitoring of social transfer programmes. In other words increasing the localised and democratic components of food aid. Furthermore ‘transformative social protection’ aims to empower poor and vulnerable people by adding rights and social justice to the agenda, in addition to social transfers (Devereux et al 2006). Most importantly, for this thesis, the concept of social protection can be politically challenging or even radical (since, like Food Sovereignty, it implies empowering citizens to claim their entitlements from the state), in contrast to the critique of social safety nets that they are politically conservative. Safety nets have been characterised as supporting a neo-liberal economic liberalisation agenda since they have been used to compensate for food insecurities that arose from structural adjustment reforms.<sup>325</sup> Indeed dependency on food aid or international safety nets brings into question the

---

<sup>323</sup> At ‘Food Sovereignty Day’ London, 18/10/11.

<sup>324</sup> The ways in which this reform is conceived within the Food Sovereignty framework is the basis of the final chapter.

<sup>325</sup> See Chapter 4.

reality of the state in the empirical sense of the word<sup>326</sup> and will be examined in the context of Kenya and Ethiopia in the following chapter.

### **Concluding comments**

Despite decades of food aid from donor countries famine, or vulnerability to famine, in parts of East Africa have not been eradicated in any permanent sense. Critics have therefore concluded that it is, by and large, a waste of money. But this overlooks the important fact that food aid is clearly not always aimed at reducing hunger. Thus, rather than being a waste of money, it represents a failure to provide food as a matter of right or even to target those most in need. In addition, some donor countries (particularly the US) continue to use food aid to promote their own commercial and national strategic interests (Barrett & Maxwell 2005; Melito 2009). Indeed those who advocate a 'new security paradigm' argue there is a growing tendency to concentrate bilateral assistance on those believed to reflect liberal values and practices or those who should be encouraged to do so, a kind of 'neo-liberal project' (Chandler 2006; Duffield 2001).<sup>327</sup> It would follow, from this argument that we are moving further away from a deontological ethical basis (rights or duty based) in the fight against famine to one of considered consequences, which include areas of economic, foreign and security policy. In these circumstances, food aid is unlikely to reduce hunger and may even increase food insecurity in recipient countries.

One of the key characteristics of the Food Sovereignty model is that it fundamentally matters who provides food, not simply that food is provided. This is of enormous importance in the way that the system of food aid needs to be restructured to fit more closely within a Food Sovereignty framework. For the remainder of this discussion on the potential of adopting a Food Sovereignty model for East Africa, three areas are given particular attention. Firstly there is the scope for institutional changes to promote Food Sovereignty; secondly there are calls for an increase in state control and a decrease in harmful foreign policies in food and agricultural issues; and thirdly the

---

<sup>326</sup> See Jackson & Rosberg (1986) for a discussion of 'Sovereignty' in an African context.

<sup>327</sup> In 2004 the major recipients of food aid were Ethiopia, North Korea, Sudan, Bangladesh, and Eritrea. These are communist or Islamic states and so, on the face of it, the facts may support the idea of a neo-liberal project inasmuch as populations who would traditionally be hostile to US influence are perhaps being targeted for aid. Critics also point out that major recipients are often those considered most useful in the 'war on terror', such as Ethiopia (Wallerstein 2007). Also see Mousseau (2005) for levels of US food aid to Afghanistan and Iraq post 911.

development of democratic controls both within national governments and in civil society with regard to food production and consumption. The refocusing of food aid policy to effectively combat famine and famine vulnerability through a framework of Food Sovereignty is a theme continued in the following two chapters of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 6 – THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF FOOD INSECURITY

Democratic control – Smallholder farmers must have direct input into formulating agricultural policies at all levels. The United Nations and related organizations will have to undergo a process of democratization to enable this to become a reality. Everyone has the right to honest, accurate information and open and democratic decision-making. These rights form the basis of good governance, accountability and equal participation in economic, political and social life, free from all forms of discrimination. Rural women, in particular, must be granted direct and active decision-making on food and rural issues (Principle 7 of Food Sovereignty).

The purpose of this chapter is to situate food insecurity within the realm of politics and power and how it relates, explicitly, to principle 7 of Food Sovereignty, which demands democratic control of food systems. The absence of democratic control of food is partially a result of ‘external’ effects of the global food system as discussed in Chapter 2 or food aid dependency discussed in Chapter 5. It can also be conceived as deriving from ‘internal’ effects as a result of national government structures and policies. This chapter advances the argument by focusing on the internal aspects of food insecurity. The discussion starts from the premise that famine prevention should be a core function of all governments.<sup>328</sup> This premise is based on the notion that food is (1) a fundamental human right as discussed in Chapter 3 ; (2) famine prevention is a fundamental condition of ‘good governance’ and this is understood in an internal and external context. The unfortunate reality, however, is that many governments are too poorly organised, politically, economically and socially, to deliver comprehensive

---

<sup>328</sup> This is best articulated as by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural rights as ‘The right to adequate food, like any other human right, imposes three types or levels of obligations on state parties: the obligations to respect, protect and to fulfil. The obligations to respect, as existing access to adequate food requires that state parties do not take any measure resulting in preventing such access. The obligation to protect requires measures by the state to ensure that enterprises or individuals do not deprive [other] individuals of their access to adequate food. The obligation to fulfil (facilitate) means that states must pro-actively engage in activities with the intention to strengthen people’s access to, and utilisation of, resources and means to ensure their livelihood, including food security. Finally, whenever an individual or group is unable to enjoy the right to adequate food by the means at their disposal, states have the obligation to fulfil (provide) that right directly.’ UN Doc. E/C.12/1999/5.

social protection or basic services, and therefore do not, or cannot, guarantee a right to food for all citizens. It is also the case that some governments are selective in how they provide protection from famine conditions. It is widely recognised, therefore, that weak public institutions, limited state political capacity<sup>329</sup> and unstable political arrangements increase vulnerability to famine. This chapter considers the political context in Kenya and Ethiopia and questions whether democracy and governance work differently in an African context. This is an important point in terms of the suitability of these countries as places where Food Sovereignty could develop as an alternative agricultural framework. It is understood that an enhanced role for civil society is crucial for the development of Food Sovereignty but this may prove to be problematic in an African context (Chabal & Daloz 1999). Theories of ‘neo-patrimonialism’ and the separation of the empirical and juridical interpretation of the state, in African context, are highly relevant to this discussion (Chabal & Daloz 1999; Jackson & Rosberg 1986).

This chapter is divided into three sections. Part 1 looks at the democratic state and its role in famine prevention. This includes a brief elucidation of how democracy is defined and conceptualised in this discussion and identifies its protective role against famine.<sup>330</sup> This is followed by a general discussion on the role of the state both in the instigation and amelioration of famines in the past before moving on to considering the African state in a contemporary context. This includes a discussion on both political culture and civil society. Amartya Sen claimed that famines do not occur in fully functioning democracies, because of the protection and guarantees that are built in to them (Sen 2001).<sup>331</sup> Whilst broadly accepting this claim, this chapter also takes account of the wider international context and non-state actors that underlie modern conditions of famine and food insecurity in East Africa. If democracy and governance do work differently in Africa, then it may be the case that Sen’s model does not quite grasp the African situation in a way that a Food Sovereignty model might.

---

<sup>329</sup> Defined as the “the ability to construct and maintain a working political coalition capable of sustaining the implementation of state policy” (Beckman, 1992: 95)

<sup>330</sup> The seventh principle of Food Sovereignty relates to the democratic control of food systems which goes beyond the accepted definitions of liberal democracy: a theme taken up in the final chapter of the thesis

<sup>331</sup> It is not the intention to offer a comprehensive and analytic overview of the varieties within democratic theory, as this is clearly beyond the scope of this chapter. Rather, it aims to establish a general basis on which to consider both the possibilities and limitations of current democratic processes and how they relate to the occurrence of famine.

Part 2 looks at the role of national government in food provision in Kenya. Government failures are specifically linked to both the implementation of structural adjustment programmes, as discussed in chapter 4, and what is frequently understood as the endemic problem of corruption of Kenyan political elites and personalised politics.

Part 3 considers the Ethiopian case, where the political context differs significantly from Kenya and government failures are linked specifically to the internal conflicts that have beset this country for decades. There is considerable evidence to show how the Ethiopian government used food as a political weapon of war and discriminated against certain sectors of the population. The concept of responsibility a theme central to this chapter. In theories of causation, it is a concept that has, thus far, been misplaced (demographic theories) or seriously underplayed (economic theories). The emphasis is on a need to challenge 'politics as usual' and establish government responsibility through political accountability. The conclusion reached is that democracy, per se, is only a partial protection from food insecurity and what is more, democracy in a Western-liberal context may never be the most suitable political system for East Africa (Chabal & Daloz 1999). What is really required is an increase in the democratic control of food systems and Food Sovereignty could provide a suitable framework.

### **1. Democratic protection from famine.**

In the early 1980s Sen asserted in his 'democracy prevents famine' thesis that the diverse set of freedoms available in a democratic state, including political rights such as the right to vote and regular elections together with civil liberties such as a free press and freedom of speech, combine to become the real force in eradicating famine. It was Sen who first articulated the idea that it is one set of freedoms, i.e. to vote, to demonstrate and to publish that are inextricably linked with other types of freedom, i.e. freedom from hunger or death by starvation. Variations of this approach continued throughout the 1990s most notably from writers such as de Waal (2000, 2006), and Devereux (1993, 2000).

However, the early optimism that the triumph of liberal democracy, the so-called 'end



of history thesis',<sup>332</sup> would lead to an extension of prosperity and an end to absolute poverty was premature.<sup>333</sup> The continuation, indeed worsening, of food insecurity in many parts of Africa offers a stark challenge to the very idea that the spread of liberal democracy was inevitable, and would, per se, become an effective solution. In fact the argument developed here is that liberal democracy is not a natural or inevitable political model and African states may simply not democratise along the same lines as the West. This fact needs to be more clearly understood and factored into the expectations of a Food Sovereignty model. Therefore, the fact that some political systems have delivered but many have not means that Sen's analysis, although intuitively powerful, is not in practice sufficient, it is descriptive, rather than prescriptive.<sup>334</sup> It is worth noting that Sen's perception of democracy is essentially a liberal one based on the belief that opposition parties and a free press are consistently interested in promoting the poor and vulnerable in society.<sup>335</sup> Superficially, the desirability of democratic systems can be demonstrated by the fact that they have greater respect for human rights and have lower incidences of hunger than authoritarian ones.<sup>336</sup> On deeper inspection though, the links between democracy and protection from hunger are more tenuous and more specific than suggested by Sen's hypothesis. For example, a free press and an independent judiciary (i.e. rule of law) may offer greater protection from hunger for minorities than the right to vote or competitive political parties.<sup>337</sup>

Thus, it can be argued in order for Sen's linking of rights and freedoms to become really meaningful a more robust political contract is required. Within a Food Sovereignty paradigm this could be conceived of as an enforceable contract between governments and their people based on inalienable rights. It is of great importance that this contract would need to be legally or constitutionally protected. There are already

---

<sup>332</sup> Francis Fukuyama (1992).

<sup>333</sup> This optimism should be viewed within an historical context. Many believed that the end of the 'cold war' would lead to an end of proxy wars and externally sponsored dictatorial governments, both of which have been shown to be key factors in famine vulnerability.

<sup>334</sup> India is often cited as an example where chronic under-nutrition, thus vulnerability to famine, is endemic despite it being the world's largest functioning democracy. See Banik 2007; Sainath 1996.

<sup>335</sup> See Wrong 2008 for a critical account of power elites in Kenya acting in their own interest, rather than on behalf of the most impoverished.

<sup>336</sup> See Freedom House 2011 [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org) Accessed 12/10/11.

<sup>337</sup> For example, Purulia district in West Bengal has had 25 years of the same party in power but a far better record on preventing starvation deaths than Kalahandi, a district with intense electoral competition and frequent changes of the party in power. See Banik, 2007: Ch 13.

examples of these types of legal guarantees in parts of Latin America and India and initiatives such as the 2005 National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) have been shown to be very effective.

David Held claims, 'Democracy seems to bestow an 'aura of legitimacy' on modern political life: rules, laws, policies and decisions appear justified and appropriate when they are democratic' (Held 1987: 1). However, the absence, or prevention, of famine or chronic food insecurity from some undemocratic countries is also relevant in this analysis particularly in understanding which types of political system lend themselves more readily to the adoption of a Food Sovereignty framework. Some countries have more equitable land allocation and fulfil a responsibility to ensure their citizens are fed, but may deny them other political and civil rights. Cuba, under Fidel Castro, is perhaps one of the best-known examples of a country placing higher value on the provision of certain social rights over and above political freedoms. Indeed it has been argued that Cuba, for a variety of reasons, may be the best example of a food sovereign country to date (Caballero 2011). China, too, has made enormous progress in reducing vulnerability to hunger and famine, although it presents an alternative political-economic model to Western liberal democracies. It is clear that the mere existence of democratic institutions does not guarantee equality of treatment of all citizens or comprehensive protection from hunger. Indeed governments, albeit elected ones, in majoritarian systems can quite easily discriminate against minority sectors of the population. Case studies have repeatedly shown that those most at risk of famine are inevitably the poorest and most marginalised citizens whose rights and welfare are most easily ignored (de Waal 1989, 2006).<sup>338</sup> Malawi, for example, has shifted from an authoritarian but effective regime to a multi party democracy that is only marginally accountable to vulnerable members of its society (Devereux (ed) 2007: Ch 7). Likewise, Kenya has moved from a one-party to a multi-party state and yet sections of Kenyan society remain marginalised and lack political representation.<sup>339</sup> Democracy therefore has many related features, including the voting aspect, elections, a competitive party system, open public deliberation and accountability. It is clear, however, that some of these aspects serve as a greater protection against famine than

---

<sup>338</sup> Rwanda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Kenya, are all examples of elected governments that have persecuted or neglected minority populations.

<sup>339</sup> See section 2 below.

others. For those advocating a Food Sovereignty model it is vital to identify which specific democratic criteria are most important for a Food Sovereignty model to flourish.

By looking at famines, in a general context, and over time, it becomes evident that some aspects of democracy, such as government transparency, accountability and responsiveness (or rather a lack of) are most relevant to famine situations. This is more than simply stating the obvious because it points to a way that this lack of democratic criteria could be overcome by the instrumentalisation of a political contract between the government and the people. The need for a political contract is emphasised by the fact that although famine is self-evidently wrong and can be conceived of as a political issue, its occurrence in an East African context has not yet brought about a lasting coalition that can enforce long-term change.<sup>340</sup> By way of a political contract, the government agrees to fulfil its duty to prevent famine and the people, in return, meet their civic duty to support the government (De Waal 2006).<sup>341</sup> Most importantly, for the analysis of famine in this thesis, it would need to be a political contract with both national and international safeguards. This perspective emphasises the need to concentrate on the roles and interconnections between certain fundamental freedoms that, as already stated, we associate with democracy: political freedoms; economic opportunities; recognition of individual rights; social facilities; protective securities and so forth. The reality of achieving this ideal, however, is fraught with difficulties and parts two and three of this chapter consider some of the obstacles, both internal and external, which may stand in the way of achieving the necessary political changes and safeguards in Kenya and Ethiopia.

#### *Development of the ideal: the State as provider*

Throughout history one can draw close relationships between famine and the fortunes of a particular state, whether that state is in Africa, Asia or Europe. Containing or preventing famine has, for centuries, been one of the primary functions of rulers and governments and one of the primary expectations that the people have of their rulers.

---

<sup>340</sup> From a theoretical perspective, deliberative democracy is the best protection from famine, but as a first step, strengthening existing institutions in developing democracies is a practical way forward.

<sup>341</sup> This is very clearly a 'western-liberal' vision of the relationship between the rulers and the ruled and has been deeply contested, in an African context. See for example Bayart (1993); Chabal & Daloz (1999).

According to social contract theory, protection from hunger, during times of dearth, would be one of the benefits for which people would be willing to sacrifice some of their freedom.<sup>342</sup> Regimes that have ignored the basic needs of its people have often lost their legitimacy and thus, historically, states have often responded by creating institutions and policies to try and meet the needs of its people during times of hunger. The English Poor Law, established during the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603), and the Corn Laws, from their origins in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century to their restoration in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, are examples of early state responses to food crises (Thompson 1971). Indeed, the Indian Famine Codes of 1880 were a significant feature of British rule in India, driven in all probability by self-interest but, nonetheless, aimed at preventing a repeat of the famines that occurred in India during the 1870s. In a modern context, one of the obvious and most basic functions of state social security, in the developed world, is to protect people from starvation. From this perspective, the duty of the state with regards to famine and hunger can be seen as fostering a growth in governmental power and influence, and a key feature in the process of democratisation and good governance as we understand them today.<sup>343</sup>

Famine and its associated ills have always had repercussions for the stability of any regime since its very basis of wealth and power is, to a great extent, dependent on the well-being of those who are ruled. Therefore promoting the idea of the state as protector and provider clearly had its political advantages. In pre-modern times this role provided a balance between the need for coercion and the willingness of the populace to submit to the hegemony of the monarch and the ruling classes. By acknowledging responsibility for the subsistence needs of their people, rulers could achieve a moral standing that went beyond self-interest and greed. Thus, a paternalistic approach, encapsulated in the feudal doctrine of 'noblese oblige' in which rank imposed obligations, gave a certain authority and legitimacy to many regimes.

Early interventions included the attempts to prohibit the export or hoarding of grain, and to oblige butchers and bakers to sell at fixed prices and standard measures, thus

---

<sup>342</sup> A highly influential theory most associated in modern times with the philosophers Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. See Hampton 1986.

<sup>343</sup> See David Williams (2000) on quasi-states, sovereignty and Africa - he discusses the way in which the concept of sovereignty has shifted and provides a helpful framework for thinking about how sovereignty came to mean what governments could and should do, rather than simply autonomy.

displaying early notions of the 'just price'.<sup>344</sup> As Europe crossed from medieval into modern times, nation states redrew their boundaries and cities and populations expanded; food provision, therefore, became a high priority. Bureaucracies, armies and populations need to be fed; hence, laws were introduced to ease the flow of food from countryside to city. A key, political, incentive for state intervention was to maintain order and stability and this remains the case today; the Tudor state in England, for example, responded with the Poor Laws to tackle rising vagrancy and destitution (Charlesworth 1999). However, for a variety of reasons discussed in this thesis, the European experience of state intervention to combat hunger has not been successfully repeated or maintained in much of post-colonial Africa.<sup>345</sup>

China, throughout its imperial dynastic history, offers an illuminating example of how once every few hundred years widespread famines triggered revolts that led to the downfall of once flourishing dynasties (Arnold 1988: 100-104). Elite self-interest and lessons learnt from previous dynasties led the Manchus, once they were in power, to establish and maintain public granaries across China. Grains were provided and replenished by imperial quotas, local taxes and voluntary contributions.

However, the more famine came to be viewed as something other than the consequences of natural causes, but something potentially man made and therefore amenable to human intervention, the more its occurrence became part of a developing critique of state power. This was especially true in colonial territories like Ireland and India, as well as much of Africa, where famine gained a prominent place in the emerging ideas of nationalism. In Europe, the French revolution of 1789 demonstrated the political significance of food; though it was clearly not just about the price of bread, it was obviously a culmination of social and political frustration, the dwindling authority of the monarch and an increasing criticism of absolutism. But the fear of hunger that had plagued France (and most other countries in Europe at the time) brought together elements of society against the merchants, landlords and nobles, who were perceived as being responsible for shortages and spiralling costs. In other words, certain sectors of society were deemed to be accountable to the hungry. A more recent

---

<sup>344</sup> Adam Smith's objection to such a concept and his belief in the free market as a pricing mechanism is discussed in Chapter 4.

<sup>345</sup> The negative impact of structural adjustments in reducing the scope of state responses to hunger is discussed in Chapter 4 and the politics of food aid is discussed in Chapter 5.

example occurred in 1974, when Emperor Haile Selassie's regime lost public confidence within Ethiopia following a famine in Wello province, ultimately leading to the Ethiopian revolution. Indeed, the peasants' revolts of the twentieth century, in places as diverse as Algeria, Mexico and Russia, were mostly triggered by subsistence crises. The evolution of Food Sovereignty, championed by the farming and peasant movement *la Via Campesina*, shares these same roots.

### *The malevolent State*

In addition to this somewhat benign image of the state as the provider of food in times of dire need, there is the very negative side of state involvement when, far from preventing famine, states have been responsible for perpetuating them. This may be as a result of policy, punishment, ignorance or wilful neglect. Very often, the 'legitimate violence' of the state has been used to uphold the ownership rights of certain sectors of the community, while others have starved (Edkins 2002). This negative role of the state can be linked to the reality in parts of Africa.

State involvement in famine causation has most commonly arisen as a result of war, either within or beyond a state's boundary. Civil wars, in particular, provide the most disturbing examples of food being used as a political motivator. In the late 1960s the government of Nigeria notoriously used hunger to defeat the attempted secession of Biafra and forced the rebellious Igbo people into submission. The more recent situation in Sudan has very similar overtones, with the Sudanese government-backed Janjaweed adopting a scorched earth policy. They have destroyed crops and villages and driven the black African Sudanese (from the Fur, Massaleet and Zagawa ethnic groups) off their lands (de Waal 2008).<sup>346</sup> Hunger, it seems, has always been used as a way of bringing the rebellious to heel; the history of warfare is replete with examples of pillaging, crop destruction and city sieges aimed at starving the opposition into surrender. Examples are universal and include the German rulers in East Africa in the early twentieth century.<sup>347</sup> When faced with revolt from the indigenous resistance movements during the 'Maji-Maji', the colonisers retaliated not just with arms but also with a 'scorched earth policy' that destroyed the crops and food reserves of

---

<sup>346</sup> Also see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3613953.stm> Accessed 07/08/11.

<sup>347</sup> The Spanish conquistadors in the Yucatan of Central America, for example, who in addition to the devastations on the battlefield, plundered and pillaged food stocks at both planting and harvesting times. Thus conquest, for the Maya, also meant famine (Arnold 1988).

hundreds of villages. The starvation that followed was considered by the colonial regime to be a necessary part of the 'process of pacification' (Arnold 1998: 121).

Less common, perhaps, than open warfare, but evident throughout history, is the situation where states have pursued a policy of famine, either for ideological objectives, such as China and the Soviet Union during the twentieth century, or in order for certain groups or 'power elites' to remain in power.

In contrast to Sen's economic analysis of the Bengal famine in 1943 (Sen 1981), there is good reason to place a greater political emphasis on its causation. The fear of an invasion from Japan led to the colonial powers taking action that, albeit unintentionally, precipitated famine amongst the local population.<sup>348</sup> Though Sen's entitlement theory explains why famine occurred to certain people in certain areas, it clearly does not address the wider political environment in which this famine occurred. This includes government mismanagement of a vulnerable economy, the suspension of normal movement of food into grain deficient areas, and, perhaps the most important for any rights based analysis, a government's willingness to sacrifice rural needs to those of the city.

Russia also provides examples of famines that were as much, if not more, political as they were climatic, demographic or economic in origin. The famine of 1932-34, the death toll of which Devereux estimates as 7-8 million (Devereux 2000: 6), can be directly attributed to malevolent government policy of the soviet state towards a particular section of the peasant class. The Bolshevik revolution of 1917 drew its main support from the cities rather than the rural areas and what resulted was a virtual civil war against the wealthier peasants or kulaks.<sup>349</sup> Through a combination of policies, introduced first by Lenin and followed by Stalin, that included forced collectivisation, food confiscation and the requisitioning of food from rural to urban workers, millions of peasants starved to death. The ideological drive of the communist party officials and the belief that the kulaks were not committed to the goals of the new political order resulted in disastrous consequences for millions from the Ukraine to Kazakhstan. Thus, as the example of Russia's 1932-1934 famines illustrates only too

---

<sup>348</sup> See Arnold (1998: Ch 5) for a discussion on the confiscation of food from Bengal to supply the more strategically important city of Calcutta.

<sup>349</sup> Interesting Parallels can be drawn here with Keen's work on the Sudanese famine 1983-89 and the targeting by the Sudanese government of the Dinka people (Keen 1994a).

clearly, it is not just governments that adhere to the political ideology of the capitalist free market that have been responsible for famines (or at least not preventing them), but equally those that espouse the political opposite of state controlled communism.

*The modern African context: rolling back the state*

Returning to Sen's assertion that famines do not occur in fully functioning democracies (Sen 2001), it is certainly the case that traditionally, famines are related to political systems as most twentieth century famines occurred in authoritarian, undemocratic and unaccountable regimes (Devereux 2000). To offer even a brief summary of the political systems in operation in any African country, without reference to history is wholly inadequate but an in-depth analysis of the political evolution in Africa, particularly since post-colonial independence, is beyond the scope of this discussion.<sup>350</sup> However, two key factors have been singled out as having facilitated poor governance in Africa and will be considered in some detail in this section. First is obviously the colonial pedigree. There is a strong linkage between the absence of good governance in the colonial era and that of the post-colonial period (McMichael 2008). It can be said that the political structures and values, economic base and social orientations promoted in the colonial era were antithetical to the evolution of what is understood in this thesis as good governance and democracy. However, once implanted these structures and processes, took on new manifestations, both internal and external in the neo-colonial era (Ki-Zerbo 1990; Chabal 1992). Secondly, in the post-colonial period in Africa, the initial emphasis of the political rulers was on national integration, unity and development. Thus the dominant doctrine can be thought of as a 'dictatorship of development', rather than the 'democracy of development' (Adejumobi 2000). However, given the fragmentation of the African state, the paucity of resources of the ruling class and its lack of hegemony, the tendency was that governance degenerated significantly, as the state became an arena of struggles for primitive accumulation and power control. The net effect was that political alienation and de-participation and increasing material poverty became the norms of political governance in Africa. Empirical research shows that post-colonial Africa has, in general, seen political instability increase and some parts have

---

<sup>350</sup> See Afigbo et al (1989); Chabal and Daloz,(1999).



experienced prolonged periods of war related famines (Collier 2007).<sup>351</sup> What is not in doubt is that countries currently experiencing the worst incidence of acute hunger are seriously lacking certain democratic criteria and protection of fundamental freedoms<sup>352</sup> and this situation can be linked to the withdrawal of state involvement in food systems as outlined below.

During brief periods in the 1970s, all countries in the horn of Africa possessed some of the most ambitious participatory and professional anti-famine institutions on the continent. Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan, for example, all had successes with introducing radical social and economic reforms aimed at confining famine to the pages of history but they have all since suffered exceptionally severe famines (Wallerstein 1993).<sup>353</sup> As was discussed in Chapters 2, 4 and 5 this increased vulnerability to famine can be located, in no small part, in the organisation of the global food system, the imposition of liberal economic reforms and the growth in dependency on food aid. The most important political impact of structural adjustment in the 1980s and 1990s was the introduction of an unprecedented level of involvement in African economic planning by the international financial institutions (IFI). From a critical perspective the IFIs subsequently became a vehicle for donors (mainly Western governments) to impose their political conditionality on recipients (Mkandawire & Olukoshi 1995). Ironically, by encouraging democracy, but insisting that economic policy remained outside the domain of democratic decision-making, SA made many African governments more externally accountable but less accountable to their own people. This shift in accountability is often framed in terms of a 'crisis of governance in Africa'. Critics argue that the adjustment years have been characterised by an erosion of the legitimacy of the post-colonial African state, with implications for its political capacity to implement policies. Thus the efforts at rolling-back the state

---

<sup>351</sup> It has often been noted that Botswana is an anomaly in Sub-Saharan Africa (Collier 2007; Sachs 2005; Sen 2003). It is a country that has maintained a functioning multi-party political system since independence, has a chronic food deficit and propensity to severe drought and yet it has averted major famine. Botswana's multi-party system, high levels of accountability, professional civil service, and its success in averting famine have been closely linked. Thus Botswana is often cited as a classic example of how democratic accountability is at the centre of famine prevention. It also happens to be wealthy with most of its GDP coming from diamond mines and benefits from an enlightened commercial contract with de Beers.

<sup>352</sup> Malawi is considered an exception in as much as its first famine occurred (2001-2002) in a functioning, albeit nascent, democracy. Several factors, including structural adjustment, combined to make Malawi more vulnerable to famine than in the past. See Devereux 2007 (ed):Ch 7.

<sup>353</sup> It is acknowledged throughout this thesis that the reasons are however, varied and complex.

not only helped to curb its social reach but also further undermined the post-colonial social contract on the basis of which the state sought to build legitimacy, forge political alliances and relate with the opposition, (Olukoshi & Laakso 1996). Furthermore, the adjustment years have been associated with the collapse of a pattern of expectations, in specific group and community demands, focused on what the role of the state is understood as being. This collapse of expectations is reinforced by the widespread awareness that structural adjustment came to Africa as an external imposition. In the search for alternatives, it has been suggested that individuals and groups were driven into ethno-political and religious organisational frameworks that pose direct challenges to the post-colonial secular, national-territorial nation-state project.<sup>354</sup> That is why some commentators have argued that the crisis of governance in Africa is also, in essence, a crisis of structural adjustment (Beckman 1992; Olukoshi & Laakso 1996).

From an historical perspective it is difficult not to question the overt anti-statism that underlies much of the neo-liberal political economy approach. When most African countries attained independence the developed world had clearly been in favour of state interventionism in their own development process (Chaudry 1993; Mkandawire 1998; Olukoshi 1996). By and large this was as true for the centrally-planned economies of the Eastern bloc as for their capitalist rivals in the West. It was as true for the developing as for the developed countries. As it pertained to the developing countries, including those of Africa, a variety of theories, ranging from the 'big push' approach to the 'Gerschenkron thesis', were developed and popularised in support of an interventionist role for the state in the struggle against underdevelopment.<sup>355</sup>

From the late 1970s, however, as the neo-liberal ideology gained in ascendancy, the interventionist role of the state, in the development process, came under severe attack. From being the cornerstone of development, the state now came to be seen as the millstone holding back a system of market-led development (Olukoshi 1996). In a modern context, theories of the state and how they relate to famine vulnerability in an African context have taken on a specific theoretical position commonly referred to as

---

<sup>354</sup> See section below on regional disparities.

<sup>355</sup> Gerschenkron's thesis (1962) on economic 'backwardness' stressed the key developmental role of the state in mobilising the necessary resources to reduce the techno-industrial gap between late industrialisers and advanced industrial powers. The theory advances that the greater the gap, the greater the need for state intervention. This has, somewhat belatedly, now been recognised by the World Bank.

‘neo-patrimonialism’. These theories have come to dominate the analysis of African states and polities from a Western or First World perspective. In essence neo-patrimonialism is a term used for patrons using state resources in order to secure the loyalty of clients in the general population, it includes informal patron-client relationships that reach from very high up in state structures down to individuals at the village level. This label is often used to describe African states, specifically as a way of explaining why they have ‘failed’ to effect neoliberal market reforms. Indeed the formal state in Africa has been described as ‘vacuous and ineffectual’ (Chabal & Daloz 1999:14). Specifically, the African states have been described as ‘ramshackle regimes of highly personalised rule that are severely deficient in institutional authority and organisational capability’ (Jackson & Rosberg 1986:1). This position is highly controversial, with some arguing that the term neo-patrimonialism is too vague. For example, Mkandawire has argued that in an African context neo-patrimonialism has been used to explain import substitution, export orientation, parastatals (state-owned enterprise), privatisation, the informal sector development, and so on. In other words by seeking to explain everything, it explains nothing except perhaps that capitalist relations in their idealised form are not typical in Africa (Mkandawire 1998).

In keeping with the global analysis of this thesis, it is argued here that neo-patrimonial theory fails to take into account the politics of non-African states. However the World Bank embraced the theory of neo-patrimonialism as it developed its political economy of African development or a ‘political economy of disorder’ as Chabal and Daloz put it (1999: xviv). The neo-liberal political economy school rests on the assumption, whether explicitly stated or not, that democracy and economic liberalisation are two sides of the same coin (Olukoshi 1999). It takes as its starting point, the view that the postcolonial African state, by its very nature and, therefore, by definition, is at the heart of the economic and governance crises pervading the continent (Bayart 2000). To paraphrase Olukoshi’s take on the World Bank’s position, the African state, stripped of the most basic checks and balances of the (late) colonial period, has failed in its developmental mission on account of various inter-related factors:

- its excessive and counterproductive intervention in domestic economic processes to the detriment of market forces and the private sector;
- its over-bureaucratisation and bloated size;
- the domination of its apparatuses by clientelist networks and an urban coalition

that orients it against the rural (productive) sector and ‘rational’ macro-economic policies;

- its submission to ‘rampant/macro populism’ as it prioritises a politically powerful ‘urban coalition’;
- its monopolisation of the main economic levers in society with the resultant proliferation of rent-generating/seeking niches/activities;
- its over-centralisation of development which has discouraged local (private) initiative (Olukoshi 1999).

Underpinning the failure of the post-colonial African state, making it an almost inevitable outcome, is its essentially neo-patrimonial nature and the rent-generating/seeking motivation of African policy makers. Or so the dominant theoretical approach would have it. Thus neo-patrimonialism has been central to the adoption by the state of policies that distort markets through protectionist tariff and non-tariff barriers, overvalued exchange rates, a host of subsidies, and the preference for state monopolies. In extending its reach as part of its goal of achieving short-term political order, the state has encouraged the proliferation of patronage institutions and networks. These help to consolidate the position of a legitimacy-hungry elite by enabling it, in part, to buy the support and acquiescence of certain groups and the silence of others whilst helping itself from the public purse.

From this perspective, given the domination of the economy by the neo-patrimonial state or at least by a neo-patrimonial state logic, it is not surprising that the failure of the state easily translates into the failure of the economy. (Bayart 1993, 2000, 2009; Chabal and Daloz 1999).<sup>356</sup> The centrality of the neo-patrimonial/rent-seeking thesis as the source of the failure of the post-colonial African states is evident in the proliferation of adjectives that were used to describe its nature and modus operandi. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s the post-colonial state was variously characterised as ‘parasitic’, ‘personalistic’, ‘clientelist’, ‘kleptocratic’, ‘over-extended’, ‘predatory’, ‘crony’, ‘weak’, ‘lame’, ‘rentier’ ‘sultanist’, and, ultimately ‘neo-patrimonial’ (Olukoshi 1999). In essence these descriptions served to underline

---

<sup>356</sup> There is an extensive literature on neo-patrimonialism. See for example Bayart 1993, 2009; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Hyden and Bratton 1992; Sandbrook 1985, 1986, 1991; Jackson & Rosberg; World Bank 1989.

the perceived negative role of the state in the economy and society. In so doing, they reinforced the World Bank's theoretical position on the African state as both inherently ineffective and illegitimate.

Precisely because of the attempt to transpose the categories of neo-classical economics to the political arena and to use these to designate social institutions and actors, the neo-liberal political economy school produced a set of rigid dichotomies opposing the state to the market, the rural to the urban, the formal to the informal, agriculture to industry, and civil society to the state. Yet this approach to understanding the African reality overlooks the fact that most of the relations designated by these categories systematically interpenetrate and overlap one another (Gibbon et al 1992, Meagher 2006). A key characteristic of African economies and societies is the prevalence of 'grey' areas, which blur, and sometimes blend, the dichotomies that are central to the arguments of the neo-liberal political economy approach. Therefore it is argued here that a helpful understanding of the politics of reform in Africa cannot be gained from the kinds of rigid dichotomies that are integral to a neo-liberal or public choice analysis. This is of particular importance in efforts to establish a realistic basis from which to develop a Food Sovereignty model. The reductionism that pervades the neo-patrimonial approach perhaps explains why the World Bank and its sympathetic critics have repeatedly and systematically misjudged and misread the effects of structural adjustment in Africa (Bayart 2000; Gibbon et al 1992).<sup>357</sup>

Also problematic is the focus on neo-patrimonialism and rent seeking, which does not allow for the validity of other motivations for the actions of social or political actors, including the state (Bayart 2000). As noted by Andrew Williams

'policy-makers...are motivated by instincts other than national interest. To assume otherwise is to assume that policy-makers are not moral beings, a curious position to take, or that national interest does not have a moral component' (Williams 2006:12).

Being more sensitive to issues that could or should drive national and international policy-making is central to a Food Sovereignty framework.

Finally, and most importantly, it is not self-evident that the creation/existence of a

---

<sup>357</sup> See Chapter 4.

private capitalist class autonomous of the state will necessarily be supportive of democracy in Africa. Numerous empirical studies on the politics of the private capitalist class and its organisations in various African countries suggest, in fact, that they could, and do, have strong anti-democratic tendencies.<sup>358</sup> (Adejumobi 2000; Chabal & Daloz 1999; Mamdani and Wamba-dia-Wamba 1995; Mkandawire 1998).

As stated earlier, democracy is not just a question of multiparty politics and electioneering even if the right of the people to freely elect their leaders is recognised as non-negotiable; it includes a vast array of social and economic reforms whose adoption are widely perceived as being necessary for the establishment of a more just social order. This understanding of democracy is more compatible with a model of Food Sovereignty. It is a definition of democracy that necessarily calls for an interventionist, developmentalist state and not for the unbridled retrenchment of the state. A Food Sovereignty model calls for the reforming of the state and its broad-ranging restructuring in order to tackle the problem of state failure but it also firmly rejects the World Bank/IMF re-definition of the role of the state. The early post-colonial period, characterised by the abandonment, in many cases, of the African anti-colonial nationalist project, also witnessed spirited struggles against the imposition of one party and military rule, the institution of personal rule with all of the clientelist networks woven around it, the proliferation of corruption and bureaucratic red-tape, and the efforts at various levels aimed at the de-politicisation of the people (Anyang' Nyong'o 1987; Mamdani et al. 1987; Mamdani and Wamba-dia-Wamba 1995).

The withdrawal of government intervention in agricultural and food sectors, however, jeopardises developing countries' ability to effectively fight hunger and poverty as it conflicts with several basic principles of good governance such as:

- *Sovereignty and democracy*: The loss of sovereignty over food and agriculture implies a democratic deficit, as citizens are not given a voice in the determination of the policies affecting their lives and their future.
- *Accountability*: Relief and development agencies are only accountable to their donors, and not to the beneficiaries of their interventions. When governments hand over the responsibility for food and agriculture to foreign bodies, they cannot be held responsible for what the international organizations do or do

---

<sup>358</sup> See Adejumobi (2000) for a very helpful analysis of Africa & good governance.

not accomplish.

- *Effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability:* Welfare systems and agricultural services with permanent staff and resources are more efficient, flexible and able to react quickly than international organizations that have to bring in international staff, recruit local personnel, call for international funding, set up offices and so forth. Moreover, food interventions run by relief agencies are geared towards short-term objectives and are not integrated into comprehensive strategies aimed at reducing food insecurity in the long run.

#### *Civil society.*

So strong were the domestic pressures for political and economic reforms in Africa towards the end of the 1980s, and so massive was the level of popular participation in the struggle for change that some commentators were to remark, rather hastily, that Africa was on the threshold of a “second liberation” (Legum 1992). Whereas the first liberation resulted in the end of colonialism, the “second liberation” was leading to the defeat of personal, autocratic rule within the framework of a system of political monopoly either by a single party or by the military. It was expected that this “second liberation” would result in the emergence of an era of democratic governments that promote rational economic policies. Yet many of those who popularised this view, failed to take full account of the democratic content of the political reforms and the sustainability of democratic change in the context of deepening economic crises, prolonged structural adjustment and the resurgence of competing ethnicities (Mkandawire & Olukoshi 1995).

Thus it is not only institutional democracy that is essential in the development of Food Sovereignty, particularly the seventh principle of democratic control of food systems, in many respects the role of civil society is just as salient. Civil can be understood here as a combination of properly organised and distinct political interests groups and social networks distinct from the state. The distinction made by Peter Gibbon (1997) between the “deepening” and the “politicisation” of civil society is instructive here. Gibbon argues that the deepening of civil society does not impact too positively on the course of democratisation, it is the latter, that is its politicisation, which does. Politicisation involves the ability of the civil associations and groups to transcend their parochial group interests and articulate demands, which could overcome their

individual and group differences. It is in this context that civil society can act as a potent force and form a viable platform for political change. While the politicisation of the civil society is important as Gibbon insists, equally the deepening of the civil society is also very relevant. The deepening of the civil society is crucial to its strength and vitality, as it reinforces its capacity for self-organisation and development, without which its politicisation will be hollow. From this perspective Food Sovereignty cannot be thought of as a state centric approach but rather as a civil society response that in places like east Africa would transcend kinship and ethnic ties. It is not about reasserting the power of the state but reasserting the power of the people and the building of international networks. The challenge of enhancing democracy in Africa therefore includes the strengthening of the civil society through both its deepening and politicisation.

However, it should be noted that the neo-liberal identification of power and exploitation exclusively with the state has been criticised for failing to acknowledge that power relations and exploitation can also be found in civil society (Olukoshi 1996; Adejumobi 2000). In other words, like the state, civil society also embodies contradictory tendencies and processes which the neo-liberal political economy theorists' uncritical equation of civil society with democracy sometimes conceals. Thus civil society is not, exclusively, a domain of liberty and democracy (Chandler 2005) and the tendency to oppose it to the state in a one-sided manner does not illuminate the ways in which the two inter-penetrate. It could, however, become more democratic. Indeed it has been suggested the most effective way to increase democratic potential is the support of a revival of 'peasant culture'. This does not just apply to the global South but the North as well. From a radical perspective, 'peasantry' is considered the most effective and enabling class of the future, not of the past.<sup>359</sup> There is good reason to promote Food Sovereignty as a vehicle for this transformation. We now turn our attention to this possibility, specifically in an East African context.

## **2. The role of government in Kenya**

Predictably the IMF and World Bank, and the government of Kenya, have criticised

---

<sup>359</sup> This point was made by Pierre Roussett in a speech delivered for Food Sovereignty Day 18<sup>th</sup> October 2011 London .



one another on the nature of structural adjustment programmes and the extent of their negative impact on food security. The international financial institutions have criticised the Kenyan government for systematically undermining the implementation process. Their criticisms include lack of government transparency and financial discipline, lack of trade reforms and an inconsistent commitment on behalf of the top officials (Swamy 1994). In other words lack of government transparency and discipline weakened or nullified the intended structural reforms. It has been said of Kenya that 'one could at best talk of a "facade" democracy in which massaged elections were grudgingly arranged, with the perpetuation of civil political autocracy under the guise of democratic rule' (Luckham, 1995: 49-50). Other less diplomatic criticisms of Kenyan government performances are much clearer in laying the blame on a political system where corruption is endemic and development funds have been routinely misappropriated, both to reward political supporters and to private off shore bank accounts (Chabal & Daloz 1999; Wrong 2009). The spectacular fortune illicitly amassed by Nicholas Biwot, once a pillar of the ruling Kenyan African National Union and close confidant of President Daniel Arap Moi, was allegedly built on a systematic manipulation of the structures and processes of adjustment-related deregulation. Land-related scandals deriving from attempts at privatising what is, for a Food Sovereignty model, Africa's most important resource have been reported, not just in Kenya, but also in all corners of the continent. (Chabal & Daloz 1999; Olukoshi 1996).

Within the Kenyan government, however, the impact of these structural adjustment programmes continues to be a matter of controversy. Whilst essentially supporting the reform process aimed at economic development its application quite quickly became a cause for concern. Most frequently, the official stance has been that the harsh and rapid conditionalities of SA were based on an economic model that did not fit the Kenyan political and social structures and conditions (Rono 2002). From a Kenyan perspective one of the most common criticisms is that the original emphasis of these programmes was on economic issues but their objectives shifted to political issues based on Western political models. In order 'to free' African economies more external controls and intrusive monitoring required national governments to stick to the conditions imposed to the point of becoming authoritarian. This accusation can be substantiated with evidence that World Bank Reports, for example, moved from a

traditional focus on economic matters to political issues such as pluralism, decentralisation of power structures, accountability and, most importantly, the reduced role of government in the state economy. The logic of conditionality, donor co-ordination and the stance that ‘there is no alternative’ compel adjusting governments to embrace a reform project which they may not necessarily believe in and strive to implement it in the face of domestic opposition, popular disaffection and limited results. It also sidesteps the domestic policy process, further erodes national sovereignty over basic economic policy decision-making, and undermines local policy-making capacity (Beckman 1992; Engberg-Pedersen et al. 1996; Gibbon and Olukoshi 1996; Mkandawire 1998; Mohan 2000).

The Kenyan government argued that the IMF and World Bank reforms addressed only the long-term implications of the economy while in the short-term they caused increased hardship, especially among the most vulnerable. This is particularly pertinent to Kenyan food security. According to the Kenyan government, between 1963 and 1982, agriculture GDP recorded high growth rates of 4% and above per annum but declined significantly thereafter to reach around 1% in the last two decades. From the government’s perspective the factors that impacted negatively on agricultural growth included:

- mismanagement of farmer support institutions that affected the areas of marketing, credit, seeds and farm inputs;
- dumping of agricultural commodities from the developed countries, such as dairy, maize and sugar in the local market;
- depreciation of the Kenya shilling (a policy integral to SA) resulting in large increases in the cost of imported agricultural inputs;
- reduction in donor support reduced resources available for investment in agriculture;
- decline in budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector.<sup>360</sup>

These factors all relate to reforms imposed as a direct result of SA and included a reduction of government expenditure on subsidies and public services, removal of price controls, easing of export licensing and foreign exchange controls and improved

---

<sup>360</sup> See MDGs in Kenya: Needs and Costs. Government of Kenya (2005) available at [planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/.../Kenya/...](http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/.../Kenya/...) Accessed 07/08/11

incentives for exports. These all had serious implications for the security of food provision as did the requirement that grain-marketing boards (GMBs) must not run at a loss.<sup>361</sup> As a result Kenyan grain reserves were wound down leading to increased vulnerability in times of poor harvests.

The real impact of this loss of government control of food stores can be illustrated by two episodes of food shortfall in Kenya before and after structural adjustment. In 1984-85 Kenya suffered a serious national food deficit that was a greater per capita grain shortfall than that experienced at the same time in Ethiopia. Kenya, however did not suffer a devastating famine. The Government's success in averting widespread famine has been attributed to President Daniel Arap Moi's political astuteness (Ng'weno 2006), but can also be attributed to the governments pre-structural adjustment position in the food industry.<sup>362</sup> During the drought Moi's government supplied food to the central highlands and cities (the politically powerful) but also the state owned Kenya Meat Commission bought up cattle, even in poor condition, to support pastoralists (the politically marginalised) which prevented mass starvation.<sup>363</sup>

The drought following failed rains in October-November 2005, however, caused a great deal more suffering. The 2005–2006 drought in Kenya occurred after five consecutive failed or poor seasons, when the coping strategies of vulnerable populations were already stretched to their limit. The impact was both widespread and severe. Nearly 3.5 million rural pastoral and farming people in 26 districts were affected. Rates of acute malnutrition rose steeply in the north east of the country, to between 18% and 30%, significantly higher than the World Health Organisation threshold (15%) indicating a critical situation. Thousands of head of livestock died, with 30–40% livestock losses (Grünewald et al 2006). The structural adjustment policy of reduced emergency food storage, and liberalised grain markets meant that some pastoralists lost as much as 80% of their herds (Ng'weno 2006). Unable to grow crops or feed or sell their cattle these communities were faced with famine. The irony is that in the Western highlands there had been bumper grain harvests whilst in northern and eastern Kenya, famine loomed. The government had neither emergency

---

<sup>361</sup> This is in direct contrast to the situation in the US, Europe and Japan where they are all heavily subsidised thus demonstrating double standards in trading to the advantage of the richer nations.

<sup>362</sup> See de Waal 2006: 38 for a broader assessment of the Kenyan governments response during this period.

<sup>363</sup> The meat commission was able to support the production of corned beef through these purchases.

food reserves, nor a mechanism to ensure that grain needed at home could be purchased and distributed where needed. The free market doctrine that grain can be sold to those who can pay the highest price meant that Kenyan grain was indeed sold on the international market. In addition, the Kenya Meat Commission was abolished during the structural adjustment programmes, removing another crucial safety net for the pastoralists in times of drought.<sup>364</sup>

It is widely recognised that the WTO institutionalised the private form of food security through the 1995 agreement on agriculture (AOA). In essence, this means that states no longer have the right to food self-sufficiency as a national strategy. Rather, the minimum market access rule guarantees the right to export, even under conditions of subsidised exports. In Kenya, local products were subjected to serious competition from imported, often subsidised commodities. This inequity was highlighted in 2000 when Oxfam posed the question “How can a farmer earning US\$230 a year (average per capita income in least developed countries) compete with a farmer who enjoys a subsidy of US\$20,000 a year (average subsidy in OECD countries)?” (Cited in McMichael 2008:171). As a result of inequitable trading conditions it seems indisputable that the Kenyan poor have become increasingly exposed to serious risks such as hunger and unemployment. Thus a result of SA is that ‘food security’, has become not self-reliance but rather food import dependency for a large number of developing countries including Kenya.

One of the most important economic objectives of SA in Kenya was to reduce the budget deficit. The servicing of the domestic debt created an unsustainable burden on the budget during the 1991-1996 development plan period. Interest payments on domestic and foreign debt took up 23% of the budget in 1995/1996 and by April 1998 interest payments on domestic debt, alone, absorbed 15% of total government expenditure (Central Bureau of Statistics 1999).<sup>365</sup> These high levels of debt, coupled with high interest rates had a negative effect on the economy as debt payments claimed a disproportionate share of government expenditure. This both increased the government deficit and shifted expenditure away from development projects to repayment of loans (Rono 2002:87). In general terms the SA programme in Kenya

---

<sup>364</sup> It was reinstated in 2005 as a result of the severe drought. See <http://www.communication.go.ke> Accessed 31/08/11.

<sup>365</sup> At [www.knbs.or.ke](http://www.knbs.or.ke) Accessed 31/08/11.

reduced relative government expenditures on basic needs and social services and specifically on education and health services.<sup>366</sup> Research by Rono (2002) provides evidence to show that SA increased the gap between the rich and the poor as well as the income gap between the rural and urban populations in Kenya, thus increasing poverty levels in absolute and relative terms. Increasing poverty, has been linked to increasing crime rates and prisoner populations and is associated with the upsurge of the ‘culture of violence’ now considered a feature of Kenyan urban society.<sup>367</sup> Negative impacts have been observed in declining employment opportunities in general and an ongoing decline in the growth of the agricultural sector since the implementation of structural adjustment programmes. Kenya has, since independence, relied on the agricultural sector as the basis for economic growth, employment creation and foreign exchange generation. The fact that this sector is a major source of food security in Kenya means it has become a primary concern for the Kenyan government. Responses from subsequent governments, however, have been deeply uneven and as we will see in the following chapter recent developments in policies and investment in Kenyan agriculture are giving cause for even greater concern.

### *Regional disparities*

It is understood that structural adjustment programmes have had both direct and indirect effects on the political structures of adjusting countries. This is because they have an effect on the political attitudes and behaviour of those who gain or lose as a result of the adjustments. In the early years of adjustment the main losers in Kenya were the urban poor such as those working in the informal sector. This constituency blamed the government, and by inference the ruling Kenyan African National Union party (KANU), for their economic hardship. The result was a movement in support for more radical parties especially the militant ones such as the Islamic party of Kenya (IPK) and the National Democratic Party (NDP) (Manundu 1997). It has been argued that the immediate post-independence emphasis on ‘development’ became a pretext for disallowing political pluralism in Kenya.<sup>368</sup> To address this democratic deficit the

---

<sup>366</sup> See Manundu 1997 for a class-based analysis of SA in Kenya and the negative impacts on the poorest communities.

<sup>367</sup> Although a public choice analysis of the ‘profits of violence’ offers a different perspective from this one, see Chabal & Daloz 1999:Ch 6.

<sup>368</sup> For example, a rival party to KANU formed by Odinga (Kenya’s first vice-president), was banned in  
*Footnote continued on the next page*

SA programmes in Kenya included the move towards political pluralism, greater democracy, accountability and human rights. The political reality however, has been heightened ethnic tensions, polarised communities and increased violent political and ethnic clashes. The violence after the contested 2007 Kenyan elections illustrates these tensions only too well. More than 1,200 people were killed and 600,000 fled their homes in weeks of unrest after the 2007 election.<sup>369</sup> The violence began as clashes between supporters of the two rival presidential candidates, Raila Odinga and Mwai Kibaki but it snowballed into a bloody round of score settling and communal violence. The unintended consequence of political pluralism in Kenya is that the principal beneficiaries of the imposed political liberalisation (i.e. multi-party elections) were well-connected urban interest groups. In addition the evidence that consecutive Kenyan presidents favoured their own region and ethnic grouping whilst implementing structural adjustment programmes is widespread (Wrong 2009). Not only did structural adjustment fail to undermine the clientelist nature of power in countries such as Kenya, more critically, it has been said that structural adjustment 'has saved the patrimonial African state from complete economic ruin' (Chabal & Daloz 1999:120). Indeed much continues to be written about a new breed of independent African rulers who are more in the business of political opportunism and maintaining their power bases than accountability and responsiveness to the needs of their constituents (Hanson 2009; Kaplan 2003).<sup>370</sup> Elaborating on the World Bank's perspective on the crisis of governance in Africa and the ways in which it has stifled development generally (World Bank report 1989), its then President, Barber Conable noted that

'Open political participation has been restricted and even condemned, and those brave enough to speak their minds have too frequently taken grave personal risks. I fear that many of Africa's leaders have been more concerned about retaining power than about the long-term interests of their people' (Conable 1991:3).

---

1969. See Afigbo et al 1989: 362.

<sup>369</sup> According to The Kenya Food Security Group, it is estimated that 20% of land was taken out of production in key production areas of the Rift Valley due to the ramifications of political unrest in December 2007. See <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp182903.pdf>.

<sup>370</sup> It could be argued that this is in fact a universal political truth and in no way exclusive to Africa.

Indeed it has been argued, with compelling evidence, that the political effects of SA disparities in regions in Kenya reflect earlier patterns of inequality that were established during the colonial period (Ng'weno 2006). A report by the Ndung' Commission to investigate patterns of illegal and irregular allocation of public land revealed that 'most illegal allocations of public land took place before or soon after the multiparty general elections of 1992, 1997 and 2002'<sup>371</sup> The so-called democracy wave did not build new inclusive political contracts but conversely there is evidence that it may have even intensified the urban bias of African politics (Rono 2002; Manunda 1997; de Waal 2006).<sup>372</sup> The semi-nomads, or Turkana, of northern and north-eastern Kenya, have suffered famine for decades. Though various governments have blamed this on drought and the backward culture of these ethnic groups a political explanation of the regional disparities appears far more convincing.

The continued repression and restriction of movement enforced on nomads has had devastating consequences for their pastoral way of life and by 1980 nomadic herders were covering only a tiny fraction of the areas covered by their fathers and grandfathers (Sobiana 1988: 221). The result of government policy has been the creation of an entire group of welfare recipients and so Kenya, in many ways, offers a classic example of a continuation of colonial and post-colonial structural inequalities. The contemporary hunger and hardship of mainly Kenyan pastoralists has, if anything intensified since the end of colonialism. It has been argued that the ethnic Somali pastoralists of Northern Kenya provide a textbook case of 'a human rights violations account of vulnerability to famine' (de Waal 2006: 40). Successive governments have diverted most development resources to urban centres and agricultural projects, neither of which benefits pastoralists.<sup>373</sup> KANU made certain compromises at independence, including safeguarding white settlers commercial and property interests and so the exploitation of the African majority continued. It is well documented that Kenya pursued a pro-Western capitalist path of development which explicitly sought, and received, Western investment. The new African Kenyan governing class joined

---

<sup>371</sup> Roger Southall, Ndungu Report Summary, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 32, No. 103, (March 2005), p. 148.

<sup>372</sup> This is evident in countries such as Kenya, Zimbabwe and the former Zaire for example.

<sup>373</sup> There is however a growing movement to put pressure on the government and international agencies to support sustainable development and promote environmental justice for these communities. Pastoralists can maintain efficient and productive food systems if fishing and subsistence agriculture rights are protected. See [www.FoLT.org](http://www.FoLT.org).

the landowning (ex-patriot) class, thus perpetuating the same structural causes of rural poverty and landlessness. The rural poor are easier to suppress, thus it seems, to date, that perpetual oligarchy is more likely to persist in Kenya, until a viable and coordinated grassroots political movement gains ground. This is the political space that the Food Sovereignty movement seeks to occupy and the pastoral way of life would be promoted and protected over and above any industrial food system.

The distance between the ruler and the ruled, the idea of ‘them and us’ appears to be a crucial and ongoing feature of contemporary famine.<sup>374</sup> As the example of Kenya makes clear, to really understand vulnerability to famine in Africa and develop robust systems of prevention, one must focus on the political accountability of those in power, not just on elections, party systems and voting rights which have been the focus of adjustment programmes.<sup>375</sup> This has of course been recognised by the Food Sovereignty movement and articulated in its principle 7, which demands democratic control.<sup>376</sup>

#### *Government attempts to reverse the impact of SA*

In recent years the Kenyan government have formulated two strategy papers relevant to food insecurity, the Economic recovery strategy (ERS) and the Strategy for Revitalization of Agriculture (SRA) 2004-2014. The ERS presents a broad development framework for reviving the economy, creating jobs and reducing poverty. Most importantly the ERS recognises agriculture as the critical sector that must be revitalised if the economic recovery objective is to be achieved. The SRA is expected to contribute significantly towards attainment of the following ERS targets: (a) reducing the proportion of the population below the poverty line from 56% in 2000 to 28% by 2010, 10% by 2015 and 0% by 2020; and (b) reducing the proportion of food poor from 48.4% in 2000 to 23.5% in 2010, to 10% in 2015, and be eliminated altogether by 2020. By setting these targets the Kenyan government actually intends to reduce hunger faster than envisaged in the Hunger MDG.

The main national development objectives of the agricultural sector include ensuring

---

<sup>374</sup> Although the neo-patrimonial model would differentiate between groups that enjoy a patron-client relationship and groups that do not.

<sup>375</sup> Nigeria offers a classic example of how the government have benefited from huge oil revenues, whilst neglecting the abject poverty of the politically powerless living in the Niger Delta region. See Hanson 2009.

<sup>376</sup> See Appendix 3.



food security (access to adequate and balanced food), increasing rural incomes, creating employment (on-farm and off-farm), support to agro-industries (supply of raw materials to local industries), promoting exports (increasing production, diversification and value-adding), and conservation (natural resource management). The main service delivery systems to the agricultural sector include technology generation (research), technology transfer (extension), facilitating access to credit, facilitating access to inputs and development of markets. The food security objective aims at ensuring that as far as possible farm households produce sufficient quantities of food to meet family nutritional requirements and also produce excess foodstuffs to feed non-producers. Increasing rural incomes through production of cash crops, livestock products, raw materials for local agro industries and export commodities generates cash to raise the quality of life in rural areas (MDGs in Kenya 2005:52).

Though these government initiatives are, on the face of it, both timely and well intentioned, the essential problem lies in the fact that they are still based on market solutions. This is problematic because it is the widespread recognition of the failure of market solutions to issues of hunger and famine vulnerability that has generated calls for an alternative framework in the first place. The question of how current Kenyan government policy on food and agriculture can be refocused and reconciled with the concept of Food Sovereignty is explored in more depth in the following chapter 7.

### **3. The role of government in Ethiopia.**

The fact that Ethiopia was not colonised has meant that it has had a different political experience and goes some way towards explaining why the neo-patrimonial model cannot be applied to Ethiopian polities in the way it can be said to apply to Kenya. However, the role of the government with regard to Ethiopian food insecurity is just as salient. Essentially, the role of the Ethiopian government during and after SA differs from Kenya in two important ways. First, conflict has been a major factor in recent Ethiopian famines and food has been used as a weapon of war. Secondly, because its political system has been based more on a Marxist rather than a liberal economic model the government has made greater attempts to ensure food security through the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP).<sup>377</sup> This programme provides cash in return for labour on community projects, or food for those unable to work over a

---

<sup>377</sup> See Chapter 1 for the key differences in the political contexts of Kenya and Ethiopia.

five year period. International donors substantially fund both emergency food aid and the PSNP in Ethiopia. Indeed the fact that Ethiopia, despite suffering more adverse drought conditions, has fared better than Somalia in the current crisis in the horn of Africa (2011), is largely attributed to the success of these government programmes. It is also acknowledged that Ethiopia is less conflict ridden than in the past whereas Somalia continues to be beset by complex obstacles to stability and security.<sup>378</sup> The role of conflict in famine vulnerability continues to be an important one and has been recognised by advocates of Food Sovereignty as an ongoing obstacle. It has thus been incorporated as the sixth principle of Food Sovereignty, which demands social peace.<sup>379</sup> This principle enshrines and emphasises the right to be free from violence and the outlawing of the use of food as a weapon of war. The Statute of Rome, which provides the framework for the International Criminal Court (ICC), is quite explicit with regard to mass starvation on three dimensions. It is a war crime, if used as a weapon of war; a crime against humanity, if it is the deliberate extermination of a civilian population; and genocide if the whole, or part of a national, ethnic, religious or racial group is singled out for starvation.

### *Conflict.*

It is impossible to discuss recent conflicts in Ethiopia without acknowledging the presence of certain political factors both internal and external. The competing ideologies of the cold war coupled with an abundance of natural resources spawned a diverse range of conflicts across the whole continent of Africa, in some cases leading governments to mount violent counter insurgency campaigns among their own populations. The United States, for example, twice helped President Mobutu crush separatist movements in the Congo's mineral rich Katanga province, while the Soviet Union helped Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia defeat similar efforts in Eritrea and the Ogaden region (Klare 2002). Counter-insurgency wars, by their very nature, seek not only to inflict a military defeat but also to disempower the opposition, deny them an identity and undermine their ability to maintain political and economic integrity. However, the common assertion that war creates famine does not always illuminate the complex relationship between, the sometimes discrete but more often overlapping,

---

<sup>378</sup> Jamal Osman. 'Famine in Somalia.' Guardian Focus podcast. guardian.co.uk, 18 August 2011

<sup>379</sup> See principle 6 in Appendix 3.

political, economic and military purposes.

Undermining the ability of communities to produce or obtain food, which renders them destitute, dependent on aid, and thus politically compliant, is illustrative of the political function. For example, the seizure of Dinka resources such as land, livestock and access to oil by government-supported militias in Sudan reduced the Dinka to destitution and removed them as a political threat (Keen 1994b). Conversely, providing food, especially in times of scarcity and disruption, places the benefactors in a powerful position to win the hearts and minds of a particular section of the population and thus secure their support. The federal Ethiopian government has been accused of ignoring the desperate food situation in the Somali region, 1999-2000, whilst responding effectively to the Prime Minister's home region of Tigray (Devereux 2009a). In this sense, food is very much a political motivator in the present context, just as it has always been in the past.

Many categories have been used in the analysis of food as a weapon of war, but those of omission, commission and provision (Macrae and Zwi 1994) work particularly well in a political context. This first category covers instances where governments fail to adequately monitor and plan for food security in some, or all, sections of a country. For example the failure to prevent the serious food crisis in 2008, despite the existence of the PSNP led to serious criticisms of the Ethiopian government response (Lefort 2009). Omission includes failure to manage food reserves<sup>380</sup> and organise and implement appropriate emergency measures. The UN resolution 43/131, passed in 1988, urged governments to enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance to victims of disasters and take advantage of the international community's ability to provide aid and assistance.<sup>381</sup> However the UN's ability to intervene remained seriously compromised by the continued supremacy of national sovereignty and the requirement of government permission to mobilise aid. Government unwillingness to protect the interests of the people, or worse, to actively oppress or discriminate against them, creates significant problems in making relief available. Among the well-documented examples is the refusal of Ethiopian president Mengistu to allow aid into rebel held

---

<sup>380</sup> As made clear in Chapter 4, structural adjustment programmes have reduced the food reserves available in many food insecure African countries.

<sup>381</sup> [www.un.org/documents/ga/res/45/a45r100.htm](http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/45/a45r100.htm).

areas of Tigray and Eritrea during the 1984 famine (Clay & Holcombe 1985).<sup>382</sup>

This example raises a whole set of questions about what ‘sovereignty’ actually means and whether or not it is particularly problematic in an African context.<sup>383</sup> Furthermore the fact that ‘sovereignty’ in the context of Food Sovereignty does not primarily refer to nation-state sovereignty is an important development in terms of food insecurities and one with great potential.<sup>384</sup>

As stated, Ethiopia has been beset by conflict for decades and the Tigray region in Northern Ethiopia has been caught up in what may be described as a complex emergency of the worst kind since the mid 1970s.<sup>385</sup> Multiple factors have brought disaster to this area but, in particular, a drought in a region heavily dependent on rain-fed crops, and an internal conflict between the central Ethiopian government of Mengistu and the then rebel movement, The Tigray Peoples’ Liberation Front (TPLF).<sup>386</sup> The much-publicised famine of 1984/85, in Tigray, was the combined effect of these two factors at their peak. The conflict destroyed or reduced the people’s options for physical survival in the way that it denied them access to all their usual coping strategies (Homer-Dixon 1999).<sup>387</sup> After 1985, localised famines continued until the end of the war when coalition forces led by the TPLF took the capital of Addis Ababa in May 1991. In this context the importance attached to national sovereignty, in terms of a food crisis, is obvious. Governments are able to withhold from their citizens the right to assistance from the U.N and other humanitarian agencies, because without government consent, these agencies are technically unable to operate within national borders.

From a political perspective, the second category of commission raises different, and perhaps more compelling, issues because unlike the category of omission, there is a clear demonstration of intent. Intentional acts in the creation of famine include ‘attacks on the means of producing and procuring food, the hindrance of coping

---

<sup>382</sup> For more on President Nimerias’ inaction in Darfur, Sudan 1983-89 see de Waal 2006: 91-93.

<sup>383</sup> See Jackson & Rosberg (1986) on their empirical versus juridical models of sovereignty and Williams (2000) on quasi-states, sovereignty and Africa.

<sup>384</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>385</sup> See de Waal (1990) for a history of food shortages in Tigray and an in depth study of the 1981-85 famine.

<sup>386</sup> The TPLF was formed in 1975 as a movement aimed at ending the military dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Miriam who had governed Ethiopia since the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974. By late 1984 TPLF forces controlled up to three quarters of rural Tigray. See Hendrie, 1994: Ch 7.

<sup>387</sup> See next section on Acts of Commission.

strategies, including attacks on relief convoys, safe corridors and markets,' (Macrae & Zwi 1994: 13-14).

It is clear that attacks on food consumption and production are often central to the process of famine creation and act as an accelerant for the descent into starvation and hunger related deaths of civilian populations. Attacks on food produce include scorched earth tactics, by both ground troops and aerial bombing, and attacks on grain stores. Grain stores are a central feature of traditional food security structures particularly in a pre-structural adjustment setting; their destruction therefore has obvious, devastating consequences.

During periods of production failure, communities who usually survive through subsistence agriculture become increasingly dependent on markets to sell their assets in exchange for grain. Markets also provide employment and act as centres of information, often vital to decision making processes that dictate survival. Because of the devastating social and economic consequences for rural communities, military forces have often directly attacked markets. 'Operation Red Star', conducted by the Ethiopian government, in 1982, to isolate Eritrea from food supplies is one well-known example of such tactics (Hendrie 1991).

Sieges of towns and cities represent one of the most dramatic restrictions on a population's ability to produce and consume sufficient food. The siege of the Eritrean capital of Asmara, which lasted for almost a year, is one such infamous example (Africa Watch 1990b). Furthermore, food aid itself is often targeted, with both government and rebel forces arguing that attacks on relief convoys are justified because they often serve as a cover to supply weapons and other provisions to opposition forces. This problem becomes acute when relief, as it often does, moves as part of a military convoy. More disturbingly, feeding centres themselves can be directly targeted, as occurred during the Ethiopian/Eritrean conflict and is occurring in Somalia in a present context.<sup>388</sup>

Forced population movements represent one of the most severe nutritional and health risks to which war affected Ethiopian communities were subjected. Both government and rebel forces forcibly displaced large civilian populations in Ethiopia during the conflict (Macrae & Zwi 1994: 18-19). The reasons are often, ostensibly, for 'a

---

<sup>388</sup> Jamal Osman 'Famine in Somalia.' Guardian Focus podcast. guardian.co.uk, 18 August 2011.

community's own protection' but in reality they are more to do with de-populating areas of rebel activity, to provide slave labour and to remove potential sources of support from the opposition. Displaced communities are amongst the most vulnerable in conflict related famines and are often forced to move by both hunger and violence. Indeed the use of these tactics illustrates one of the key weaknesses of Sen's analysis and economic famine theories in general. Sen's analysis does not take sufficient account of the use of force, where politically powerful groups resort to various kinds of force to transfer wealth from victims to themselves, whether that is land, cattle or access to natural resources. From this perspective it is powerlessness, not poverty, which leads to famine. On the contrary, the Food Sovereignty model recognises, quite explicitly, the role of conflict in exacerbating food insecurity.

The third classification in this analysis is a form of commission but relates specifically to the differential supply of food during conflicts. Food may be selectively supplied to current or potential government supporters or used to lure sections of the population to areas controlled by the military. The abuse of food aid, for political purposes, is not well documented, but there is increasing recognition that food aid may well have prolonged conflicts in the recent past, a point addressed in Chapter 5.<sup>389</sup> Reports from refugees in Sudan claimed that the Ethiopian government used the promise of food aid to encourage peasants from rebel held areas to cross military lines and enter towns under government control (Clay and Holcombe 1985). Once inside the towns, however, people were rounded up for resettlement on state farms in the south of the country. Although the resettlement programmes were presented to the international community as a means of responding to the famine in the North, many Tigrayans viewed it as political and a military operation aimed specifically at depopulating the countryside in order to weaken the support for the TPLF (REST 1985). The current food crisis in Somalia, which is inextricably linked to internal conflict, demonstrates only too well the ongoing obstacles to overcoming differential food supplies.<sup>390</sup>

It is important to note that the acts of the central Ethiopian Government were also influencing the strategic use of international relief. For example, it refused to guarantee safe passage of relief supplies to Tigray despite appeals from the UN and

---

<sup>389</sup> For examples of abuse of aid in Somalia see [http://www.WorldHunger.org:armed conflict and hunger](http://www.WorldHunger.org:armed%20conflict%20and%20hunger), Accessed 21/09/2011.

<sup>390</sup> Jamal Osman. 'Famine in Somalia.' Guardian Focus podcast. [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk), 18 August 2011.

the ICRC. Such an agreement would have allowed relief transports to travel from towns across military lines to the worst affected rural areas. From the Government's perspective, however, this would have given de facto recognition of the TPLF's control of large parts of the countryside, and also have been an admission that Government provisions for the starving in the north were failing (Jansson et al 1987). Instead, people from TPLF areas were expected to enter the government towns to receive dry ration distributions. As mentioned, however, fear and harassment from government soldiers effectively discouraged this option, allowing the government to deny food aid to rebel areas by restricting the geographic scope of the relief programme.

The case of Tigray is a classic example of a government's ability to control not only the flow of aid resources but also the flow of information, by exploiting diplomatic prerogatives, inherent in the concept of state sovereignty. The notion of sovereignty and the corollary of non-interference in a state's internal affairs were invoked many times by major donors as a reason for not challenging the government more strongly on the relationship between food aid and warfare in the region.<sup>391</sup>

More specifically, the government refused to acknowledge that a war was being waged in the north, thus donors were encouraged to view the situation as an internal security problem as opposed to an openly declared conflict (Kaplan 2003). Again parallels can be drawn here with the current famine in parts of Somalia and the ongoing conflict in Darfur.<sup>392</sup>

It is well established that it is the politically powerless groups, especially during conflict, which are the most vulnerable to hunger but the role of conflict in modern famines is now understood as more complex than in the past (Keen 1994a). There are beneficiaries as well as victims and it has been the case that the wealthy may well be targeted (Duffield 2001). It is fair to say that in recent years there has been an increased flexibility in relief operations involved in areas of conflict, but there is a clear need for more emphasis on conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. The failures in the Tigray area, during 1984/85 had much to

---

<sup>391</sup> Obvious parallels can be drawn with the current situation in Darfur, Sudan, though lack of intervention may have more to do with UK/US military overstretch in Afghanistan and Iraq than recognition of Sudanese sovereignty.

<sup>392</sup> Jamal Osman. 'Famine in Somalia.' Guardian Focus podcast. guardian.co.uk, 18 August 2011

do with the almost total dependence on the Ethiopian government for information and distribution and its ability to manipulate events. In other words there was a complete lack of accountability nationally and internationally. The political unwillingness (or inability) of the UN to establish lines of communication with both sides, i.e. including the TPLF, created a life threatening distortion in both the perception and planning of relief operations.

The principal of respect for state sovereignty was extended beyond reasonable boundaries by stopping information about conditions in rebel held areas as well as an effective ban on relief managers and political authorities from any contact in these zones. This resulted in the exclusion of up to 3 million people from access to the world's food aid until it was too late (Hendrie 1994: 137). The Ethiopian experience of famine offers very clear lessons for policy makers both within and beyond the current Ethiopian government. For example the placing of rights at the forefront of defining the outer limits of a country's sovereignty would prevent this situation occurring in the future (Rawls 1999). Indeed an emphasis on rights is the cornerstone of Food Sovereignty and as such this framework would go a long way towards reducing vulnerability to famine during times of conflict as well as peace.<sup>393</sup> This is an extremely important point in developing and strengthening the arguments for Food Sovereignty as a responsive policy framework for global agricultural change.

### **Concluding comments**

It is a common belief that one of the most important reasons for the continued failure of famine prevention and relief systems in countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia is national government failure and abuse of power. This chapter has developed the argument that famines can result from the conscious exercise of power in pursuit of gain or advantage. Whilst this is undoubtedly part of the problem it is also the case that international influences have been a significant contributory factor and continue to be so. This position has been defended in previous chapters in terms of the negative impact of neo-liberal SA policy on government accountability, and how the internationalisation of welfare, the so-called 'international safety-net' has further reduced national governments' responsibility and accountability to their people. This chapter has emphasised the important role that democratic systems and public

---

<sup>393</sup> See Chapter 7 on the potential and challenges to Food Sovereignty.



accountability can play in preventing famines, in both a national and an international context. A strict interpretation of the 'democracy prevents famine thesis' (Sen 2001) is that famine would never be able to occur in a democratic society with a free press. A weak interpretation, on the other hand, merely hypothesises that democracy and a free press reduce the likelihood of famine, because they increase government responsiveness, but it does not rule it out altogether. Thus weak or undemocratic African states must bear some responsibility for famine.<sup>394</sup>

In the absence of a variety of political safeguards that are crucial to a fully functioning democracy, the dominant paradigm of economic development, pursued through free markets and adjustment programmes, will not provide lasting protection against famine. Political powerlessness is a critical factor in the occurrence of famine because it is largely a result of lack of protection and lack of political representation.

In famine analysis there is often a weak call for 'political will' to bridge the gap between knowledge of technical measures and action to implement them' (de Waal 2006: 1). It is suggested here that Food Sovereignty can be thought of as a bridge between these two areas. Part of the essence of the Food Sovereignty framework is to regain policy space for national policymaking. However, it is important to understand that the potential for, and obstacles to, Food Sovereignty reside both in the relationships between the people and their governments and between national governments and international political and economic institutions. Thus it is highly relevant that Food Sovereignty does not primarily refer to nation-state sovereignty but rather a new and modern definition of sovereignty. In this context sovereignty is used to demand the right to control policies, the distribution of resources, and national and international decision-making for those who are directly affected by these policies. The term has therefore more of a connotation of local democracy, participatory development, and subsidiarity than of national policy formulation and government bureaucracies. These themes are brought together, specifically with regard to the issue of land, in the following chapter.

---

<sup>394</sup> The famine in Malawi 2001-2002 proves this point. Although democratic, Malawi was considered a weak and thus vulnerable democratic system. See Devereux & Tiba (2007).

## **CHAPTER 7 – FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN KENYA AND ETHIOPIA: THE ISSUE OF LAND**

The purpose of this chapter is to bring together the potential of Food Sovereignty in Ethiopia and Kenya with some distinctive issues associated with land. This chapter is organised thematically around the three problematic issues of land tenure, land grabs and land use. These three areas constitute both possibilities and obstacles for achieving Principle 2 of Food Sovereignty, which demands radical agrarian reform.<sup>395</sup> For Food Sovereignty to become more than a normative concept, agriculture needs to be utilised as an instrument for strengthening food security and, it is argued, this can only happen through comprehensive agrarian reforms. One way of doing this is by increasing food production for local consumption through land distribution and tenure. This both challenges the global food system, as it is currently constituted, and makes greater demands on the involvement of national governments in their own food systems.<sup>396</sup> Although Kenya and Ethiopia are facing similar challenges with regards to food security at present, their policies with regard to land and agricultural policy, particularly in the recent past, are quite different. Furthermore, their approach to land reform in a current context is also assuming different directions.<sup>397</sup> This chapter seeks to establish whether or not these changes can be compatible with a Food Sovereignty framework.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Part 1 looks at the issue of land tenure in Ethiopia and Kenya in a comparative context.<sup>398</sup> The issue of land in these two countries is linked to their relative histories, their place in the global food system and their problems of internal governance. It will be shown in this section that the land issue can be conceived of as straddling the international-domestic divide. Part 2 analyses the recent and growing phenomenon of so-called land grabbing in Kenya and

---

<sup>395</sup> See below.

<sup>396</sup> See Chapter 6.

<sup>397</sup> Efforts by states to redistribute land since World War II, at least those in market economies, have utilised five basic models: land to the tiller reforms, ceilings reforms, restitution reforms, privatisation reforms, and, most recently, 'community-based' (or 'market-mechanism') reform. Each model tends to be linked to particular historical and regional circumstances giving rise to the perceived inequitable or inefficient distribution of land that the reform seeks to address. See Bruce (2008:20) for a useful discussion on the five basic models.

<sup>398</sup> Land tenure is the name given, particularly in common law systems, to the legal regime in which land is owned by an individual, who is said to "hold" the land, from the French 'tenir'.

Ethiopia, again in a comparative context. The controversy around the phenomenon of land grabs is of growing importance for those concerned with land rights and these developments will be analysed in terms of how they equate with a Food Sovereignty framework. While international land deals are emerging as a global phenomenon, in keeping with previous chapters, the focus here is specifically on Kenya and Ethiopia. For the purpose of this discussion, 'land grabbing' is defined as taking possession of and/or controlling an area of land for commercial/industrial agricultural production. This definition does not focus on what may well be abusive practices in the process of acquiring the land but rather on the distributional aspects of the phenomenon and its impact on the political economy and the local and national populations' right to resources associated with food. This definition of land grabbing includes both national and foreign investors. Part 3 addresses the tension between the use of productive land for growing biofuels or agrofuels rather than food.<sup>399</sup> There is no doubt that the biofuel boom is a contributing factor to the problem of food insecurity outlined in Chapter 1. Although not yet a dominant causal factor akin to the liberal economic adjustment programmes or the dependency on food aid discussed in previous chapters, it seems certain that the demand for agrofuel can only exacerbate the problem of food insecurity.<sup>400</sup> This chapter further advances the argument that a Food Sovereignty paradigm would provide a viable solution to many of issues raised in this thesis.

### **1. Land tenure**

The second principle of Food Sovereignty demands agrarian reform articulated as follows. 'A genuine agrarian reform is necessary which gives landless and farming people – especially women – ownership and control of the land they work and returns territories to indigenous peoples. The right to land must be free of discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, race, social class or ideology; the land belongs to those who work it.'<sup>401</sup> As we will see in the following examples this vision does not represent the current position in East Africa and, furthermore, the breadth of scope

---

<sup>399</sup> These terms are used interchangeably in this discussion and are mainly derived from biomass or bio waste. Agricultural products that are specially grown for the production of biofuels include switchgrass, soybeans and corn in the United States, sugar cane in Brazil and sugar beet and wheat in Europe. China produces cassava and sorghum, Southeast Asia produces miscanthus and palm oil while India produces jatropha. In Africa, actual and potential biofuel crops include sugarcane, maize, sweet sorghum, cassava, palm oil and jatropha.

<sup>400</sup> See, for example, Rosset (2009).

<sup>401</sup> See Appendix 3.

will, inevitably, raise questions concerning its feasibility.

This level of agrarian reform, which is so central to Food Sovereignty, is dependent, first and foremost, on the reform of land tenure to reflect a more democratic model of ownership and control. These two factors have a clear impact on an individual or group capacity to produce food. The capacity to produce food depends on the resource base available to agriculture and this includes not only land, but also other aspects of production such as labour and machinery. In addition it includes farmers' knowledge, the production potential of crop varieties, climatic factors such as water and sunlight and the methods used to increase yields, control weeds, insects and disease. The size of the resource base can obviously be increased or decreased: the former by investment and the latter by neglect or sale. It is a critical point and must be emphasised that nearly all the factors of the resource base can be altered. Just like the global food system, in general, land use is a human political construct and thus on the face of it, could be amenable to intervention and reform. It is now widely understood that primary sectors of national economies, such as agriculture, are essential for countries' and peoples' self-determination, food security and Food Sovereignty (Zeigler 2008).

The first rather obvious precondition to growing food is access to land. Most Third World inhabitants live in the countryside, for example 80% in Asia and as high as 95% in some parts of Africa (Fletcher 2006). To reiterate some of the issues discussed in Chapter 1, every poor country has, without exception, a greater proportion of its population whose only means of livelihood is agriculture rather than any other sector. Though all poor countries have incidences of appalling urban poverty in and around their large cities, and this is universally expected to rise (Davis 2006), most of what the World Bank calls the 'absolute poor', i.e. living on less than one dollar a day, still lives in rural areas.<sup>402</sup> The 2008 World Development Report states that three out of four of the poorest people in developing countries live in rural areas (WDR 2008). Paradoxically, then, those who live on the land, and are technically in the position of feeding themselves, are the most likely to go hungry. It has been shown, empirically, that this paradox is, to a very large degree, a question of land ownership thus

---

<sup>402</sup> The World Bank estimate that 1.6 billion out of 7 billion people live below this frugal international poverty line and almost 3 billion live on less than \$2 a day. See [www.worldbank.org/research](http://www.worldbank.org/research). The poverty line is explained in World Development Report 2000/2001: 17 & 23.

highlighting the need for comprehensive land reform (Windfuhr & Jonsén 2005). In general terms land ownership in Africa tends to be concentrated in the hands of the few<sup>403</sup> and the growing trend of large land acquisitions by both foreign and national investors is unlikely to change this situation.<sup>404</sup>

### *The Ethiopian example*

For decades, Ethiopia has been known to the outside world as a country of famine, food shortages, endemic hunger, and chronic dependency on foreign aid. Despite receiving billions of dollars in aid, Ethiopians remain among the poorest in the world.<sup>405</sup> It is important therefore to understand how this position can be linked, specifically, to land tenure. The contemporary land situation in Ethiopia can be traced to 1974 and the rise to power of the Derg. This changed the political and economic landscape of the country from a 'feudal' system towards a 'socialist' system. In 1975, major land reform took place which abolished existing systems, replacing them with communal (i.e. state) ownership of land. These changes were enshrined in the 1987 Constitution. Farmers would receive free land in their place of residence with specific use requirements.<sup>406</sup> From 1976-78, there were efforts to confiscate land from those families with more than 10 hectares (ha) to redistribute equally to other farmers through peasant associations. Throughout the 1980s, there was a continued collectivisation of land and agriculture, and one could argue that the situation was not altogether incompatible with a Food Sovereignty model. It may not have been democratic but it prioritised small rural farmers and localised control of food production through peasant organisations. However in 1989, the Derg announced its intent to move towards more market-based approaches to land tenure more in keeping with a neo-liberal economic model.

In 1991, Meles Zenawi's TPLF came to power forming a ruling political coalition

---

<sup>403</sup> John Bruce co-coordinated an in-depth profile of land tenure in Africa country by country that supports this assertion. See LTC Research Paper 130 available from Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison December 1998.

<sup>404</sup> See section 2 on land grabs.

<sup>405</sup> It would be misleading, however, to portray Ethiopians as an homogenous group in terms of poverty rates. There are in fact significant differences between and within the country's regions and communities. See, for example, Devereux (2007).

<sup>406</sup> These reforms can be considered as based on a 'land to the tiller' model of reform. See Bruce (2008:20).

called the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)<sup>407</sup> and continued the system of 'universal access' and state ownership of land. The political (socialist) rationale for this policy was that opening land markets would provide inroads for dispossession of land from poor and vulnerable peasants. The 1995 reenactment of the Constitution thus reaffirmed state ownership of land. According to the Constitution, landholders have the right to transfer land and assets (under specific conditions) and the right to compensation in case of expropriation. Furthermore, under the Constitution there was an increased recognition of pastoralist rights, a fact that has great relevance in a contemporary context and again, lends itself to Principle 2 of the Food Sovereignty model.

The 1996 Constitutional land reforms in Ethiopia contained several important changes, including legalising land leases and rentals. The Federal Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation (Proclamation 89/1997) heralded a move towards decentralisation, enabling regional governments to make laws to administer their lands. On the face of it, this could be construed as a positive step towards the democratisation of localised food systems (Principle 7). For example at the federal level, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD) has the mandate for land issues. At the regional levels, responsibility for land administration varies between regions and, in practice, rural land administration and use is carried out at the *woreda* (district) and *kebele* (village) levels.

However, since early 2008, the Ethiopian federal government has embarked on a process to award millions of hectares of land to foreign and national agricultural investors. Recent research shows that at least 3,619,509 ha of land have been transferred to investors, although the author of the report for the Oakland Institute acknowledges the actual number may be higher (Horne 2011). As stated, regional governments now determine land tenure and certification specifics in Ethiopia, which may be beneficial to rural populations but these vary from region to region so potential benefits are not consistent. There are three main types of systems of arable land rights in practice in Ethiopia today: administrative based, market-based, and

---

<sup>407</sup> The EPRDF is an alliance of four parties: the OPDO, which is based in the Oromia Region; the ANDM based in the Amhara Region; the SEPDP based in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region; and the TPLF based in the Tigray Region.

customary-based non-market arrangements, however these 'rights' need to be understood in terms of continued state-ownership of all land.

1. Administrative-based. Under this system, eligible families have the right to land, subject to a size limit. These rights are usually unrestricted except for conservation and/or improvement requirements. There are increasing rental rights associated with this system and it has become the most common system in use.
2. Market-based. This has largely occurred because the demand for land is outstripping the supply in many areas of the country. Farm sizes are dropping, whereas local populations are growing. Rent markets are based on supply/demand factors. The usual form is shared tenancy, short-term contracts and very limited and specific uses. These rights are not usually transferable, and lands are rarely left fallow (arguably resulting in further land degradation).
3. Customary-based non-market arrangements. This is the dominant system in the lowland areas where much of the current foreign direct investment in land is focused. It is also where the most marginalised group of Somali pastoralists are located. It usually involves some claim to ancestral lands and hereditary rights are still dominant in this type of tenure. There are many variations of this system depending on the ethnicity of the people and the location, which can make it more sensitive to local needs. In addition to arable land rights, there are rights to pooled resources, or 'commons', which are used for grazing, hunting, fishing, spiritual purposes, or other resource uses. Typically these are managed through customary arrangements and this aspect of Ethiopian land tenure could lend itself more easily to a Food Sovereignty framework than the administrative or market based arrangements. Access to these areas is managed through groups with customary claim to the area. The mode of access and sharing of use, as well as the use of these areas by other groups, are often governed by informal, but well understood, rules. In a current context state involvement in these processes is minimal and this fact is absolutely crucial but in contrasting ways.

Despite the strong constitutional basis for pastoralists' rights in Ethiopia, it has been noted that government policies have historically disregarded the communal land tenure traditions that characterise pastoral production (Hagmann 2005a). Numerous reports of pastoralists loss of lands and lack of secure tenure would appear to support this assertion. Examples include the current controversial issues with the dam

construction in the Omo valley, land issues with Afar pastoralists in the Awash valley, and the issue of the Karrayu Oromo pastoralists (See Hagmann & Mulugeta 2008) Thus Principle 2 of Food Sovereignty which would give landless and farming people – especially women – ownership and control of the land they work and return territories to indigenous peoples requires a different, more proactive type of state involvement. By institutionalising the right to land and ensuring that its allocation is free of discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, race, social class or ideology, the state would take on a more positive and constitutionally ordained role. Customary non-market based arrangements are, therefore, a useful and appropriate model for Food Sovereignty but they must be protected. A second requirement for state intervention in land matters in Ethiopia concerns the need for state protection of vulnerable groups from external forces. The potential for exploitation of certain groups involved in the land acquisition process and the positive role that the state could play are discussed in part 2 of this chapter. Despite these very real issues, it can be said that the ‘communal logic’ of Ethiopian politics is a feature that lends itself to a Food Sovereignty model and we will now see how this compares with the Kenyan example.

### *The Kenyan example*

#### *Land tenure*

As one would expect Kenya’s different experience, historically and politically has also left its imprint on its land tenure system. Kenya’s arable land constitutes 9.2% of the country’s territory, of which 1.8% is irrigated.<sup>408</sup> Smallholdings have an important role in Kenyan agricultural production, as they are responsible for about 70% of the general crop production.<sup>409</sup> Despite this key function in food production smallholdings are generally in an unstable position as only 6% of the land in the country is registered under individual titles. Smallholders have both customary and statutory rights in Kenya, but the large number of different legislations and policies issued by the government has restricted further registration, mainly due to a large number of land adjudications, and the fear by smallholders of having their customary rights

---

<sup>408</sup> Rural Poverty Portal, Kenya Statistics, available at:

<http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/statistics/tags/kenya>. Accessed 20/01/2010.

<sup>409</sup> FAO, Land Reform: Land Settlement and Cooperatives, 2001/2002, p. 50. Available at:

<http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/Y2519T/y2519t05.htm> Accessed 22/01/2010.



disregarded. Land has always played an essential role in Kenya, both politically and socio-economically. During British rule,<sup>410</sup> many of the uplands of Kenya, the so-called 'White Highlands' and adjacent rangelands, were dispossessed and given to European settlers. It is estimated that 20% of Kenya's land, most of which were prime agriculture lands, was seized in this process (FIAN 2010). This colonial land policy was legalised by colonial legislation, replacing the customary land tenure systems with the implementation of an individual freehold title registration system, and thereby taking away the local inhabitants' guaranteed claims over their land.<sup>411</sup> Furthermore, colonial laws did not consider the indigenous groups to be 'capable' of holding direct land titles, and therefore held land 'on trust' for them by governmental authorities.<sup>412</sup> Kenya's first president after its independence, Jomo Kenyatta, gave major political posts as well as much of the fertile central highlands to a small group of Kikuyu (the ethnic group to which the President belonged) at the expense of other ethnic groups (Wrong 2009). These land inequalities were further aggravated by Kenyatta's successor, Daniel arap Moi. Like his predecessor, it is generally understood that Moi used public lands as patronage resources and means to maintain control during the 1990s, at the advent of multiparty politics in Kenya.<sup>413</sup> Land was traded for political support and allocated to influential individuals and to groups on whose support the government depended (Chua 2003). This is both a predictable and a rational response in a political system characterised by neo-patrimonialism.<sup>414</sup> The Ndungu Report, a report by the Ndungu Commission to investigate patterns of illegal and irregular allocation of public land, revealed that 'most illegal allocations of public land took place before or soon after the multiparty general elections of 1992, 1997 and 2002'.<sup>415</sup> Kenya has not yet recovered from civil strife after the disputed presidential elections in January 2007. What is commonly referred to as post-election violence cost the lives of around 1,200 Kenyans and displaced around 400,000 (FIAN 2010) and this

---

<sup>410</sup> Kenya became a British protectorate in 1895 and gained its independence in 1963.

<sup>411</sup> Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and Kenya Land Alliance, *Unjust Enrichment: The making of Land-Grabbing Millionaires*, Living Large Series, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>412</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Ballots to Bullets: Organised Political Violence and Kenya's Crisis of Governance*, March 2008, p. 13.

<sup>413</sup> See Chapter 6 on the political impact of structural adjustment, which included the introduction of political pluralism, in Kenya.

<sup>414</sup> See Chapter 6.

<sup>415</sup> Roger Southall, *Ndungu Report Summary*, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 32, No.103, (March 2005), p. 148.

continues to impact on the people and their relationship with the land.

Issues over land in Kenya have been on the political agenda for some time but the New Land Policy (NLP), whilst still in its development stage, was delayed due to the 2007 post-election violence. It was finally adopted by Parliament in December 2009. Up until that point land policy in Kenya was not explicitly articulated in any policy document, nonetheless, the legal framework for land had been clear and consistent for decades. In keeping with a neo-liberal political economy it was accepted, unquestionably, that only private ownership of land could ensure economic growth. Consequently, as a result of the dominant neo-liberal paradigm, customary tenure in Kenya has been neglected and treated as an inferior tenure system. Accordingly, the thrust of laws previous to the NLP had been to individualise all modes of tenure, especially customary tenure. It is clear, however, that serious injustices in terms of land use and distribution occurred (Chua 2003). Some involve illegal and irregular allocations of public and reserve lands depriving local populations of their food and economic resources. It is understood that these resentments lie behind the ongoing ethnic conflict in the Rift Valley.<sup>416</sup>

It is noteworthy that the NLP tends to use the term ‘illegitimate’, rather than ‘illegal’ in dealing with historical injustices. This would indicate that the new land programme seeks to redress shifts of land ownership viewed as unfair or unjust, even though they may be legal (Bruce 2008) In this respect it can be said that Kenya land policy is moving closer towards a system that can, at least in part, be compatible with a Food Sovereignty model. The direction of the NLP also indicates that there are grounds for thinking that present circumstances favour the legal bureaucratisation of the political order in Kenya in a way that the theory of neo-patrimonial precludes.<sup>417</sup>

For example, the current Constitution in Kenya establishes three types of land: government land, private land, and trust land while the NLP distinguishes between public land, community land and private land. The category of government land that was previously ‘owned’ by the State, and for which the President was legally empowered to allocate, will be replaced by public land, and will come under the National Land Commission, which is to be accountable to Parliament. As such, the

---

<sup>416</sup> See ‘Ethnic Violence in Rift Valley Is Tearing Kenya Apart’ at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/27/> Accessed 15/11/11.

<sup>417</sup> See Chapter 6.

President will no longer have a privilege of giving away land freely. This certainly weakens the theory that political elites in African countries such as Kenya will always exploit government resources, such as land, for patrimonial purposes. They may, in other words, give way to ‘institutionalised legitimacy’, which shifts the supremacy of the individual to the supremacy of institutions, that is, parliament (Chabal & Daloz, 1999). This is a positive step towards principle 7 of Food Sovereignty which demands that ‘everyone has the right to honest, accurate information and open and democratic decision-making. These rights form the basis of good governance, accountability and equal participation in economic, political and social life, free from all forms of discrimination’.<sup>418</sup>

The former trust land will become community land, and will not be ‘held in trust’ by local county councils but instead administered by the local communities. This increases democratic control over issues of land. In the past, the county councils which consisted of a number of elected and appointed councillors needed to seek the consent of the communities whenever they wanted to dispose of portions of the trust land. Legally, the local councils cannot sell it but they may lease it for up to 99 years. In practice, however, communities were rarely consulted (Bruce 2008). Both the county councils and central government treated trust land as if it were government land and the communities were simply informed when trust land was leased or even sold. This is why land administration has become the centre of controversy; the former allocation process lacked transparency because it was almost exclusively in the hands of the President. No regard was taken of the interests of the residents, tenants or squatters in the area. Under the NLP, all land allocations must be made public to the people so objections can be raised. The NLP also ensures that land use by foreign investors complies with environmental standards and that land use benefits first and foremost local citizens, and colonial land leases allowed for up to 999 years would be limited to 99 years (FIAN 2010). In view of the rising foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa, this is a timely and important development. Before moving on to discuss the growing phenomenon of FDI and land-grabs it would be useful to consider the Malawi model of land reform. There are good reasons to argue that these reforms are compatible with a Food Sovereignty framework and could be adopted in a Kenyan and

---

<sup>418</sup> See principle 7 Appendix 3.

Ethiopian context.

*The Malawi model.*

It is clear that the present distribution of land in Kenya is inequitable and it has been argued that if the land reforms proposed by the NLP were fulfilled they would go some way towards achieving agrarian reform as advocated by a Food Sovereignty model. This is especially true of the proposed return to customary rights rather than private ownership of land. The question is whether programs of the nature put forward by the NLP can be implemented in an equitable fashion and in a manner that avoids major negative impacts on food production. In an atmosphere of deep ethnic resentment over land issues, many of the NPL solutions are framed in terms of historical injustices that have cut along lines of race and ethnicity. In this way the reforms resemble a 'restitution' model' of reform. This can be troublesome in many ways. The process of their implementation, though aimed to redress those ethnically charged injustices, may in the short run acerbate the tensions those injustices have caused. As the example of Zimbabwe shows only too well, badly implemented land reforms based on a 'restitution model' can have devastating consequences across the whole society.

Thus it has been suggested that the Kenyan Government might consider a different land reform agenda, one that is framed in ethnically neutral terms, such as classic 'ceilings' (Bruce 2008:20). 'Ceilings reforms' is the model most associated with Latin American reforms in the 1960s. In the Latin American case, the large estates were often worked as at least partly integrated operations, by a paid labour force (who usually had their small food plots), rather than tenants. A legal maximum size of holding was legislated, and all or a part of each holding that exceeds that maximum (the 'ceiling') was taken by the state for redistribution. Compensation may or may not have been paid, or have been adequate, depending on the case. Beneficiaries included the farm's labour force but also other poor. The land was sometimes given to individual households to farm, but was also sometimes given to collectives, in an attempt to preserve the integrated large farm operation. Brazil provides an example of an effective ongoing reform on these lines and one can clearly see how this model of reform has been incorporated into the Food Sovereignty framework.

Whilst it is accepted that 'ceilings' lack the moral justification of injustices redressed,

as they often are through ‘restitution reforms’, they may be less socially risky and this is of vital importance if land reforms are to be implemented peacefully. Ceilings also have another important advantage: they reassure a very large portion of landholders (those with holdings below the ceilings) that they will not be affected directly by the reforms and so can continue to invest time and money in their enterprises.

This community-based land reform is also being implemented in southern Malawi. Freehold tea and other estates around the old capital of Blantyre have extensive uncultivated lands and, on many estates, the cultivated area is shrinking. At the same time, the population of the local communities surrounding the estates, to whom the land once belonged, has grown and land has become scarce. The Government of Malawi, using funds from the World Bank, is extending credit to groups of local families to purchase land from the estates, often adjacent to their communities. A critical factor is that various controls have been put in place to ensure that the buyers are not cheated and the government registers the new holdings. The beneficiaries can receive a freehold title, or can, at their option, have the land reintegrated into the customary land tenure system of their community and the government is also registering the new titles. Thus protective guarantees of different land rights are being institutionalised.

Although this process is said to be slow, it has been shown to be faster than most compulsory acquisition processes, at least those that are done in accordance with law and subject to reasonable compensation requirements (Bruce 2008). The process in Malawi appears to have gone smoothly, in part, because this is a regional, not a national, political issue, but one that the national government was keen to see addressed before it became more problematic. This regional approach to land reforms lends itself to Ethiopia and Kenya both geographically and politically. As stated, the Ethiopian land reform of the 1970s resembled the ‘land to the tiller’ model in its early stages,<sup>419</sup> at least de facto, but crucially beneficiaries did not receive ownership rights and damaging periodic distributions of land were introduced. The ‘ceiling reforms’ model has the advantage of formalising the reforms through registration and titling.

---

<sup>419</sup> ‘Land to the tiller’ reforms were most common in systems where land was owned by large landlords and farmed for them by many small tenant farmers. The reform consisted of simply giving tenants the land they tilled. Its success reflects its simplicity: no change in scale of production or resettlement of beneficiaries was involved.

Thus land reforms sensitive to local political, social and historical contexts would undoubtedly prove more successful than adopting a 'one size fits all' approach.

The community-based land reform process in Malawi is essentially a state-assisted and state-subsidised market mechanism solution. It involves recognition by the government and the World Bank that land markets, without help, will not move land to these smaller and potentially much more efficient land users. The approach has the advantage of not being compulsory, and so the owners do not contest the acquisitions in court. Kenya and Ethiopia can thus look to Malawi as a possible model for land reforms that would be consistent with the agrarian reforms essential to a Food Sovereignty framework. The Malawi model, also referred to as 'community-based reform', achieved recognition in the 1990s with the support of the World Bank. Instead of the state taking land, sometimes by force, to redistribute to the poor and landless, the state loans funds to groups of the poor who then purchase large farms on the market and subdivide them among themselves. Besides learning from its adoption in Malawi, Kenya and Ethiopia can also learn from an adaptation of the model utilised by South Africa in its 'willing-buyer, willing-seller' reforms (Bruce 2008).<sup>420</sup>

In a contemporary context it is fair to say that almost all societies have a need for state-held and public land, but there is equally room for private rights, whether individual or community. This position is compatible with a Food Sovereignty framework at every level since all seven principles, in some way, seek protection of both. It is vital, however, that these private rights are administered and secured through formalised systems, including land registration and titling as is happening in Malawi, or through less formal systems, such as customary, 'traditional', or other non-statutory systems as seen in many parts of Africa. The degree of formalisation needed depends on the development of national markets; the needs of the country; its administrative capacity; and other social, political, economic, and cultural challenges and opportunities. It is not uncommon therefore, or necessarily problematic, to have both formal and informal or less formal systems operating in one country at the same time. Indeed this is already very much the position in Kenya and is increasingly becoming the case in Ethiopia.

When dual systems of land tenure do exist, the challenge for a Food Sovereignty

---

<sup>420</sup> This was the original model adopted for land reform in Zimbabwe but it was not successfully upheld.

framework is not to eradicate one in favour of the other—the informal in favour of the formal—but to create linkages between these systems that will provide security of property rights and allow individuals, communities, and corporate structures opportunities to make transactions between these systems. The opportunity to upgrade or transform property rights (from less formal to more formal) could be provided when economic conditions are right, and institutions exist to administer, record, and adjudicate more formalised rights. This clearly demands an institutionalised state apparatus, but one that functions as a custodian of public goods.

Despite the alleged agrarian bias of the NLP (Bruce 2008), the Kenyan national economic development ‘Vision 2030’,<sup>421</sup> considers foreign investment to be key to agricultural development. The Kenyan government has thus sought to attract investors with the particular intent to grow cash crops both for export and for domestic consumption. The official Ethiopian government position also reflects the idealistic point of view that foreign investors will bring technology, jobs, infrastructure and tax revenues, facilitating the country’s transition to modern farming. It is within this, sometimes contradictory, context of government policy and land reforms that large-scale land acquisition is taking place in both Kenya and Ethiopia and is discussed in the next section.

## **2. Land grabs**

This section examines some potential obstacles to the development of a Food Sovereignty model, which arise from the growing phenomenon of large-scale acquisition of farmland in foreign countries referred to as ‘land grabs’. For the purpose of this discussion large-scale land acquisitions is broadly defined as acquisitions (whether purchases, leases or other) of land areas over 1,000 ha (Cotula et al 2009). In this context land grabs can be viewed as a potential obstacle to Food Sovereignty, but more powerfully, Food Sovereignty can be viewed as an appropriate framework to mitigate some of the detrimental affects of large-scale land acquisitions. Specifically, Principle 7 of Food Sovereignty which calls for increased democratic control, demands that ‘Smallholder farmers must have direct input into formulating agricultural policies at all levels’ and, ‘everyone has the right to honest, accurate

---

<sup>421</sup> A series of five-year plans with the first one for the period 2008- 2012.

information and open and democratic decision-making'.<sup>422</sup>

The issue of food security is by no means confined to the poorest countries of the world indeed very rich governments concerned about the stability of their own food supplies are pursuing large-scale acquisition of farmland in foreign countries as an alternative to purchasing food from international markets. Recipient countries, such as Kenya and Ethiopia, are welcoming the new wave of foreign direct investment (FDI), and as we will see, have been proactive in implementing policy and legislative reforms to attract investors. This newly evolving context of land use and tenure creates both opportunities and challenges but above all it creates risk for food insecure populations. Generally speaking, the current literature on land grabs offers two conflicting views, which we will refer to as the 'idealistic' and the 'realistic' position. The idealistic position reflects a neo-liberal political economy approach discussed in previous chapters, and advocates that increased FDI will bring macro-level benefits (GDP growth and government revenues), and create opportunities for raising local living standards. For poorer countries with relatively abundant land, incoming investors can bring capital, technology, know-how and market access, playing an important role in kick-starting rural economic development.

Conversely, what we will call the 'realistic position' reflects the more radical stance of Food Sovereignty advocates and argues that large-scale land acquisitions can result in local people losing access to the resources on which they depend for their food security and livelihoods. Local people may be directly dispossessed of the land they live on, often land they have farmed for generations. Indirect impacts may also be of major significance, although these impacts are often more difficult to measure (Cotula et al 2009). They can include, for example, loss of seasonal resource access for non-resident groups such as pastoralists, or shifts of power from women to men as land gains in commercial value. Traditionally, land rights in both Kenya and Ethiopia are conceived of in patriarchal terms and the need to address gendered inequality is explicit in the Food Sovereignty framework.<sup>423</sup> In addition it is not only the land acquired that can be affected. Knock-on effects are possible in the same region, or in other parts of the country as local users can be pushed from higher-value lands to

---

<sup>422</sup> See Principle 7 Appendix 3.

<sup>423</sup> See Principle 2 in Appendix 3.



more marginal lands and as poorer people are priced out of the land market altogether. There is no doubt that, in recent years, vast tracks of agricultural lands in Africa have been taken over by foreign companies or governments and this phenomenon is of growing concern not just to NGOs and civil society but to UN agencies such as the FAO as well (Cotula et al 2009). One of the most controversial aspects, in as much as it is not even related to meeting food needs, is recent research revealing the relationship between land grabs and private hedge and equity funds.<sup>424</sup> The growth in land acquisitions in African countries for short term, high returns on private investment funds, which do not pay taxes and have exit strategies of 5-6 years is potentially damaging on many levels.<sup>425</sup> In terms of democratic criteria such as consultation, transparency and accountability there are very real concerns that much of this land acquisition has been happening outside public scrutiny and many details remain hidden (FIAN 2010). This is in essence the position adopted by the Food Sovereignty movement, and specifically addressed in Principle 7. It is fair to say that in the Food Sovereignty literature land grabs are increasingly cited as the greatest obstacle to land reform in Africa. However until now, few evidence-based studies have been undertaken to analyse the full extent and nature of the land deals in individual countries. Recent studies in selected African countries by the Oakland Institute (OI) and FIAN international have gone some way towards filling that information and knowledge gap. Because of the lack of detailed studies on land grabs in Ethiopia, this discussion draws fairly heavily on the 2011 OI Ethiopian country report.<sup>426</sup> In the case of Kenya, a 2009 joint research project by FAO/IFAD/IIED has been particularly instructive.<sup>427</sup> In addition between May and August/September 2009 FIAN international investigated four cases of land grabbing in Kenya and Mozambique, of which findings from the three Kenyan examples will be included in this discussion.

In Africa in general, land leases, rather than purchases, predominate with durations ranging from short term to 99 years. As stated, in Ethiopia the Government owns all

---

<sup>424</sup> See 'Hedge funds grab Africa's land' at [www.ecadforum.com/ethiopian-news](http://www.ecadforum.com/ethiopian-news).

<sup>425</sup> See Report by Anuradha Mittal 'Land Grabs: The Ethiopia Report' available at <http://media.oaklandinstitute.org/land-deals-africa/ethiopia> Accessed 09/10/11.

<sup>426</sup> See *Understanding Land Investment Deals in Africa: Ethiopia*, at [www.oaklandinstitute.org](http://www.oaklandinstitute.org).

<sup>427</sup> See *Land grabs or development opportunity* at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/ak241e/ak241e00.htm>

the land, which is usually leased for periods from 20 to 45 years.<sup>428</sup> Much of the newly leased Ethiopian land is in the state of Gambella and other western lowland regions and represents more than 20% of the area currently farmed by its own people countrywide (Cotula et al 2009). Amongst hundreds of relatively minor private investors, the current government programme has already secured individual contracts covering 100,000 hectares or more from corporations acting on behalf of foreign governments scouring the world for sources of food.<sup>429</sup> The official Ethiopian government position reflects the idealistic point of view that foreign investors will bring technology, jobs, infrastructure and tax revenues, facilitating the country's transition to modern farming. The neo-liberal economic position, which this reflects, has been explored at length in other chapters of this thesis so will not be considered in any more detail here. Rather attention will be focused on the realistic position on land-grabs and the ways in which a Food Sovereignty model could prevent the negative and undemocratic impact of land grabs. Those adopting the realistic position seriously challenge the notion that a food deficit country such as Ethiopia, with more than 10 million people dependent on assistance, can address its problems by relieving the food insecurity of countries such as Saudi Arabia and India (Mittal 2011).

In December 2008, it was made known that Kenya would receive a US\$2.5 billion loan to build a second deepwater port, and provide in exchange 40,000 hectares of land to the government of Qatar to grow food for Qatar (FIAN 2010). Since this deal was reported in the Kenyan press in early December of 2008, no further details have been made known. An FAO/IFAD/IIED sponsored report reads in this regard: "The Qatar-Kenya deal has drawn particular media attention as the project, implying the alienation of land and export of food crops was revealed just as Kenya had experienced severe droughts and failed harvests, forcing the government to admit it would have to declare a national food shortage emergency."<sup>430</sup> More critically, the Kenyan government has been accused of intentionally leasing land, in drought-ridden

---

<sup>428</sup> See Foreign Direct Investment in the Agricultural Sector in Ethiopia, EcoFair Trade Dialogue: Discussion paper No 12 by Lucie Weissleder, University of Bonn, Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Misereor, October 2009. Available at [http://www.ecofair-trade.org/pics/en/FDIs\\_Ethiopia\\_15\\_10\\_09\\_c.pdf](http://www.ecofair-trade.org/pics/en/FDIs_Ethiopia_15_10_09_c.pdf).

<sup>429</sup> One World Briefing Sept 14 2011- <http://uk.oneworld.net/guides/ethiopia/development> Accessed 14/09/11.

<sup>430</sup> FAO/IFAD/IIED, 2009. Land grab or development opportunity? Agricultural Investment and International Land Deals in Africa.P.86-87. [http://www.ifad.org/pub/land/land\\_grab.pdf](http://www.ifad.org/pub/land/land_grab.pdf) Accessed 01/10/11.

areas, to agribusiness. This allows the government to simultaneously manipulate food aid whilst destroying the pastoralists' way of life (Yego 2011).<sup>431</sup> Thus land grabbing represents a newly evolving political paradox: certain governments (in this case the Qatari government) maybe fulfilling their obligations to their own people, by ensuring the right to food for example, but in so doing they may well be acting against the interests of other nations (in this case the Kenyans). In this respect, a strong argument can be made for the development of Food Sovereignty, as an alternative analytical framework. Food Sovereignty is more democratic and comprehensive than the 'right to food' because as the issue of land grabbing demonstrates, in certain situations, the right to food can be fulfilled without changing any aspect of the global food system. However, fulfilling the rights contained within a Food Sovereignty model would not be possible in the GFS, certainly as it is currently constituted.<sup>432</sup> A Food Sovereignty model, for example, would put in place structures and guarantees to ensure that the right to food was not being met by a total dependence on food aid whilst locally produced food is exported elsewhere.

The Oakland Institute, FIAN international and FAO/IFAD/IIED reports have all attempted to move beyond the rhetoric and hype and provide a meaningful understanding of the actual impacts of land investments on the land and its people. Interviews with impacted communities, government officials, investors, civil society and others, have produced an abundance of data, from which six key areas of concern, relating to land grabs, can be identified. The ways in which these six areas of concern can be addressed specifically by a Food Sovereignty model are discussed below.

1. Commercial investment will increase rates of food insecurity in the vicinity of land investments. Despite Ethiopia's endemic poverty and food insecurity, it has been found that there are no mechanisms in place to ensure that these investments contribute to improved food security. In addition, there are numerous incentives to ensure that food production is exported out of the country, providing foreign exchange for the country at the expense of local food supplies. Furthermore, while the Ethiopian government lists transfer of technology as a major outcome

---

<sup>431</sup> Helen Yego is a representative of the Ngoma Campaign Kenya and delivered a paper at the Food Sovereignty Day, London, October 18<sup>th</sup> 2011.

<sup>432</sup> See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the key conceptual differences of the right to food and Food Sovereignty.

of land investment, it has established no mechanism for such transfers to take place. In the case of Kenya, the FAO/IFAD/IIED report concluded that, despite its positive intentions, the government's 'Vision 2030' strategy has not undergone any human rights impact assessment, nor does it even signal awareness of economic, social and cultural rights. It is based on an unshakeable belief that incoming investors can bring capital, technology, know-how and market access, playing an important role in kick-starting rural economic development, referred to in this chapter as the idealistic position. It has been observed that the international financial institutions, which have largely ignored the development of peasant farming, have promoted the ideology reflected in 'Vision 2030'. As was discussed in Chapters 4 and 6 this has included instigating governments to dismantle the existing elements of pro-peasant policies and institutions. This situation is clearly at odds with the agrarian reforms advocated by the Food Sovereignty movement. However, policy-making at both a national and an international level could be refocused to ensure that FDI benefits the majority of the rural poor who are currently the most food insecure. This would be achieved, for example, by adopting Principle 4 of Food Sovereignty.<sup>433</sup> Reorganising food trade to ensure that food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade would be a practical and positive first step. If national agricultural policies were to prioritise production for domestic consumption and food self-sufficiency then food insecurity could be addressed in the long-term.

2. There are large discrepancies between publicly stated positions, laws, policies and procedures and what is actually happening on the ground in Kenya and Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government, for example, insists that for all land deals, consultation is being carried out, no farmers are being displaced, and the land being granted is 'unused'. However, the OI team did not find a single incidence of community consultation. Furthermore, virtually every investment site they visited involved the loss of some local farmland, and every investment area exhibited a variety of land uses and socio-cultural/ecological values associated with it prior to land investment. In other words the land was clearly not 'unused'.

---

<sup>433</sup> See Appendix 3.

Principle 7 of Food Sovereignty, which demands democratic control, specifically addresses this issue. It states ‘Smallholder farmers must have direct input into formulating agricultural policies at all levels’. Furthermore principle 7 states ‘Everyone has the right to honest, accurate information, and open and democratic decision-making.’<sup>434</sup> The adoption of principle 7 would thus go a long way towards minimising the displacement and loss of land of vulnerable communities, particularly pastoralists.

3. Evidence gathered on land grabs highlights that, at present, there are no limits on water use, no Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), and no environmental controls. With water being of critical importance in Ethiopia and considering its critical location at the headwaters of the Nile, it is of great concern that investors are free to use water in Ethiopia with no restrictions. Despite assurances from the Ethiopian government that EIAs are performed, no government official could produce a completed EIA, no investor had evidence of a completed one, and no community had ever seen one (Horne 2011:1). The priority of Principle 3 of Food Sovereignty is protecting natural resources – ‘Food Sovereignty entails the sustainable care and use of natural resources, especially land, water, and seeds and livestock breeds. The people who work the land must have the right to practice sustainable management of natural resources and to conserve biodiversity free of restrictive intellectual property rights. This can only be done from a sound economic basis with security of tenure, healthy soils and reduced use of agro-chemicals’. Thus environmental controls are an essential feature of the Food Sovereignty framework and would limit this type of unsustainable development, whether nationally or internationally generated.
4. Evidence of land grabbing in both Kenya and Ethiopia shows that displacement from farmland is widespread, and the vast majority of locals receive no compensation. The majority of these investments in Ethiopia are in the lowland areas where, with the exception of one region, there are no land certification processes under way (Horne 2011). Furthermore, it seems that the Ethiopian government pays little attention to patterns of shifting cultivation,<sup>435</sup> pastoralism,

---

<sup>434</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>435</sup> Shifting cultivation is practiced in the southern and western part of the country. Fields are usually left fallow after short periods of cultivation to revegetate (usually 1-2 years). Clearing of the vegetation  
*Footnote continued on the next page*

or communally used areas, and therefore claims all these lands to be ‘unused’ when they are clearly not. Displaced farmers are forced to find farmland elsewhere, increasing competition and tension with other farmers over access to land and resources (Hagmann & Mulugeta 2008). Again the principles of Food Sovereignty that are focused on agrarian reform, democratic control of food systems and protecting natural resources would address these major concerns. Food Sovereignty entails the sustainable care and use of natural resources, especially land, water, and seeds and livestock breeds. It demands that people who work the land must have the right to practice sustainable management of natural resources and to conserve biodiversity free of restrictive intellectual property rights.

5. The country reports used in this discussion have demonstrated that there is no meaningful pre-project assessment, and little in the way of local benefits associated with land investments (OI 2011; FIAN 2010; FAO/IFAD/IIED 2009). Forests are cleared, critical wildlife habitat lost, and livelihoods destroyed. There is no process to ensure that land investment is happening in appropriate areas to find a balance of land uses across the landscape. Instead, it is largely at the investor’s discretion to determine if agriculture is the best use of the land. Crucially, there is nothing in place to ensure that local people benefit from the business opportunities that these investments could present. In many cases, local indigenous people already live on the margins and face chronic food insecurity.<sup>436</sup> The Yala swamp project in Kenya is a case in point. The Yala Swamp wetlands are located on the north-eastern shoreline of Lake Victoria covering approximately 17,500 ha (175 Km<sup>2</sup>). It provides major ecological and hydrological functions and is a key source of livelihoods for the neighbouring communities. The Yala swampland is trust land (designated as community land under NLP) under the custody of the Siaya and Bondo County councils. It is a densely populated area with a population of about half a million; for a very long time, the local people accessed this land and used it in their various daily activities on a free access basis. In 2003, Dominion arms Ltd, a subsidiary of

---

cover is done by setting fire to these areas during the dry seasons before planting.

<sup>436</sup> See Devereux 2007.

Dominion Group of Companies based in the USA, arrived in Yala swamp. Dominion entered into an agreement with both the Siaya and Bondo County Councils covering 6,900 ha of the 17,500 ha wetlands under the Yala Swamp Integrated Development Project, for a period of 25 years, with a possibility of extension. Eventually, Dominion proposed to cover the entire swamp region of 17,500 hectares.<sup>437</sup> Principle 6 of Food Sovereignty, which demands social peace, addresses this kind of marginalisation that stems from land grabbing. It states 'Increasing levels of poverty and marginalisation in the countryside, along with the growing oppression of ethnic minorities and indigenous populations, aggravate situations of injustice and hopelessness. The ongoing displacement, forced urbanisation, repression and increasing incidence of racism of smallholder farmers cannot be tolerated'.

6. It is also clear from recent research that while large foreign investments are highly controversial and 'headline-grabbing', many East African land deals involve small-scale investors (local and diaspora), many of whom have limited agricultural experience (Horne 2011). While potential investors must provide some evidence that they have the financial ability to carry out the operation, no such evidence is required of an investor's technical ability and knowledge. It was evident from the OI fieldwork (2011) that many investors lack the knowledge to be farming at this scale. The need to recognise the value of farmer's knowledge, especially poor rural farmers, is embedded in the Food Sovereignty framework. Ethiopia, for example, has numerous other incentives in place to encourage large-scale investment. Listed incentives focus on encouraging export, tax/duty/land-rent holidays, improved access to financing, and streamlined processes. Crucially from a Food Sovereignty perspective, there are no incentives to ensure that food production is available to meet local needs. This is a critical point and one that would become a central feature of agricultural policy-making in a Food Sovereignty model.

Because of the shift in government policy on FDI, for Ethiopia, this is very likely to be just the beginning. However, the lack of local knowledge about these land

---

<sup>437</sup> The breaching of state authorities human rights obligations towards the local population and the experience of peasant farmers resisting the take-over of their lands is detailed in the FIAN 2010 report

investments, with local communities often only becoming aware once bulldozers arrive to clear the land, is deeply troubling. This highlights the need for transparency and accountability, which is the basis of the demand for democratic control. As articulated in principle 7, Food Sovereignty demands that ‘Everyone has the right to honest, accurate information and open and democratic decision-making. These rights form the basis of good governance, accountability and equal participation in economic, political and social life, free from all forms of discrimination’. It is arguable that Ethiopian government’s desire for land investment is associated with the likely further marginalisation/disempowerment of the indigenous people, increased dependence on government for food security, and increased difficulty for rebel groups to operate in the lowland areas. The granting of land-based assets to the Tigray and other urban elites who offer support for the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRD) emphasises the message that support of the government will result in preferential treatment (Horne 2011).<sup>438</sup>

In the absence of enhanced democratic controls, it seems likely that as investors increasingly clear Ethiopian land, levels of frustration will grow, and environmental and food security concerns will steadily worsen. The negative impacts of land grabs will likely be magnified many times over into the future unless the Ethiopian government takes steps to address them. The most obvious policy reform is for the government to ensure that any land investments that are granted are for the benefit of local communities and for the country as a whole. It is accepted that this proposal and all others associated with a Food Sovereignty paradigm, require far-reaching changes in the current regulation of international agricultural and trade policies. Indeed, in terms of trade, the entire scope of major international institutions and treaties would have to be changed. However, Food Sovereignty is less a proposal for a single policy change in one of the international regimes, but more a framework to change the broad range of agricultural policies. Under the umbrella of Food Sovereignty, several new institutional frameworks are required but they are possible. The current controversy surrounding land grabbing in both Kenya and Ethiopia is inseparable from the model of agricultural production, which such deals imply.<sup>439</sup> An increasingly controversial

---

<sup>438</sup> See Chapter 6.

<sup>439</sup> See Chapter 2.



aspect of this current model, the move towards biofuel production, is discussed in the next section.

### **3. Land use: The food versus fuel debate**

In addition to the potential loss of control of national food production through large-scale land acquisition, there is growing concern surrounding the support for a transition from fossil fuels to agrofuels. The two categories of agrofuels are ethanol crops or bio-diesel crops. Research on the negative effect of biofuel or agrofuel on food-poor countries (Pretty et al 2004) strengthens the position on biofuels adopted by the Food Sovereignty movement. This section begins by considering the evidence of these negative impacts and then looks at how the adoption of a Food Sovereignty model would overcome most of these problems.

There seems little doubt that the agrofuel boom is a contributing factor in the current food price crisis and its continued growth is most likely to exacerbate this situation (Eide 2007; Rosset 2009). Although environmentalists promoted biofuel in the 1990s as a 'green energy' alternative to oil, it is now recognised that biofuels are contributing to soil erosion and serious depletion of water resources, removing crops from the food system and driving up food prices (Paul & Wahlberg 2008). A World Bank assessment in 2008 concluded that biofuels were responsible for more than 50% of the overall price increases in food (World bank 2008). In addition, new quotas for the use of agrofuels in the European Union and the United States have contributed to large land acquisitions as corporations have begun searching for the vast land (and water) resources needed to produce crops that can be converted to fuels.<sup>440</sup> Within the context of a pro-biofuel policy arena, the right to food, which is the first principle of Food Sovereignty, is challenged in two specific areas. If one's right to life includes the right to food, which it clearly does within a Food Sovereignty framework, then it must also include the freedom to exercise a livelihood so that one's entitlement to food is ensured.<sup>441</sup> This is particularly relevant to the rural poor who rely on the land for their livelihoods. The most severe critics of the global food system, however, have argued

---

<sup>440</sup> In the EU, several member states have increased their national biofuels blending quotas in 2011 in comparison with 2010 on the basis of energy content. See <http://biofuelsdigest.com/> Accessed 19/12/2011.

<sup>441</sup> The term entitlement is used in the context associated with the work of Amartya Sen (1981). See Chapter 4.

that the process of globalisation<sup>442</sup> is rewriting the human rights agenda. Shiva, for example, argues that ‘the most basic of human rights is today under threat as the right to food is sacrificed to the right to trade’ (Shiva 2003: 87). The competition for land for biofuel rather than food production is very often portrayed within this context especially land that is acquired by foreign governments. For many of the world’s poorest, this ‘clash of rights’ of private property ownership, over the right to food, is increasing vulnerability and food insecurity. As already discussed, it demonstrates that relying on rights, as a basis for reducing vulnerability to famine, can be problematic. That is not to say that we shouldn’t rely on rights in overcoming food insecurity but it is more a question of which rights are most important. In this discussion the right to food, without which we can’t live, assumes a greater importance than the right to trade. Within a Food Sovereignty framework, subsistence rights, therefore, need not be regarded as only possible in some utopian future; on the contrary it is a case of restoring ‘something of value that has for some time been lost in our theory and our practice’ (Shue 1996: 29). Within this framework the interconnectedness of all rights are recognised and institutionally protected. Thus supporting the broader set of rights and democratic controls that a Food Sovereignty framework would guarantee seems eminently more desirable and robust as a long-term solution.<sup>443</sup>

The tension between the uses of land for fuel verses food can be demonstrated by research on a project in the Tana delta in Kenya, which concerns sugarcane monoculture (FIAN 2010). The Tana River Delta is a lifeline to some 30,000 farmers, pastoralists and fishermen as well as minority hunter and gatherer communities collectively called the Wasanya. In a planned-public private joint venture, Mumias Sugar Company Ltd, the largest sugar company in Kenya, and the state-run Tana Athi River Development Authority (TARDA), are proposing to turn 16,000 hectares (160 Km<sup>2</sup>) into a sugar cane plantation for agrofuels. On 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008 Kenya’s National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) approved the project. Although the Tana River Delta conservation lobby took the issue to the High Court to try to halt the

---

<sup>442</sup> It is accepted that this is a problematic concept but it is not a debate that can be entered into here. Shiva uses the term to describe a ‘project of domination by the developed North over the South, by corporations over citizens’ (2003: 87-88). There are however, many, more benign and optimistic interpretations of globalisation. See, for example, Held et al 2005.

<sup>443</sup> However, this is also problematic, see Windfuhr & Jonsén 2005 for arguments in favour but also a comprehensive analysis of constraints to the adoption and implementation of Food Sovereignty policies.

decision, in June 2009, Kenya's High Court ruled in favour of the developers.<sup>444</sup> If realised, this will lead to the displacement of tens of thousands of peasant farmers, who currently use this land for food crops for their consumption such as maize, cassava, beans, vegetables and mango. Pastoralist tribes such as Orma and Wardei will also suffer severely as the delta has been used as grazing land for their cattle for generations (FIAN 2010).

As another example of the tension between food and fuel production, Bedford Biofuels Inc, a multinational company based in Canada, is seeking a 45 year lease agreement on 65,000 ha of land in Tana River District in Kenya to transform it into biofuel farms, mainly growing jatropha (*Jatropha curcas*). All of this land is either in or adjacent to the delta. A significant percentage of the local community members are not in support of this project and during 2011 there have been ongoing disputes to try and prevent the project from going ahead. One of the key arguments against this project is that jatropha has been shown to fail as an economically viable crop in East Africa.<sup>445</sup> Furthermore it is argued that as a biofuel, the aim of which is to reduce carbon emissions, the process of producing it actually releases more carbon than would be reduced in burning it instead of fossil fuels.<sup>446</sup> Indeed it has been argued that the industrial agricultural system, as a whole, produces 50% of the green house gasses but this could be reversed in fifty years if all arable land was returned to agricultural and traditional methods (Yego 2011). Although this seems unlikely in the present context, it is indicative of the growing awareness of the unsustainable nature of the current agricultural model, particularly in those countries most adversely affected by it, and the need to reverse the huge incentives currently available to the biofuel industry.<sup>447</sup>

Within this context the Ethiopian Government has also encouraged biofuel projects as a means of reducing the drain on the economy of importing increasingly expensive crude oil. In view of Ethiopia's current economic position, this seems to be a justified and rational response. As a result several *Jatropha* and Castor Oil projects have been

---

<sup>444</sup> The website of the Tana River Delta campaign puts this estimate at 20,000 ha. See [www.tanariverdelta.org](http://www.tanariverdelta.org) Accessed 13/02/10

<sup>445</sup> See *Jatropha: Wonder crop? Experience from Swaziland* at [www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk) Accessed 10/12/11

<sup>446</sup> See [www.biofuelwatch.org](http://www.biofuelwatch.org)

<sup>447</sup> Woods and oils receive twice as much in subsidies than wind, for example. See [www.biofuelwatch.org](http://www.biofuelwatch.org)

established. The government's official line is that there is no shortage of agricultural land in Ethiopia for food production. In fact, they have suggested that they have up to 23 million hectares, which could be developed both for crops and biofuel.<sup>448</sup> Importantly, the government argue that biofuel plants are being developed on arid and barren land not suitable for food production. However this is not supported by the most recent research (Horne 2011).

It must be said that the agrofuel transition is not inevitable, especially in Africa as a whole, as most countries are still only studying the possibilities of biofuels. There is no rational reason to sacrifice the possibility of sustainable, equitable food and fuel systems to an industrial strategy that compromises both (Sielhorst et al 2008). Many successful, locally focused, energy-efficient and people-centred alternatives are presently producing food and fuel in ways that do not threaten food systems, the environment, or livelihoods. By way of example PELUM-Kenya has been actively participating in raising community awareness on issues of agrofuels.<sup>449</sup> A study on the Kenyan situation was carried out by PELUM-Kenya as a way to establish the extent of agrofuels adoption, promoters and the existing effects on the small-scale farmers. This research should enable communities within Kenya to make informed choices on whether or not to adopt the agrofuels and to what scale. They will also be in a position to influence agrofuels policy drafting ensuring they make known their concerns to the policy makers. This provides a good example of the possibilities of incorporating democratic principles into agricultural decision-making along the lines of a Food Sovereignty model.

Indeed, research has shown that biofuel production can have positive socio-economic effects on the population of African wetlands, provided that production is carefully managed by governments and companies, and monitored by certification schemes and non-governmental organisations.<sup>450</sup> Several general conditions have been identified

---

<sup>448</sup> In June 2006 Melis Teka, coordinator of biofuel development in the Ministry of Mines and Energy stated this in an interview for Reuters. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/06/09/idUSL09327212> Accessed 15/11/11.

<sup>449</sup> Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Association is a network of Civil Society Organisations/NGOs working with small-scale farmers in East, central and Southern Africa. The Association membership has grown from 25 pioneer members (in 1995) to over 230 members in 2010. PELUM- Kenya is the Kenyan country chapter of the PELUM Association and has a membership of 38 member organisations.

<sup>450</sup> See for a detailed and balanced assessment of biofuels in Africa see Sielhorst et al (2008) at [www.wetlands.org](http://www.wetlands.org) Accessed 10/12/11.

which help to mitigate risks from biofuel production and promote the potential benefits (Sielhorst et al 2008:50). It would make sense, therefore, that these become embedded in the design and maintenance of any future agrofuel production projects.

- Effective land use planning by governments
- Effective biofuels policies by governments
- Effective accountability mechanisms, i.e. sustainability criteria for biofuels
- Adjust biofuel crop to natural conditions present at production location (instead of the other way around)
- Apply good agricultural management practices
- Stimulate awareness of impacts of biofuel production on African wetland areas

The question, therefore, is not whether ethanol and bio-diesel, per-se, have a place in our future, but whether or not a handful of global corporations are to determine the future by advancing the agrofuels transition despite the detrimental impacts. In view of what we understand as the negative impacts, discussed earlier in this section, any effective mechanisms put in place to enhance the benefits and minimise their costs to local rural populations can only be encouraged.

So how could a Food Sovereignty framework ensure a more positive future outcome? Within this model policy makers would pursue a different, steady-state agrarian transition built on re-distributive land reform that re-populates and stabilises the world's struggling rural communities. Food would, first and foremost, be recognised and protected as a necessity of life and therefore would only be considered an item of trade once this need has been fulfilled. The development of biofuels has undoubtedly added a new dimension, and a new obstacle, to achieving this balance, but that does not negate the potential of institutionalising the right to food over and above any other rights. In concrete terms this means that national agricultural policies must be allowed to prioritise production for domestic consumption and food self-sufficiency over and above any other trade consideration. With land grabbing specifically for the production of biofuels, the globalisation paradigm is reaching further into the primary sector of national economies and if this is not controlled it does not bode well for countries' and peoples' self-determination and Food Sovereignty. Thus from a realistic position, land grabbing fits well within a strategy towards deepening the commodification of agriculture and the domination of a small group of 'investors' and

their TNCs.<sup>451</sup> But that is assuming it continues to evolve in the absence of institutionalised protections, and, of course, this is not set in stone. As PELUM Kenya demonstrates, increasing democracy at all levels of the decision-making process can mitigate many of the negative outcomes. Therefore defending equitable access to land and resources as a precondition for decentralised, sustainable and autonomous peasant agriculture is a crucial component of the right to adequate food. This position is supported by the authoritative international recommendations such as those of the Hunger Task Force of the UN Millennium Project and the more recent International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) (2009), which view the support of peasant agriculture as a fundamental effort in the struggle against food insecurity.<sup>452</sup> There is a growing evidence-based movement that continues to campaign for this increased support.

### **Concluding comments**

The Food Sovereignty approach is to replace the existing agricultural model with a new model through agrarian reform (Principle 2) and a renewed emphasis on the importance and value of peasant culture. In this way it is truly radical but the important question is whether or not it is feasible, especially within the context of globalisation. On a structural level Food Sovereignty necessitates a move towards increased democratic processes and decision making at all levels of society and this is neither controversial nor very far removed from what we already understand as ‘deliberative democracy’.<sup>453</sup> However the demands for an alternative agricultural model are more challenging. Research reveals that most contemporary land-grabbing processes do not promote peasant and sustainable agriculture as advocated by a Food Sovereignty framework because of the industrial high-tech agriculture that they favour. Furthermore it appears that land grabbing is set to be an increasing activity, which if uncontrolled, may potentially destroy ecosystems and pastoral communities and foreclose rights based rural policy options such as agrarian reform.

---

<sup>451</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>452</sup> The objective of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) is to assess the impacts of past, present and future agricultural knowledge, science and technology (AKST) on the: reduction of hunger and poverty; improvement of rural livelihoods and human health; and, equitable, socially, environmentally and economically sustainable development. See [www.agassessment.org](http://www.agassessment.org) for IAASTD (2009) Synthesis Report.

<sup>453</sup> See Chapter 3.

Elements of Food Sovereignty has only been made possible for those in the developed world because the correlative duties, which safeguard the right to food, have been institutionalised. A Food Sovereignty framework, therefore, advocates that this can and should be extended, on a global scale, through increased democratic control. The concept of Food Sovereignty, necessarily, means a return to protecting the national food production of vulnerable nations, especially against the dumping of artificially cheap food from developed nations and limiting the amount of land given over for purely commercial purposes. It also means rebuilding national grain reserves and prioritising farmers' organisations as the guardians of food production. In real terms this means regaining local control of food supplies and reducing the power of TNCs and International Financial Institutions. Most importantly, national governments need the ability to implement export controls, to prevent the forced exportation of food that their own populations may desperately need. This can only be realistically achieved by a development orientated trade agenda, which embraces the concept of Food Sovereignty. This is not the situation at present but the salient point is that it could be. With regard to the biofuel transition, the increasing pressure to produce agrofuels as an alternative to fossil fuel is reported as creating an artificial demand (for agrofuels) that is unprecedented among cash crops, and which is likely to persist beyond the usual length of a 'commodity boom' cycle.<sup>454</sup> Curbing or reversing this lucrative trend is obviously a huge challenge particularly during the current period of economic and social instability. This reversal is explicit in the Food Sovereignty framework and is clearly an ambitious and far-reaching project. However, a reasonable next step would be for the Food Sovereignty movement to launch a pro-active, global moratorium on the expansion of agrofuels. Time and public debate based on a model of deliberative democracy is needed to assess the potential impacts of agrofuels in East Africa, and to develop the regulatory structures, programmes, and incentives for conservation and food and fuel development alternatives.

---

<sup>454</sup> See 'Fuelling exclusion? The bio-fuels boom and poor people's access to land', IIED and FAO, 2008, page 7. Available at <http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdfs/12551IIED.pdf>.

## **CONCLUSION OF THESIS**

This thesis has sought to address two key questions: first, in what ways does the global food system, as it is currently constituted, increase food insecurity in East Africa; second, in what ways might reorganising aspects of the global food system reduce food insecurity in Kenya and Ethiopia, with Food Sovereignty as a guiding principle? In addressing these questions, this thesis has approached food insecurity in terms of identifying the problem and the key causal factors, assessing interventions and responses, and making recommendations for permanent solutions. In addressing these questions this analysis has taken account of both internal and external political and economic pressures.

The original contribution of this thesis has been to propose and test three distinct arguments in respect of food insecurity in East Africa. The first argument (A1) is that a failure to think about food insecurity in Africa as a consequence of the global food system (GFS) handicaps attempts to reduce that insecurity. The second argument (A2) is that Food Sovereignty is an appropriate solution to famine, and vulnerability to famine, where famine is caused by systemic features of the global food system. The third argument (A3) is that there are clear obstacles to the adaptation and development of Food Sovereignty in an East African context taking account of differences in economic structure, political culture, land tenure and institutions of government.

### **Summary of the thesis**

A1 was addressed primarily in the first two chapters. Chapter 1 discussed the problem of food insecurity, in general, and in East Africa in particular. It outlined some of the methodological issues that arose in this study of food insecurity and emphasised the importance of definition and measures when analysing the phenomenon. It also highlighted the relationship between famine and famine vulnerability and demonstrated how this reflects on efforts both to understand and to overcome them. It concluded that famines continue to be viewed mainly as food crises, with demographic or environmental causal factors with international food aid as the main response. However, it was made clear that food production or the vagaries of the weather are not essentially the issue; political marginalisation at a regional, national or international level is the critical reality of contemporary famines. The political basis of



food insecurity is located in the relationships of power between people and groups (both nationally and internationally), and not just between people and commodities. These power relationships and their causal role were conceptualised within the global food system, which was introduced in the next chapter.

Chapter 2 gave a substantive and analytical account of the GFS and laid the foundations for the subsequent analysis of structural adjustment policies, transnational corporations, international institutions and the state, and the notion of Food Sovereignty. This account of the GFS presented a complex web involving interactions of natural, social, economic and political factors. Factors, it is argued, that have hitherto been underplayed. It is clear that farmers, producers, consumers, politicians and aid agencies are all integral to the GFS and have their part to play if the situation for the most food insecure is to improve. However, this analysis of the GFS suggests that as long as food insecurity co-exists with over-production and over-consumption, only structural international change, combined with domestic measures, can provide everyone with enough of the kinds of food they need for healthy development.<sup>455</sup> This acknowledgement and understanding that reducing food insecurity requires building democracy from the bottom up links to the second thesis question and the exploration of Food Sovereignty as an alternative paradigm.

Chapter 3 set out the framework of Food Sovereignty and showed how it evolved in a Latin American context as a response to the failure to think about food insecurity as a consequence of the global food system. This chapter laid the foundations on which to build the argument to support A2, that a new paradigm based on Food Sovereignty would be the most effective way of reversing the corporate monopolisation of the global food system and would protect people's political and economic right to determine the course of their own food system. What becomes clear from this exploration of Food Sovereignty is that one cannot yet talk of a fully-fledged Food Sovereignty model. By this I mean that there is no ready-made set of policies available for national and global governance of rural and agricultural policies. Although many key elements of a new policy proposal have been identified and formulated, the overall concept and strategy needs further improvement and clarification. The pressing need for this process of democratisation in agriculture was emphasised by the

---

<sup>455</sup> As per the UNDHR.

consideration of the failure of responses to food insecurity. The conceptual framework of this thesis, based on a rejection of the neo-liberal view that the market is the most appropriate system by which basic needs can be met, was strengthened in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 carried forward the argument, central to this thesis (and the Food Sovereignty framework), that food has a unique social function and it should not be subordinated to market dictates. It made an explicit link between liberal economic policies such as structural adjustment and increased food insecurity. Understanding this relationship sheds light on the necessary role for the state, at the national and international level, in the provision of food. Policies that have looked to open markets and greater economic integration have not been successful in improving food insecurity in East Africa. However, concentrating on the failures of big ‘top-down’ agendas may be overly pessimistic. If the focus shifts to more local and specific agendas, advocated by a Food Sovereignty model, then there is greater reason for optimism. Developing and sustaining democratic control of food requires bringing the state back in, not only to regulate the market, but also to provide social welfare and protect the most weak and vulnerable in society. This requires a constructive reappraisal of the role and function of food aid in a current context.

Chapter 5 considered the role and function of food aid and revealed that it remains deeply politicised and embedded in the current global food system. It would seem that for those on the political left food aid is still, in many ways, about making reparations for colonialism and the injustices of the past. For those on the right of the political spectrum it is about the undesirable creation of welfare dependency and filling the coffers of corrupt African rulers. There are well-documented cases to support both points of view but this thesis has argued for more a positive position that is situated somewhere in the middle. From a humanitarian perspective, international aid is undoubtedly an appropriate response to cases of extreme hunger, caused by sudden emergencies. The challenge, however, is to incorporate this response within a combined course of complementary action as suggested by A2. An overemphasis on food aid in the past may be partly due to the fact that it is the easiest thing for the developed world to do (rather than address structural inequalities, or secure the right to food, for example) and partly because aid slots into the moral universe that demands reparation to be made for past wrongs. However, Chapter 5 advanced the argument that donor countries have a responsibility to ensure that food aid works to

the benefit of the most needy and this can only be achieved by reforming the major international actors who govern global food aid.<sup>456</sup> The positive changes, such as the reduction in tied aid and the increase in aid procured in developing countries, are acknowledged but the critical point is that these changes should be expanded. The long-term aim of food aid should be about developing local productive capacity and removing restrictive practices so that developing countries have their own immunity to adverse conditions.<sup>457</sup> This is a central feature of Food Sovereignty but a paradigmatic shift towards Food Sovereignty can only be developed if the current food aid regime is seriously and constructively reformed as understood in A3. This necessitates a move away from food aid to one of social protection, a move that would be facilitated by the adoption of a comprehensive framework of Food Sovereignty. This examination of the role and function of food aid leads to the utilitarian conclusion that the system would be relatively easy to reform, without incurring huge costs to anyone, resulting in far greater benefits to those most in need.

Chapters 2 to 5 advanced the argument that greater control, and hence accountability, of food systems should be relocated within a national or regional context. Support for this position can be found in the current East African food crises (2011/12) affecting Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia. The food crises in these countries demonstrate how national government response to a deteriorating food situation is absolutely crucial. With regard to Somalia, the lack of governance and political instability is proving to be catastrophic whereas the Ethiopian government, at least at present, is managing to avert the same level of disaster.<sup>458</sup>

The last two substantive chapters of this thesis addressed A3 and focused on the potential and obstacles to Food Sovereignty, as an alternative framework for agriculture, in Kenya and Ethiopia. The conclusion reached in Chapter 5 that the internationalisation of welfare, particularly in terms of food provision, has further reduced national governments' responsibility and accountability to their people is taken forward in Chapter 6. The continuing focus on aid and/or technological solutions avoids the uncomfortable fact that it is the relationship between politics and

---

<sup>456</sup> For example the FAO, the WFP, the FAC, and CSSD. See Chapter 1.

<sup>457</sup> Initiatives such as Emergency Food Security Reserves (EFSR) or Productive Safety Net Programmes (PSNP) are relevant examples.

<sup>458</sup> Jamal Osman. 'Famine in Somalia'. Guardian Focus podcast. [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk), 18 August 2011.

food insecurity that must come to the forefront of policy making. The Food Sovereignty model recognises, and aims to institutionalise, the need for states to regain the necessary policy space to conduct their fight against food insecurity. Most importantly states must be able to implement their obligations to their citizens to ensure both their right to adequate food as well as their other human rights. There is no doubt that this poses political challenges. As Chapter 4 made clear, in terms of food insecurity it seems that the role of the state has been largely denigrated just at the moment it may be most needed.

However, the availability of the necessary policy space does not automatically lead to national policies that promote or even consider the interests of smallholder farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk or remote rural areas. Chapter 6 demonstrated that national governments are often not respectful of the needs of the most food insecure segments of their society. More critically, this chapter showed that governments have been responsible for causing, or at least not preventing, certain incidences of famine thus showing that food insecurity is not always a result of the systemic features of the GFS.<sup>459</sup> This understanding of causal factors not directly related to the GFS reinforces the need to place rights at the forefront of food issues. The right to food is an extremely important element of Food Sovereignty since it is already a legal instrument with which to make national governments accountable to people facing hunger and food insecurity. By its very nature, accountability operates at its best when it is responding to local and specific pressure. A2 is therefore defended in this thesis by the assertion that the localised and bottom-up approach of Food Sovereignty, strengthened through international support, is the key to eradicating famine and famine vulnerability in the twenty first century. This necessity of internal and external components is of paramount importance.

Nonetheless, this study has shown that one cannot promote Food Sovereignty as an alternative model in East Africa without taking seriously the issues of political cultures and structures, which may be problematic. Principles 6 and 7 of Food Sovereignty, which incorporate demands for social peace and democratic control,<sup>460</sup>

---

<sup>459</sup> Famine in Ethiopia during the 1980s, for example, was largely a result of conflict and government policy rather than the systemic features of the GFS. In a current context conflict and poor governance is a significant factor in the food crises in Somalia.

<sup>460</sup> See Appendix 3 for a list of the seven principles of Food Sovereignty.

are clear signposts to these potential obstacles. However, whilst democracy is accepted as a good in itself, and may augment good governance especially with respect to the civil and political liberties it guarantees, it does not add up to, nor does it guarantee, good governance. Thus there are very good reasons for supporting the notion implicit in the Food Sovereignty model that constructing good governance in Africa is likely to be more realisable within a more developed social democracy than in the context of liberal democracy. Chapter 7 provided an opportunity to tentatively explore this idea specifically in relation to the issue of land in Kenya and Ethiopia.

An abundance of research shows that land conflicts and the struggles to gain access to, and control over, land is nothing new in Africa. Historically, women, peasants, small producers, pastoralists and indigenous people have seen their traditional lands taken away by powerful actors, including colonial powers, their own government, national elites or large investors. However, as Chapter 7 demonstrated, the pressure on the land of peasants has undoubtedly increased with the multiplication of deals by which foreign investors (governments or TNCs) can now acquire and control vast tracks of land. Furthermore, in cases, where land is taken without respecting basic international standards such as a prior comprehensive impact assessment, consultation, compensation and rehabilitation, human rights are very likely to be violated (FIAN 2010). This poses many questions in relation to A3. Not only are there the immediate problems of violating human rights to adequate food and housing, water and personal security linked to land conflicts and evictions, but also the issue of reduced land availability in the long term.

References to research in Kenya and Ethiopia showed that land grabbing, even where there are no related forced evictions, drastically reduces land availability for land scarce groups. This reduces the political space for peasant oriented agricultural policies and gears national markets towards agribusiness interests and global markets, rather than sustainable peasant agriculture for local and national markets. That said, recognition of the need for more comprehensive land reform is gaining ground and the Kenya NLP offers a contemporary example, which, if fully adopted, will go some way towards improving the prospects for a Food Sovereignty model to be developed in East Africa.<sup>461</sup>

---

<sup>461</sup> See Bruce 2008 for the concerns as well as the possibilities of the Kenyan NLP.

**The key findings**

In view of the fact that for the next four decades or so, the majority of the world's poor population will continue to live in rural areas, it makes sense that strategies to reduce the worst incidences of food insecurity will require a new focus on rural development and rural areas. Food Sovereignty policies offer a necessary and important contribution to the current debate by concentrating attention on the perspectives of those who suffer most from food insecurity. This principle is common to all the different interpretations of Food Sovereignty: that is, they start their analyses from the perspective of those facing hunger and rural poverty. It is a dynamic debate that requires further support and enrichment from civil and political society and this includes scientific contributions. It is clear that the negative aspects of the past and present economic models need to be reversed, and now may be an opportune time for transformative change. It seems reasonable to suggest that the further development of the Food Sovereignty framework would probably be best served by implementing several of the ideas in parallel. Some initiatives have already started, for example some co-ordination of views is being achieved through the IPC for Food Sovereignty in Rome.<sup>462</sup> For the time being though, the most important outcome could be to enrich the debate and discuss the relevance of different potential policy changes associated with the seven principles. Each government, NGO, CSO or social movement could then decide which strategic element it can support.

It has been made clear that overcoming food insecurity depends, to a great extent, on the way in which it is defined. It also depends on whether food insecurity is understood and addressed as an issue of political containment or political empowerment. The first approach, particularly in a national context, is a successful strategy for meeting needs at times of acute crises, as is occurring in a current context in both Kenya and Ethiopia. This thesis, however, has advanced the argument that the second approach is the only way to transform the vulnerabilities of these famine prone communities in the long-term. At present famine-vulnerable communities in East Africa tend to lack sufficient leadership, cohesion and political power to mobilise against famine effectively but the point is that they could. Alliances, therefore, will be necessary and this in turn requires food insecurity to become a political issue for those

---

<sup>462</sup> See Chapter 3.

not directly affected. Thus, the argument made in this thesis for a greater understanding of famine in an international context. The suggestion that famine prevention should become a 'barometer of political legitimacy' (de Waal 2006: 215) is a helpful one and would fit very well within a Food Sovereignty paradigm. This requires more public engagement in the processes that can prevent and relieve famine but it also requires public bodies able to investigate political responsibility when famines do occur.

The level of interactions in the GFS demonstrates that the scientific and technical expertise of participating nations could be pooled in the search for best practices and production methods. For example it is not unreasonable to suggest that a global authority could be formed, within a strengthened UN, to coordinate and protect the world's food and water resources. Such an institution could provide an accurate inventory of global food supplies and develop mechanisms for the global allocation of these vital resources in times of extreme scarcity or emergency. Shared research efforts could lead to more economical methods of converting salt water into fresh water or for more efficient and widespread irrigation. The UNDP and the WHO have demonstrated, over a considerable period of time, the capacity to address complex international problems in an efficient manner. But this optimistic vision demands the re-building of local food systems architecture to ensure that most of the wealth and benefits of food systems accrue locally, not in the company accounts of agri-foods giants. This thesis, therefore, has argued for a much greater role for the state in food provision in what is essentially in Africa a market economy. The recommendation is for a more balanced and mixed economy as opposed to the extreme liberalism of classical liberal economics and structural adjustment.

It is evident that a genuine transformation of the current food system will require tremendous political will and a powerful coalition for change. It is also the case, however, that the developed world has a strong collective interest in addressing the problems of the world's most food insecure. The rapid growth of the Food Sovereignty movement over a relatively short space of time allows for some optimism. The greatest potential of the Food Sovereignty paradigm is in the recognition that the key to establishing a more positive strategy lies in both the national and the international sphere. Nationally, by increasing democratic credentials and control over the supply of food to all members of society and internationally, by

establishing more robust international institutions that could address major food problems whilst retaining the confidence of global leaders and the public. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the current global financial crisis and economic recession could create opportunities to challenge flawed existing models and assert new strategies for Africa's economic progress.

It is clear that collective responses to food insecurity need to occupy the political and economic realms as well as a humanitarian one and non-food aid responses need to be given greater emphasis.<sup>463</sup> In countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia, the focus on meeting short-term consumption through food aid has added to the conceptualisation of the acute stage of famine as a discrete event, rather than how it is conceptualised in this thesis, as the logical, but preventable, outcome of underlying powerlessness and livelihood crises embedded in the global food system.<sup>464</sup> Without effectively addressing the underlying processes creating food insecurity, that is the local and international power structures that shape famine and famine relief, then interventions, particularly food aid, can merely reinforce existing power structures and may even exacerbate famine vulnerability. Thus the deep-seated nature of the problem has resulted in a growing tendency amongst international agencies to develop indefinite food aid programmes. Indeed the changing role of food aid as part of the international 'safety net,' provided by international humanitarianism, has led to a 'black hole of accountability' (Devereux 2007: 8). In other words the donor is primarily accountable to communities and powers outside the area of the food crises; it is rarely, if ever, accountable to those insiders receiving the aid. This permanent 'safety net' can act as an obstacle to the development of local and national food secure systems that are implicit to a Food Sovereignty model (Yego 2011). As a result, the politicisation of food aid has contributed to the failure to prevent famine vulnerability in a current context.

There is no doubt, however, that positive action can bring about change. Food Sovereignty could be pursued like the anti-apartheid movement on the basis that it

---

<sup>463</sup> The provision of water and health supplies, for example, and long-term support given to the most vulnerable livelihood systems such as pastoralism.

<sup>464</sup> Ethiopia is a pressing example of how emergency responses have so far been inadequate in addressing long-term poverty reduction and the underlying processes that lead to famine. Arguably, Ethiopia is more vulnerable now than it was a decade ago because of lack of long-term development strategies. See Lautze & Maxwell (2007).



must be a bottom up approach but one that operates at a global level. In essence, this thesis argues that the concept of Food Sovereignty should be taken more seriously, given international protection and treated as something separate from general development programmes. This thesis reveals that the Food Sovereignty framework addresses both external and internal factors in overcoming food insecurity. It paves the way for special attention to be given to the international governance of food and agriculture and to the international causes of hunger and malnutrition. Thus the Food Sovereignty movement has a clear international focus and devotes much of its campaigning activities towards the international institutions and organisations, which influence food security. But it also encourages a discussion about the policy space that needs to exist to facilitate the creation of national policies, which aim to reduce rural poverty and eliminate food insecurity. The reality of food insecurity is not simply a struggle between the evil rich world and a noble poor one. Nor is it just about corrupt African rulers oppressing brave people within a national context. The struggle to eradicate famine and famine vulnerability is both within and beyond the most vulnerable countries. It follows that so too are the solutions.

### **Areas for further research**

#### *The political context.*

It is easy to foresee problems in achieving more political support for Food Sovereignty particularly since the framework is so broad and covers a variety of issues and proposals. Clearly new thinking on agricultural and rural development policies is required, but paradigm shifts need time. Many people might agree with the principles of Food Sovereignty, but disagree with some of the analyses or policy proposals. The scope remains extremely broad and the use of terminology and definitions, particularly the rights-based language, will need to become more precise. Several issues have yet to be properly addressed, such as the situation of the urban poor and their access to food.<sup>465</sup> These are areas in which further debate is needed. Thus it is fair to say that the Food Sovereignty framework has not yet been finalised but it is still being formed. Although we can see a convergence in the analyses of important problems, concrete policy proposals still have to be developed and defined further. While few will disagree with Food Sovereignty's principle of the human right to food, some countries

---

<sup>465</sup> See Davis (2006).

will remain opposed to the overall framework and this requires greater understanding. Kenya and Ethiopia, for example, are both committed to pursuing FDI in agriculture but how this can be reconciled with the agrarian reforms so central to a Food Sovereignty framework is not known.

When it comes to reducing resistance to Food Sovereignty, however, its comprehensive nature could be an advantage. The policy changes needed to seriously reduce, and ultimately eradicate, the number of food insecure people, as well as to tackle rural poverty, are enormous. Therefore a broad-based discussion based on the principles of Food Sovereignty is more likely to initiate far-reaching changes than a discussion about making small changes to existing instruments. At present the main focus is to widen policy spaces for the nation state within international regimes such as the trade regime. National responsibilities are not yet addressed in as detailed a way as international trade policy changes. The Food Sovereignty framework aims to create policy space for the nation state in international forums, thereby assuming that they would be adopted by national governments. Whether, and under what conditions, national governments would make use of these policy spaces for the benefit of hungry and food insecure peoples has not yet been thoroughly understood. As has been demonstrated by the examples of Kenya and Ethiopia, national policies still play a crucial role and should therefore not be downplayed.

The inclusion of Food Sovereignty in the mainstream conversations that at present dominate the political and social dilemmas about food insecurity is offered in my view as a political challenge but one that has huge consequences for a viable response to famine. In the light of what we have seen in this thesis to be consistent failure in the conventional approaches to food insecurity, the introduction of Food Sovereignty as a more viable alternative would inevitably bring the search for solutions to another level of challenge. In advocating Food Sovereignty, this thesis does not try to provide a policy blueprint for eradicating global food insecurity. What I have sought to emphasise is the need to make food policy design sensitive to each country's historical and initial conditions.

#### *Agro-ecological production methods*

Critical challenges to Food Sovereignty are most likely to include many questions concerning food production. Will smallholder farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk be able to increase global production enough, particularly if support for marginal farmers

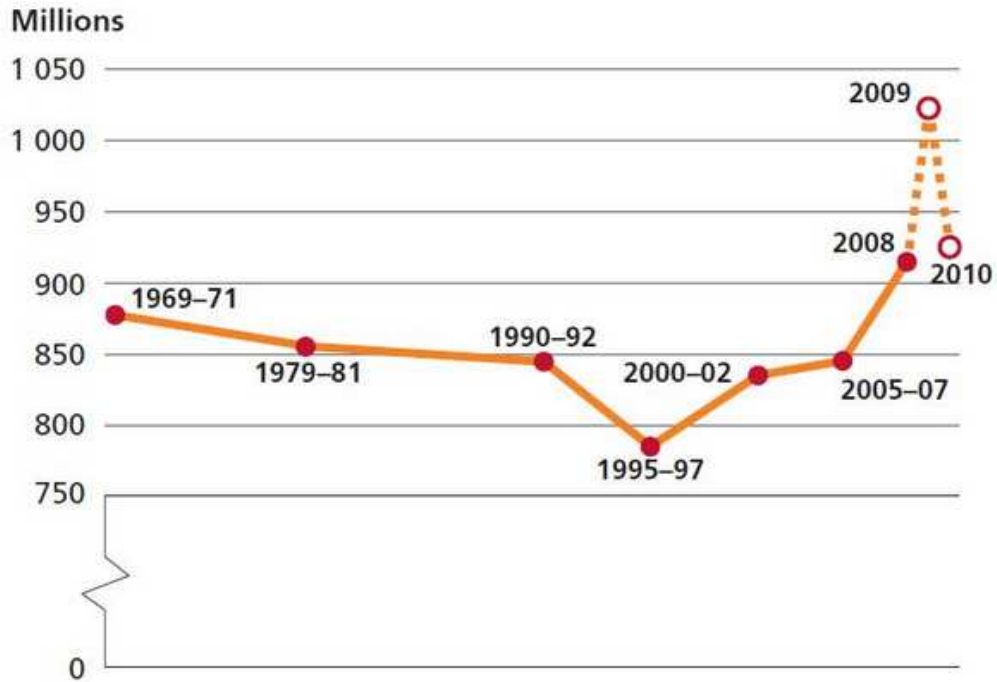
is combined with agroecology? Will a new policy based on the interests of smallholder farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk adequately take into account the future need to increase the production of food for the growing world population? Is there a risk that Food Sovereignty policies will favour producers who are less 'efficient' in conventional economic terms? From the perspective of a Food Sovereignty framework seeking to guarantee the right to food, protect natural resources, maintain social peace and achieve democratic control of food and rural issues through agro-ecological methods is a huge task, and whether it can successfully replace the food security model remains to be seen.

Thus the question remains as to whether the more radical dimensions of Food Sovereignty can be integrated into the mainstream framework of food policies. This thesis does not seek to answer this question but to open up a context for what could be an evolving dialogue. It has been the underlying hermeneutic of this study that the emergence of Food Sovereignty into the landscape of food issues would not be one of dominance but as another perspective would bring a more creative and fresh approach. I would want to affirm that the diversity of approaches that we have looked at, have been prone to failure, not so much because of the intention and context of their goals per se, but rather in terms of a dimension that was missing. It has been argued here that that dimension is the alternative framework of Food Sovereignty.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Number of undernourished people in the world, 1969–71 to 2010

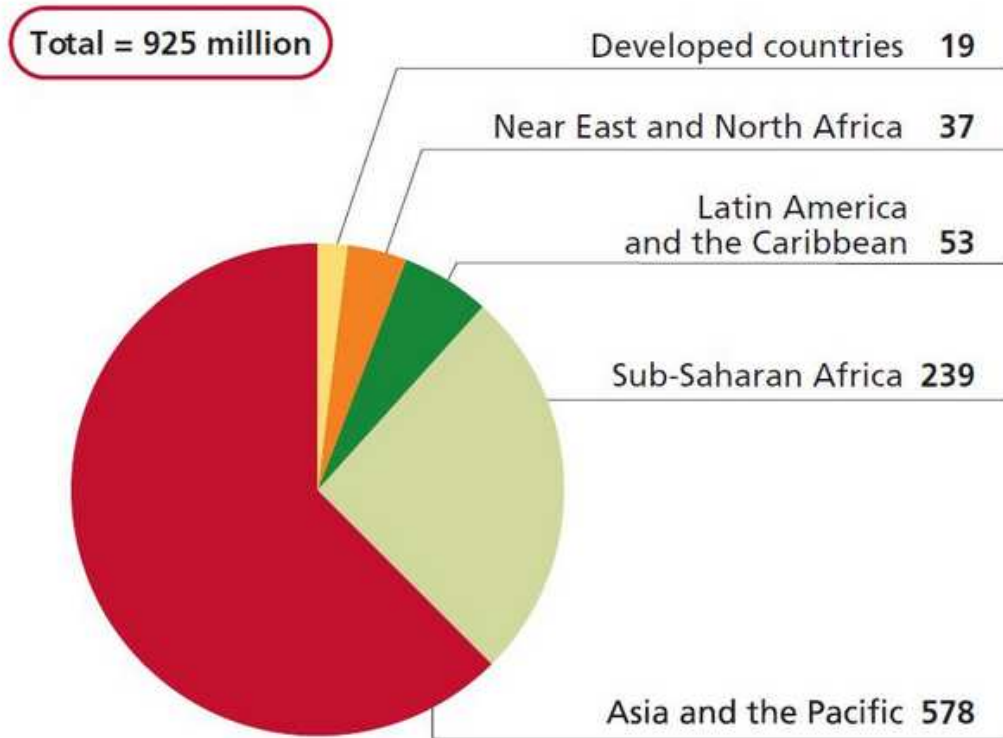


Note: Figures for 2009 and 2010 are estimated by FAO with input from the United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

Source: FAO.

**Appendix 2**

**Undernourishment in 2010, by region (millions)**



Note: All figures are rounded.

Source: FAO.

**Appendix 3****Summary of Via Campesina's 'Seven Principles to Achieve Food Sovereignty'**

1. **Food: A Basic Human Right** – Everyone must have access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain a healthy life with full human dignity. Each nation should declare that access to food is a constitutional right and guarantee the development of the primary sector to ensure the concrete realization of this fundamental right.
2. **Agrarian Reform** – A genuine agrarian reform is necessary which gives landless and farming people – especially women – ownership and control of the land they work and returns territories to indigenous peoples. The right to land must be free of discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, race, social class or ideology; the land belongs to those who work it.
3. **Protecting Natural Resources** – Food Sovereignty entails the sustainable care and use of natural resources, especially land, water, and seeds and livestock breeds. The people who work the land must have the right to practice sustainable management of natural resources and to conserve biodiversity free of restrictive intellectual property rights. This can only be done from a sound economic basis with security of tenure, healthy soils and reduced use of agro-chemicals.
4. **Reorganizing Food Trade** – Food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade. National agricultural policies must prioritize production for domestic consumption and food self-sufficiency. Food imports must not displace local production nor depress prices.
5. **Ending the Globalization of Hunger** – Food Sovereignty is undermined by multilateral institutions and by speculative capital. The growing control of multinational corporations over agricultural policies has been facilitated by the economic policies of multilateral organizations such as the WTO, World Bank and the IMF. Regulation and taxation of speculative capital and a strictly enforced Code of Conduct for TNCs is therefore needed.
6. **Social Peace** – Everyone has the right to be free from violence. Food must not be used as a weapon. Increasing levels of poverty and marginalization in the countryside, along with the growing oppression of ethnic minorities and indigenous populations, aggravate situations of injustice and hopelessness. The ongoing displacement, forced urbanization, repression and increasing incidence of racism of smallholder farmers cannot be tolerated.
7. **Democratic control** – Smallholder farmers must have direct input into formulating agricultural policies at all levels. The United Nations and related organizations will have to undergo a process of democratization to enable this to become a reality. Everyone has the right to honest, accurate information and open and democratic decision-making. These rights form the basis of good governance, accountability and equal participation in economic, political and social life, free from all forms of discrimination. Rural women, in particular, must be granted direct and active decision-making on food and rural issues.

**Appendix 4*****Chronology of the Emergence of the Food Sovereignty Framework***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Publication/Statement/Declaration</b>	<b>Authors/Location</b>
1996	'Food Sovereignty: A Future Without Hunger'	Via Campesina
1996	'Statement by the NGO Forum to the World Food Summit'	NGO Forum to the World Food Summit
2001	'Our World is Not For Sale. WTO: Shrink or Sink'	Our World is Not for Sale Network
2001	'Final Declaration of the World Forum on Food Sovereignty'	Havana, Cuba
2001	'Priority to Peoples' Food Sovereignty'	Via Campesina
2001	'Sale of the Century? Peoples Food Sovereignty. Part 1 – the Implications of Trade Negotiations'	Friends of the Earth International
2001	'Sale of the Century? Peoples Food Sovereignty. Part 2 – a New Multilateral Framework for Food and Agriculture'	Friends of the Earth International
2001	'Food Sovereignty in the Era of Trade Liberalisation: Are Multilateral Means Feasible?'	Steve Suppan, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
2002	'Food Sovereignty: A Right for All. Political Statement of the NGO/CSO Forum for Food Sovereignty'	Rome, Italy
2002	'Statement on People's Food Sovereignty: Our World is Not for Sale.'	Cancun, Mexico
2002	'Sustaining Agricultural Biodiversity and the Integrity and Free Flow of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture'	ITDG/GRAIN/ETC Group
2003	'What is Food Sovereignty?'	Via Campesina
2003	'Towards Food Sovereignty: Constructing an Alternative to the WTO's AoA'	Geneva, Switzerland
2003	'Trade and People's Food Sovereignty'	Friends of the Earth
2003	'How TRIPS Threatens Biodiversity and Food Sovereignty'	Hyderabad, India
2003	'Statement on People's Food Sovereignty: Our World is Not for Sale.'	Cancun, Mexico
2005	'Food Sovereignty: Towards Democracy in Localised Food Systems'	Michael Windfuhr and Jennie Jonsén, FIAN International
2006	'Agrarian Reform and Food Sovereignty: Alternative Model for the Rural World'	Peter Rosset, Univ California at Berkeley / Globalalternatives

(adapted from Windfuhr and Jonsén, 2005: 47-48)

## Appendix 5

The millennium development goals (MDGs) are eight goals to be achieved by the year 2015 aimed at addressing what are considered to be the world's main development challenges. These goals are a result of the plans and targets identified in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium summit in September 2000. The eight goals break down in to eighteen quantifiable targets that are measured by forty-eight indicators.<sup>466</sup> The eight goals are as follows.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. (Halve by 2015 the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day. Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.)
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

The overriding aim of the MDGs is to reconcile and synthesise many of the most important commitments that were made at separate international conferences and summits during the 1990s. Its authors explicitly recognise the interdependence between poverty reduction, growth and long term sustainable development. Furthermore, emphasis is now also on the concept that development (in a Western liberal context) is dependent on democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights and security. In order to achieve the eight goals, the framers aim to bring together the responsibilities of developing countries with those of the developed countries, and utilise the wealth, new technologies and the global awareness with which we entered the twenty-first century.

---

<sup>466</sup> For a full list see <http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml>



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Action Against Hunger, (2000). *The Geopolitics of Hunger: Hunger and Power*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.
- Action Aid, (2004). *Power Hungry: Six Reasons to Regulate Global Capital Food Corporations*. Johannesburg: ActionAid International.
- Adejumobi, S., (2000). *Africa and the Challenges of Democracy and Good Governance in the 21st Century*. Addis Ababa 2000 available at <http://unpan1.un.org/> accessed 05/11/11.
- Afigbo, A.E. et al., (1989). *The Making Of Modern Africa, Volume 2, The Twentieth Century. (4th ed)*, Hong Kong: Longman.
- Africa Watch, (1990a). *Mengistu has decided to burn us like wood; bombing of civilians and civilian targets by the Air force*, London.
- Africa Watch, (1990b). *Denying the Honour of the Living*, London.
- Africa Watch, (1993). *Land mines in Angola*, New York.
- AFRODAD, (2005). *Assessing the Impact of the PRGF on Social Services: The Case of Ethiopia*. African Forum and Network on Debt and Development
- Altieri, M., (1995). *Agroecology: The Science of Sustainable Agriculture*. London, IT Publications
- Ake, Claude, (1996). *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington D.C: Brookings Institute.
- Albritton, R., (2009). *Let Them Eat Junk: How Capitalism Creates Hunger And Obesity*, London, Pluto Press
- Alpert, S. et al., (1997). Water Resources: Agriculture, the Environment, and Society. *BioScience*, 47(2), 97-106.
- Annan, K. (1997). "A New Era Beckons Africa", *Africa Recovery*. Vol. 11, No. 1, July. p.4
- Anderson, M., (2001). Aid: a Mixed Blessing. in *Debating Development*. Oxford: Oxfam
- Anderson, S. & Cavanagh, J., (2000). *Top 200: The Rise of Global Corporate Power*, Global Policy Forum.
- Anuradha, M., (1997). Earth Island Institute. (spring). *Earth Island Institute Journal*.
- Anyang' Nyong'o, P., (1987). *Popular Struggles for Democracy in Africa* (ed) London: Zed Books
- Arezki, R. & Brückner M., (2011) *Food Prices and Political Instability* IMF Working Paper WP/11/62 March 2011.
- Arnold, D., (1988). *Famine*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Araujo, S., (2009). 'Family Farmers Feed Brazil' . Grassroots International October 16<sup>th</sup> 2009.
- Bachrach, P. & Baratz, M.S., (1962). The Two Faces of Power. *American Political Science Review* 56:941-52.
- Bates R, (1997). *Open Economy Politics: the Political Economy of the World Coffee Trade*, Princeton: Princeton University press.

- Baker, K.M., (1975). *Condorcet: From Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics*, London: University of Chicago Press.
- Baker, R., (2005). *Capitalism's Achilles Heel: Dirty Money and How to Renew the Free-Market System*, New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Ball, N., (1981). *World Hunger: A guide To The Economic and Political Dimensions*, Oxford: Clio Press.
- Banik, D. (2007). Is Democracy the Answer? Famine Prevention in Two Indian States, in Stephen Devereux (ed.), *The New Famines: Why Famines Persist in an Era of Globalisation*. London: Routledge
- Barnett, A., (2005). UK arms sales to Africa reach 1 billion pound mark (Jun 12). *The Observer*.
- Barnett, A., Held, D. & Henderson, C. (eds), (2005). *Debating Globalisation*, Oxford: Polity.
- Barracrough, S., (1999). *Land Reform in Developing Countries: The role of the state and other actors*, discussion Paper no.101, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development: Geneva.
- Barratt-Brown, M., (1987). *Models in Political Economy. A guide to the arguments*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Barrett, C., Carter, M. & Little, P., (2006). *Understanding And Reducing Persistent Poverty In Africa*, London: Routledge.
- Barrett, C. & Maxwell, D., (2005). *Food Aid After Fifty Years, Recasting Its Role*, London: Routledge.
- Bayart, J-F., (1993). *Politics of the Belly*, Longman: Harlow.
- Bayart, J-F., (2000). 'Africa in the World: a history of extraversion', *African Affairs*, 99, 217-267.
- Bayart, J-F., (2009). *The State in Africa* Polity Press: Cambridge.
- Beaumont, P., (2008). Food riots fear after rice price hits a high (April 6). *The Observer*.
- Becker, C.M., Hamer, A.M. & Morrison, A.R., (1994). *Beyond Urban Bias in Africa: Urbanization in an Era of Structural Adjustment*, James Currey.
- Beckman, B.,(1990). "Structural Adjustment and Democracy: Interest Group Resistance to Structural Adjustment and the Development of the Democracy Movement in Africa." Stockholm, Mimeo.
- Beckman, B., (1992). "Empowerment or Repression?: The World Bank and the Politics of Adjustment." In: P. Gibbon, Y. Bangura and A. Ofstad (eds) (1992).
- Beitz, C., (1979). *Political Theory And International Relations*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Beitz, C., (2004). Human Rights and the Law of Peoples. In D. Chatterjee, (ed) *The Ethics of Assistance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Belknap, J.V., (2007). *Hunger: A Modern History*, Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Benn, H., (2004). Trade and Justice: Time to Choose. (26 July). *Global Policy Forum*.
- Berdal, M. & Malone, D., (2000). *Greed and Grievance: economic agendas in civil wars*, London: Boulder

- Berman, B. & Lonsdale, J., (1992). *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (2 Vols), London: James Currey
- Besley, T.J. & Burgess, R., (2001). *The Political Economy of Government Responsiveness: Theory and Evidence from India*, C.E.P.R. Discussion Papers.
- Blair, D., (2008). Crisis in Haitis slums as world food prices trigger fight for survival. (May 19). *The Daily Telegraph*.
- Boone, P., (1995). *Politics and the Effectiveness of Foreign Aid*, Centre for Economic performance, LSE.
- Borgstrom, G., (1969). *Too many. A study of Earths biological limitations*, New York: Macmillan.
- Boserup, E., (1965). *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth*, London: George, Allen and Unwin.
- Bradbury, M., (1998). Normalizing the crisis in Africa. *Disasters* 22 (4) 328-38.
- Bradlow, D.D. & Grossman, C., (1995). Limited Mandates and Intertwined Problems: A New Challenge for the World Bank and the IMF. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 17(3), 411-442.
- Bradsher, K., (2008). High Rice Cost Creating Fears of Asia Unrest. (March 29) *New York Times*.
- Branch, D., (2011). *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair 1963-2010*. Yale University Press.
- Branford, S., (2011). *Food Sovereignty: Reclaiming the global food system*. War On Want.
- Bryceson, D. Kay, C. & Mooli J., (2000). *Disappearing Peasantries: Rural Labour in Africa, Asia and Latin America*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Brown, L., (1991). *State Of The World; A World Watch Institute Report On Progress Towards Sustainability*, New York: WW Norton.
- Brown, L., (1995). *Who Will Feed China? Wake Up Call For A Small Planet*, London: Earthscan Publications.
- Brown, L., (1996). *Tough Choices: Facing The Challenge Of Food Scarcity*, New York: WW Norton.
- Brown, L., (2001). *Eradicating Hunger; A Growing Challenge; State Of The World 2001*, The World watch institute 2001:43-62.
- Brown, L., (2003). *Plan B: Rescuing A Planet Under Stress And A Civilisation In Trouble*, New York: WW Norton.
- Brown, L. & Kane, H., (1995). *Full House: Reassessing The Earth's Population Carrying Capacity*, London: Earthscan Publications.
- Bruce, J.W., (1998). *Country Profiles of Land Tenure: Africa, 1996. LTC Research Paper 130*, Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Bruce, J.W., (2008). *Kenya Land Policy: Analysis and Recommendations*, April 2008, United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
- Burns, E., (ed), (1982). *The Marxist Reader. Works that Changed the World*, New York: Avenel Books.
- Burnside, C. & Dollar, D., (2000). *Aid, Policies and Growth*, American Economic Review, Vol 90:847-868.
- Burnside, C. & Dollar, D., (2004). *Aid, Policies and Growth: Revisiting the evidence*, Washington DC:

- World Bank.
- Caldwell, J.C., (1986). *Routes To Low Mortality In Poor Countries*, Population and Development Review, Vol 12 No2: 847-868
- Caballero, R., (2011). Food Sovereignty Day, House of Commons, London. Oct 18<sup>th</sup>
- Castells, M., (1996). *The Rise Of The Network Society (The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture)*, Volume 1, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cathie, J., (1982). *The Political Economy Of Food Aid*, Aldershot: Gower.
- Cathie, J., (1989). *Food Aid. And Industrialisation: The Development Of The South Korean Economy*, Aldershot: Avebury.
- Cerny, A., (2005). *The Curse of Natural Resources and the Role of Democracy*, CERGE-EI working Papers, The Centre for Economic Research and Graduate Education, Economic Institute: Prague, Czech Republic.
- Chabal, (1992), *Power in Africa: an Essay in political interpretation*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.
- Chabal & Daloz, (1999). *Africa Works: disorder and political instrument* IAI & James Currey
- Chandler, D., (2005). *From Kabul To Kosovo*, London: Pluto Press.
- Chandler, D., (2006). *Empire In Denial*, London: Pluto Press.
- Charlesworth, L.R., (2002). *Poor Law, Community and Charity, A History of Giving*, Presentation at the Annual Conference of the Association of Legal and Social Philosophy "The Ethics of Altruism", Royal Holloway University of London.
- Charlton, M., (1997) Famine and the Food Weapon: Implications for the Global Food Aid Regime. *Journal of Conflict Studies, North America, 17, jun. 1997*. Available at: <<http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/view/11736/12493>>. Date accessed: 03 Nov. 2011.
- Chaudhry, K.A., (1993). Myths of the Market and the Common History of Late Developers. *Politics and Society*, pp. 245-274.
- Chen, S. & Ravallion, M., (2007). Absolute Poverty Measures for the Developing World 1981-2004. *PNAS Vol 104, no 43* (Oct 23, 2007) National Academy of Sciences.
- Chomsky, N., (2003). *Recovering Rights: A Crooked Path*, chapter 2 in *Globalizing Rights*. Gibney, M. J. (ed), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Christiano, T., (1996). *The Rule of Many : Fundamental issues in Democratic theory*, Westview: Boulder.
- Chua, A., (2003). *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability*, New York: Doubleday.
- Clarke, C., (1977a). *Population Growth and Land Use*, London: Macmillan.
- Clarke, C., (1977b). *Exploding Population Myths*, Melbourne Australia: Monash University.
- Clay, D., Molla, D. & Habtewold, D., (1999). Food Aid Targeting in Ethiopia : a study of who needs it and who gets it. *Food policy 24(4):391-409*.
- Clay, J. & Holcombe, B., (1985). The Politics of Famine in Ethiopia. *Cultural Survival Quarterly. i 92*

- Clay, E.J., & Benson, C., (1991). Triangular Transactions, Local Purchases and Exchange Arrangements in Food Aid: A Provisional Review With Special Reference To Sub-Saharan Africa. In E. J. Clay & O. Stoke, (eds) *Food Aid Reconsidered: Assessing The Impact On Third World Countries*. London: Frank Cass.
- Clay, E.J. & Singer, H.W., (1985). Food aid and development: issues and evidence. A survey of the literature since 1977 on the role and impact of food in developing countries. FAO
- Club of Rome, (1972). *The Limits To Growth*, New York: Universe Books.
- Collier, P., (2007). *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can be Done About it*, Oxford: University press.
- Collier, P., (2008). The Politics of Hunger: How illusion and Greed Fan the Food Crisis. *Foreign Affairs November/December 2008*
- Collins, (2004). *Collins English Dictionary 6th edition Complete and Unabridged*, Glasgow: Harper Collins.
- Conable, B. (1991). "Reflections on Africa: The Priority of Sub-Saharan African Economic Development." World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- Conroy, M., Murray, D., Rosset, P., (1996). *A cautionary tale: failed US development policy in Central America*. Lynne Rienner, Boulder CO
- Cotula, L., Vermeulen, S., Leonard, R. & Keeley, J., (2009). *Land grab or development opportunity? Agricultural investment and international land deals in Africa*. IIED/FAO/IFAD, London/Rome
- Covach, H., Neligan, C. & Burall, S., (2003). *Power Without Accountability*, The One Word Trust.
- Cranston, M., (1973). *What are Human Rights?*, London: Bodley Head.
- Crow, B., (2008). *The unacknowledged cause and unprecedented scale of the global food crisis*. Third World Network April 2008.
- Curtis, M., (2001). *Trade For Life: Making Trade Work For Poor People*, London: Christian Aid.
- Curtis, M., (2003). *Web Of Deceit*, London: Random House.
- Dahl, R., (1961). *Who Governs?*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Dando, W., (1980). *The Geography Of Famine*, London: Arnold.
- Davis, M., (2001). *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino famines and the making of the Third World*. London:Verso.
- Davis, M., (2006) . *Planet of Slums*. London:Verso
- Deininger, K., Jin, S., Adenew, B., Gebre-Selassie, S. & Nega, B., (2003). "Tenure Security and Land-Related Investment: Evidence from Ethiopia." World Bank Policy Research Paper 2991. Washington DC: World Bank
- Deng, L.B., (1999). *Famine in the Sudan:causes, preparedness, and response: a political, social and economic analysis of the 1998 Bahr el Ghazal famine. IDS Discussion paper 369*, Brighton: IDS Publications..
- Deng, L.B., (2007). Increased rural vulnerability in the era of globalisation:conflict and famine in

- Sudan during the 1990s. chapter 11. In S. Devereux, (ed) *The New Famines*. London: Routledge.
- Dercon & Vargas Hill, (2009). Growth From Agriculture in Ethiopia: Identifying Key Constraints. DfID UK
- Desai, M., (1988). The Economics Of Famine, chapter 3. In G. A. Harrison, (ed) *Famine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Desmarais, A., (2007). *La Via Campesina: Globalisation and the power of the Peasants*, London, Pluto Press.
- Desmarais, A., (2002). La Vía Campesina: Consolidating an International Peasant and Farm Movement. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 91-124
- Devereux, S., (1993). *Theories Of Famine*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Devereux, S., (2000). *Famine In The Twentieth Century, (IDS Working Paper 105)*, Brighton: IDS Publications.
- Devereux, S., (2004). 'Food Security Issues in Ethiopia: Comparisons and Contrasts between Lowland and Highland Areas', Pastoralist Communication Initiative (PCI) Special Seminar, Addis Ababa: UN-OCHA
- Devereux, S., (2006). 'Vulnerable Livelihoods in Somali Region, Ethiopia', IDS Research Report 57, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies
- Devereux, S., (2007). *Cashing in or Crashing Out: Pastoralist Livelihoods in Somali Region, Ethiopia*, Living on the margins Conference March 26-28, 2007: Stellenbosch.
- Devereux, S., (ed) (2007). *The New Famines*, London: Routledge.
- Devereux, S., (2009a). *Social protection for agricultural growth in Africa*. FAC working paper No SP06 January 2009
- Devereux, S., (2009b). Why Does Famine Persist in Africa? *Food Security 2009*, 25-35.
- Devereux, S., Sabates-Wheeler, R., Mulugeta Tefera and Hailemichael Taye, (2006). *Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP): Trends in PSNP Transfers Within Targeted Households*, Brighton and Addis Ababa: Institute of Development Studies and Indak
- Devereux, S. & Scoones, I., (2006). 'The crisis of pastoralism? A response to Stephen Sandford', Future Agricultures Consortium debate, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies
- Devereux, S. & Tiba, Z., (2007). Malawi's first famine, 2001-2002. Chapter 7. In S. Devereux, (ed) *The New Famines*. London: Routledge.
- Devereux, S. & White, P., (2010). Social Protection in Africa: Evidence, Politics and Rights, *Poverty and Public Policy*, 2(3): 53-77.
- Dinham, B. & Hines, C., (1984). *Agribusiness in Africa*, London: Earth Resources Research Ltd.
- DFID, (2004). *Concentration in food supply and retail chains*. Department for International Development, August 2004.
- Dolan, C.S., (2004). On farm and Packhouse: Employment at the Bottom of a Global Value Chain.. *Rural sociology 69(1): 99-126*
- Dower, N., (1997). Human Rights And International Relations. *The International Journal Of Human*

*Rights, Vol 1, No 1. Pages 86-111,*

- Dower, N., (2000). World Poverty. Chapter 23. In P. Singer, (ed) *A Companion To Ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Downs, A., (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, New York: Harper.
- Dreze, J. & Sen, A., (eds) (1990). *The Political Economy Of Hunger. Volume II: Famine Prevention*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Dreze, J. & Sen, A., (eds) (1995). *The Political Economy Of Hunger. Volume I: Entitlement And Well-Being*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Dryzek, J., (2002). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond. Liberals, Critics, Contestations*, Oxford: University Press.
- Dryzek, J., (2005). *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* 2nd edition, Oxford: University Press.
- D'Souza, G. & Ikerd, J., (1996). "Small Farms and Sustainable Development: Is Small More Sustainable?" *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics* 28(1):73-83.
- Duffield, M., (1991). *War and Famine in Africa*, Oxford: Oxford Research Paper No 5.
- Duffield, M., (1994). The Political Economy of Internal War: Asset Transfer, Complex Emergencies and International Aid, chapter 3. In J. Macrae & A. Zwi, (eds) *War And Hunger. Rethinking International Responses To Complex Emergencies*. London: Zed books.
- Duffield, M., (2001). *Global Governance And The New Wars. The Merger Of Development And Security*, London: Zed books.
- Duffield, M., (2007). *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the world of peoples*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Dyson, T., (1996). *Population And Food: Global Trends And Future Prospects*, London: Routledge.
- Dyson, T., (2010). *Population and Development* 1st (ed), Zed Books Ltd.
- Eade, D., (ed) (2001). *Debating Development: NGOs and the Future*, Kumarian Press.
- Easterly, W., (2006). *The White Man's Burden*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Edkins, J., (2000). *Whose Hunger? Concepts of famine, Practices of Aid*, Minneapolis, MN: Minesota Press.
- Edkins, J., (2002). *Mass Starvations and the Limits of Famine Theorising (October)*, IDS Bulletin, Vol 33, no 4.
- Edkins, J., (2007). The criminalisation of mass starvations :From natural disaster to crimes against humanity, chapter 3. In S. Devereux, (ed) *The New Famines*. London: Routledge.
- Edwards, J., (2006). Rights: foundations, contents, hierarchy. Volume 13, No 3. *Res Publica*.
- Ehrlich, P.R. & Ehrlich, A.H., (1990). *The population explosion*, New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Eide, A., (2008). *The right to food and the impact of liquid biofuels*, Rome: FAO.
- Engberg-Pedersen, P. et al. (1996). (eds), '*Limits to adjustment in Africa: The effects of economic liberalisation 1986-94*', Copenhagen and Oxford: Centre for Development Research in

Association with James Currey

- FAO, (2002). *World Agriculture 2030: Global food production will exceed population growth*, Rome: FAO.
- FAO, (2003). *Trade reforms and food security: conceptualising the linkages*. Commodity Policy and Projections service. Commodities and trade division, Rome: FAO
- FAO, (2004). *The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets. Changing consumption patterns and international trade*. Rome: FAO
- FAO, (2006a). *FAO Briefs on Import Surges-Countries, No 5, Ghana. (November)*, Rome: FAO.
- FAO, (2006b). *The State of Food and Agriculture*, Rome: FAO.
- FAO, (2008). *Boosting Food Production in Africa's Breadbasket Areas*, Rome: FAO.
- Fatton, R., (1992). *Predatory Rule: State and Civil Society in Africa*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- FIAN, (2009). *Recognize land as a human right- Sellout of agricultural lands will aggravate food crisis*. Heidelberg; FIAN International , December 2009.
- FIAN, (2010). *Land Grabbing in Kenya and Mozambique: a report on two research missions-and a human rights analysis of land grabbing*, Heidelberg; FIAN International , April 2010.
- Field, J.O. & Levinson, F.J., (1974). Nutrition and Development: the Dynamics of Commitment. In N. S. Scrimshaw & M. Behar, (eds) *Nutrition and Agricultural Development*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Fine, B., (1997). 'Entitlement Failure?' *Development and Change*, 28 (4). pp. 617-647.
- Fine, B., (2010). 'Economics and Scarcity: With Amartya Sen as Point of Departure?' In: Mehta, Lyla, (ed.), *The Limits to Scarcity: contesting the politics of allocation*. London: Earthscan, pp. 89-107.
- Fletcher, S., (2006). *Poor Commonwealth No Longer? Challenges to the Commonwealth in Achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals*, London: Commonwealth secretariat and Cumberland lodge.
- Ford Runge, C. & Senauer, B., (2007). How Biofuels Could Starve the Poor. *Foreign Affairs*. May/June
- Friedmann, H., (1982). 'The political economy of food: the rise and fall of the Postwar International Food Order', *American Journal of Sociology*, 88 (2).
- Friedmann, H., (1995). 'The International Political Economy of Food: A Global Crisis', *International Journal of Health Services*, 25 (3): 511-538.
- Friedmann, H. & McMichael, P., (1989). 'Agriculture and the State System: The Rise and Decline of National Agriculture', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 19 (2): 93-117.
- FTN partners and Wemos, (2005). *Dumping Food Aid: Trade or Aid? (subsidised) Food Aid in kind: what is in it for the WTO*. T. Sheldon, (ed) Amsterdam: Wemos Foundation.
- Funes, F., (2002). *Sustainable agriculture and resistance: transforming food production in Cuba*. Oakland CA: Food First Books.
- Fujita, M., Krugman, P.R. & Venables, A., (1999). *The Spatial Economy: Cities, Regions, and*



- International Trade*, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Fukuyama, F., (1992). *The End of History and the Last Man*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Gallagher, J., (2011). *Britain and Africa under Blair : In Pursuit of the Good State*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- George, S., (1991). *How The Other Half Dies*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- George, S., (1994). *A Fate Worse Than Debt*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- George, S., (1996). *Ill Fares The Land: Essays On Food Hunger And Power*, London: Writers and Readers Publications.
- Georgescu-Roegen, N., (1971). *The Entropy Law And Economic Progress*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gerschenkron, A., (1962). *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective: A Book of Essays*. Cambridge, MA:
- Gereffi G. & Korzeniewicz M. (eds), (1994). *Commodity Chains and Global Capitalism*, Westport, CT, Greenwood Press.
- Gibbon, P., (1997). 'Prawns and Piranhas: the Political Economy of a Tanzanian Private Sector Marketing Chain'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol 24, No, 4.
- Gibbon, P., (2007). *Africa, Tropical Commodity Policy and the WTO Doha Round*. *Development Policy Review*, 25: 43–70
- Gibbon, P. & Ponte, S., (2000). *Trading down: Africa, value chains, and the global economy*. Temple University Press
- Gibbon, P., Bangura, Y. & Ofstad, A. (eds), (1992). *Authoritarianism, Democracy and Adjustment: The Politics of Economic Reform in Africa*. Uppsala: SIAS,
- Gibney, M.J. (ed), (2003). *Globalizing Rights*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gilbert, C.L. & Vines, D. (eds) (2000). *The World Bank: Structure and Policies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Godwin, W., (1986). *The Anarchist Writings*, London: Freedom Press.
- Goldschmidt, W.R., (1978). *As You Sow: Three Studies in the Social Consequences of Agribusiness*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Lanham MD.
- Goldsmith, J., (1994). *The Trap*. New York : Carroll & Graff
- Gould, C., (2004). *Globalizing Democracy and Human Rights*, Cambridge Mass: Cambridge University press.
- Gray, J., (ed) (1991). *On Liberty And Other Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Grigg, D., (1981). *The historiography of hunger: changing views on the world food problem*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series 6 Pages 279-292.
- Grigg, D., (1993). *The World Food Problem*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Grünewald, F., Robins, K., Odico, A., Woldemariam, M., Nicholson, N. & Teshome, A., (2006). *Real Time Evaluation of the Drought Response in the Horn of Africa*, ALNAP. Available at:

<http://www.alnap.org/resource/3444.aspx> Accessed 01/09/11.

- Hagmann, T., (2005a). Confronting the Concept of Environmentally Induced Conflict. *Peace, Conflict and Development*. No 6 2005.
- Hagmann, T., (2005b). Beyond clannishness and colonialism: understanding political disorder in Ethiopia's Somali Region, 1991-2004. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 43 (4): 509-536.
- Hagmann, T. & Mulugeta, A., (2008). Pastoral conflicts and state-building in the Ethiopian lowlands. *Afrika Spectrum* 43 (2008) 1: 19-37 2008 GIGA Institute of African Affairs, Hamburg
- Hampton, J., (1986). *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hanlon, J., (1996). *Peace without Profit: How the IMF blocks rebuilding in Mozambique*, Oxford, James Currey.
- Hanson, S., (2009). *Corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa — International Reporting Project*, SAIS: Washington DC.
- Hardin, G., (1968). The Tragedy Of The Commons. *Science* 162:1243-1248.
- Hardin, G., (1974). Life boat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor. *Psychology Today*.
- Hardin, G., (1977). Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor. In W. Aiken & H. la Follette, (eds) *World Hunger And Moral Obligation*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Hardin, G., (1993). *Living Within Limits, Ecology, Economics and Population Taboos*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harrison, P., (1986). *The Third World Tomorrow, (2nd Edition)*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Harrison, G.A., (ed) (1998). *Famine* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harriss-White, B. & Hoffenberg, (1994). *Food: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Harriss-White, B. & Janakarajan, S., (eds) (2004). *Rural India Facing the 21st Century*, Wimbledon: Anthem Press.
- Hartzok, A., (2004). *Citizens Dividends and Oil Resource Rents- A Focus on Alaska, Norway and Nigeria (March-April)*, Earth Rights Institute.
- Held, D., (1987). *Models of Democracy*. Polity and Stanford University Press
- Hendrie, B., (1991). *Impact of War in Tigray, Ethiopia, Draft Report for the Inter-Africa Group*, Nairobi.
- Hendrie, B., (1994). Relief Behind the Lines: The Cross-Border Operation in Tigray, UN HDR Chapter 7. In J. Macrae & A. Zwi, (eds). *War And Hunger. Rethinking International Responses To Complex Emergencies*. London: Zed books.
- Hendrie, B., (1997). Knowledge and Power: A Critique of an International Relief Operation. *Disasters* 21 (1), 57-76.
- Holt-Giménez, E., (2007). Food First Backgrounder: *Biofuels--Myths of the Agro-fuels Transition*. Food First/Institute
- Homer-Dixon, T.F., (1999). *Environment, Scarcity and Violence*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Hoover, H., (1952). *Memoirs Of Herbert Hoover; Years Of Adventure 1874-1920*, New York: Macmillan.
- Hopkins, T.K. & Wallerstein, I., (1994). Commodity Chains in the Capitalist World Economy Prior to 1800. in Gereffi, G. & Korzeniewicz, M., Praeger, CT (eds) *Commodity Chains and Global Capitalism*. Praeger
- Horne, F., (2011). *Understanding Land investment deals in Africa: country report Ethiopia*. Oakland Institute CA.
- Howe, P., (2007). Priority Regimes and Famine, chapter 15. In S. Devereux, (ed) *The New Famines*. London: Routledge.
- Howe, P. & Devereux, S., (2007). Famine scales: towards an instrumental definition of 'famine'. Chapter 2. In S. Devereux, (ed) *The New Famines*. London: Routledge.
- Human Rights Committee, (1982). *General Comment 6 (16) To Article 6, UN Doc A/37/40*,
- Human Rights Watch, (1990). *Ethiopia: 200 days in the death of Asmara (20 Sept)*, London: Human Rights Watch.
- Human Rights Watch, (1992). *Indivisible human rights: the relationship of political and civil rights to survival, subsistence and poverty*, New York NY: Human Rights Watch.
- Humphrey, J., (2008). 'Private Standards, Small Farmers and Donor Policy: EUREPGAP in Kenya', *IDS Working Paper 308*, Brighton: IDS
- Hutton, W., (1995). *The State Were In*, London: Random House.
- Hyden G., & Bratton M., (1992). *Governance and Politics in Africa*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- IAASTD, (2009). *Agriculture at a Crossroads at a Synthesis Report*. IAASTD:
- ICRC, (1998). *General Problems In Implementing The Fourth Geneva Convention. 27-10-1998 Report*, International Committee of the Red Cross.
- IFPRI, (2006). *Sustainable Solutions for Ending Hunger and Poverty*, International Food Policy Research Institute.
- IFPRI, (2011). *The Challenge of Hunger: Taming Price Spikes and Excessive Food Price Volatility*. October 2011. IFPRI, Welthungerhilfe, and Concern Worldwide.
- Imi, A., (2006). *Did Botswana escape from the resource curse? (June 2006)*, IMF Working Paper:
- Iliffe, J., (1987). *The African Poor: A History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ingram, A., (1994). *A Political Theory Of Rights*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Insel, B., (1985). A World Awash In Grain. *Foreign Affairs Lxiii, No. 4: 892-911*.
- Jackson, R. & Rosberg, C., (1986). Sovereignty and Underdevelopment: Juridical Statehood in the African Crisis, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 24,1, pp.1-31
- Jansson, K., Harris, M. & Penrose, A., (1987). *The Ethiopian Famine*, London: Zed books.
- Jespersion, E., (1992). External Shocks, Adjustment Policies and Economic and Social Performance *In Africa's Recovery in the 1990s from stagnation and adjustment to human development*, R. G A Coernia, Hoeven, R van der, & T. Mkandawire, (eds) New York: St Martins.

- Jodha, N., (1975). Famine And Famine Policies: Some Empirical Evidence. *Economic And Political Weekly*, 11 October 1975.
- Jordan, G., & Maloney, W.A., (2007). *Democracy and Interest Groups: Enhancing Participation?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kahn, H., (1982). *The Coming Boom: Economic, Political and Social*, New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Kant, I., (1962). Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals (*First Published 1785*). In *The Moral Law* H. J. Paton, (ed) New York: Harper and Row.
- Kaplan, R.D., (1994). The Coming Anarchy (Feb). *The Atlantic Monthly Volume 273, No 2 Pages 44-76*.
- Kaplan, R.D., (2003). *Surrender or Starve. Travels in Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea*, New York: Vintage.
- Kebede, B., (2006). *Land Reform, Distribution of Land and Institutions in Rural Ethiopia: Analysis of Inequality with Dirty Data*, CSAE WPS 2006/05, Centre for the Study of African Economies, University of Oxford.
- Keen, D., (1994a). *The Benefits Of Famine: A Political Economy Of Famine And Relief In Southwestern Sudan, 1983-1989*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Keen, D., (1994b). The Functions of Famine in Southwestern Sudan: Implications for Relief, chapter 6. In J. Macrae & A. Zwi, (eds) *War And Hunger. Rethinking International Responses To Complex Emergencies*. London: Zed books.
- Keen, D., (2000). 'Incentives and Disincentives for Violence', in Berdal, M & Malone, D: *Greed and Grievance: economic agendas in civil wars*, London: Boulder
- Kennedy, P., (2007). *The United Nations and the Quest for World Government*, London: Routledge.
- Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and Kenya Land Alliance, (2006). *Unjust Enrichment: The making of Land-Grabbing Millionaires*, Living Large Series, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2006, p. 1
- Khouri, R.G., (2008). Whose Crimes? Against Whose Humanity? *Agence Global*.
- Ki-Zerbo, J., (1990). *General history of Africa, Volume 1*. Unesco: J. Currey.
- Klare, M.T., (2002). *Resource Wars. The New Landscape Of Global Conflict*, New York: Owl Books.
- Klein, N., (2001). *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, Knopf Canada: Picador.
- Kumar, B., (1990). Ethiopian Famines 1973-85: a case study. chapter 3. In J. Dreze & A. Sen, (eds) *The Political Economy of Hunger, Volume 2: Famine prevention*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lam, R. & Wantchekon, L., (1999). *Dictatorships as a Political Dutch Disease. Working Paper, 19 January 1999 Centre Discussion Paper 795*, Economic Growth Centre; Yale University.
- Lambrechts, K. & Barry, G., (2003). *Why is Southern Africa Hungry? The Roots of Southern Africa's Food Crisis*, London: Christian Aid.
- Lang, T. & Heasman, M., (2004). *Food wars: The Global Battle for Mouths, Minds and Markets*. London: Earthscan.
- Lautze, S. & Maxwell, D., (2007). Why does Famine Persist in the Horn of Africa? Ethiopia 1999-2003, Chapter 10. In S. Devereux, (ed) *The New Famines*. London: Routledge.

- Lee, R., (2007). *Food Security and Food Sovereignty*. Centre for Rural Economy Discussion Paper Series No. 11. Newcastle: University of Newcastle upon Tyne
- Lefort, R., (1983). *Ethiopia. An heretical Revolution?*, London: Zed books.
- Lefort, R., (2009). *Ethiopia's famine: deny and delay*. 24 March. www.openDemocracy
- Legum, C., (1992). The Postcommunist Third world: Focus on Africa. *Problems of Communism*, 41, 1–2
- Lenin, V.I., (1976). *The State and Revolution. The Marxist teaching on The State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution* (First Published 1917), Peking: Foreign Languages Press.
- Lenin, V.I., (1986). *Imperialism, The Highest Stage Of Capitalism*, (First Published 1916, translated 1986), Moscow: Progress publishers.
- Lijphart, A., (1984). *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Livi-Bacci, M., (1994). *A Concise History Of World Population*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lloyd, R., Oatham, J. & Hammer, M., (2007). *Global Accountability Report*, The One Word Trust.
- Locke, J., (1956). The Second Treatise of Government. In G. J., (ed) *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Luckham, R., (1995). Dilemmas of Military Disengagement and Democratization in Africa. *IDS Bulletin*, 26(2).
- Lukes, S., (2005). *Power; A Radical View*, (2nd edition) Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- MacDonald, B., (2001). *A Time of Desolation. Clones Poor Law Union 1845-1850*, Enniskillen: Cogher Historical Society.
- Macrae, J. & Zwi, A., (eds) (1994). *War And Hunger. Rethinking International Responses To Complex Emergencies*, London: Zed books.
- Malthus, T., (1993). *An Essay On The Principle Of Population As It Affects The Future Improvement Of Society*, (First published 1798). Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Mamdani, M. & Wamba-dia-Wamba, E. (1995). *African studies in social movements and democracy*. Dakar: CODESRIA Books
- Manundu, M., (1997). *Class-based Conflicts: the impact of Structural Adjustment in Kenya*. Department of Economics, University of Nairobi.
- Mandel, E., (1974). *Marxist Economic Theory*, London: Merlin Press.
- Marcus, D., (2003). Famine Crimes in International Law. *American Journal of International Law*, (97), 245-81.
- Martin, R. & Reidy, D.A., (eds) (2006). *Rawls' Law Of Peoples. A Realistic Utopia?*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Martinez-Torres, E. & Rosset, P., (2010). La Via Campesina :The Evolution of a Transnational Movement. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 37; 149-175.
- Marx, K., (1982). Capital (first published 1867). In E. Burns, (ed) *The Marxist Reader: Works that*

- Changed the World*. New York: Avenel Books.
- Marx, K. & Engels, F., (1982). *The Communist Manifesto*. (first published 1848) In E. Burns, (ed) *The Marxist Reader: Works That Changed the World*. New York: Avenel Books.
- Massari, S., (2003). *Current Food Consumption Patterns And Global Sustainability*, www.agrifood-forum.net.
- McMichael, P., (2008). *Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective* (4th edition), Pine Forge Press, London.
- McMichael, P. (2009). 'A food regime analysis of the world food crisis', *Agriculture and Human Values*, 4 281-295.
- Meagher, K., (2006). Social Capital, Social Liabilities, and Political Capital: Social Networks and Informal Manufacturing in Nigeria. *African Affairs* May 2006: 553-582.
- Mearsheimer, J., (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W W Norton.
- Melito, T., (2009). *International Food Assistance Local and Regional Procurement Provides Opportunities to Enhance U.S Food Aid but Challenges May Constrain Its Implementation*, Testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, United States Government Accountability Office. (June 4th 2009) <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09757t.pdf>
- Mephan, D. & Cooper, J., (2004). *Human Rights and Global Responsibility: An international Agenda for the UK*, Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Messer, E., Cohen, M.J. & D'Costa, J., (1998). *Food From Peace. Breaking The Links Between Conflict And Hunger*. International Food Policy Research Institute. Discussion Paper 24,
- Messer, E & Uvin, P., (eds) (1996). *Hunger Report 1995*. The Alan Shawn Feinstein World Hunger Program., Rhode Island: Brown University.
- Milancovic, B., (1999). *True World Income Distribution, 1988 and 1993*, Washington DC: World Bank.
- Milanovic, B., (2007). *Worlds Apart: Measuring International and Global Inequalities*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Millennium Development Goals in Kenya, (2005). *Needs & Costs*. Report prepared by the Ministry of planning and National Development, Courtesy of the UNDP, Kenya, and the Government of Finland
- Miller, D., (1995). *On Nationality*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Miller, D., (2004). Are They My Poor? The Problem of Altruism in a World of Strangers. In J. Seglow, (ed) *The Ethics Of Altruism*. London: Frank Cass.
- Miller, D. & Oddy, D., (1985). *Diet And Health In Modern Britain*, Beckenham Kent: Groom Held Ltd.
- Mitchell, D., Ingco, M. & Duncan, R., (1997). *The World Food Outlook*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Mittal, A., (2011). *Understanding land investment deals in Africa*: Oakland Institute report
- Mkandawire, T., (1998). *Thinking About Developmental States in African Development in the 21st*

- Century. African Economic Research Consortium, United Nations University. (16 October 1998).
- Mkandawire, T. & Soludo C., (1999). *Our Continent, Our Future: African perspectives on Structural Adjustment*. Dakar: CODESRIA Books
- Mkandawire, T., & Olukoshi, A., (eds) (1995). *Between Liberalization and Repression: The Politics of Structural Adjustment in Africa*. Dakar: CODESRIA Books
- Mohan, G., (2000). *Structural adjustment: theory, practice and impacts*. London: Routledge
- Monbiot, G., (1998). Food Fascism (March 5). *The Guardian*.
- Monbiot, G., (2000). *Captive State: The corporate takeover of Britain*, London: Pan.
- Monbiot, G., (2001). Market Force (21st August). *The Guardian*.
- Moore, D., (2002). *Humanitarian agendas, State reconstruction and democratisation processes in war-torn societies*. Working paper no 24, UNCHR.
- Mortimore, M., (1989). *Adapting to drought : farmers, famines, and desertification in West Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mortimore, M., (1998). *Roots in the African Dust: Sustaining the Dry Lands*, Cambridge: University Press.
- Mousseau, F., (2005). *Food Aid or Food Sovereignty?. Ending world hunger in our time*. CA: Oakland Institute.
- Mousseau, F., (2009). *A billion hungry people : governments and aid agencies must rise to the challenge*, Oxford: Oxfam International.
- Moyo, D., (2010). *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa*, Penguin.
- Mukui, J.T., (2005). "Poverty analysis in Kenya: Ten years on". Study conducted for the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Society for International Development (SID) and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).
- Murphy, S. & McAfee K., (2005). *U.S. Food Aid: Time To Get It Right*. Minneapolis: Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.
- Myers, N. & Kent, J., (2001). *Perverse Subsidies: How Misused Tax Dollars Harm the Environment and the Economy*, Washington DC: Island Press.
- Nestle, M., (2007). *Food Politics: How the food Industry influences nutrition and Health*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) University of California Press.
- Newman, J., (2005). *Protection Through Participation: Voices out of conflict: Young people affected by forced migration and political crises (March)*, Refugee Study Centre, University of Oxford.
- Ng'weno, (2006). "In Post-Structural Adjustment Kenya: Bumper Harvests and Famine" *Against the Current* Vol. 21(4):22-24
- Nilsson, D., (2001). *Internally Displaced, Refugees and Returnees from and in the Sudan: A review*, Uppsala, Sweden: Nordic Africa Institute.
- Nozick, R., (1973). *Anarchy, State And Utopia*, Oxford: Blackwell.

- Oakland Institute, (2010). *(Mis)investment in Agriculture. The Role of the International Finance Corporation in Global Land Grabs*. CA: Oakland
- O'Brien, P., (2001). *Benefit-Harms Handbook*. Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc (CARE).
- OECD, (2009). *Agricultural policies in OECD countries: monitoring and evaluation 2009*. OECD.
- O'Grada, C., (1999). *Black 47 And Beyond: The Great Irish Famine In History, Economy And Memory*, Chichester: Princeton University Press.
- Olukoshi, A., (1999). *The Elusive Prince of Denmark: Structural Adjustment and the Crisis of Governance in Africa* (Research report), The Nordic African Institute.
- Olukoshi, A. & Laakso, L., (eds) (1996). *Challenges to the Nation-State in Africa*. Uppsala: Nordic African Institute.
- Olsen, G., Carstensen, N. & Hoyen, K., (2003). Humanitarian crises: what determines the level of emergency assistance? Media coverage, donor interests and the aid business. *Disasters* 27(2):109-126.
- O'Neill, O., (1986). *Faces of Hunger: an essay on Poverty, Development and Justice*, London: George, Allen and Unwin.
- O'Neill, O., (2000). *Bounds of Justice*, Cambridge: University press.
- Oxfam, (1997). *Human Development Report 1997, Human Development to Eradicate poverty*, Oxford University Press.
- Oxfam, (2005). *Food Aid or Hidden Dumping?* Oxfam Briefing Paper March 2005
- Oxfam, (2009). *Bridging the Divide. The reform of global food security governance (November)*, Oxford: Oxfam.
- Oxfam, Saferworld & IANSA, (2007). *Africas missing billions, (October)*,
- Page, S.L., Baksh, M.E., Duveiller, E. & Waddington, S.R., (2009). Putting the poorest farmers in control of disseminating improved wheat seed: a strategy to accelerate technology adoption and alleviate poverty in Bangladesh. *Food Security (2009) 1:99-109*.
- Palley, T.I., (2003). Lifting the natural Resource Curse (December). *Foreign Service Journal*.
- Patel, R., (2007). *Stuffed and Starved: Markets, Power and the Hidden Battle for the World Food System*, Toronto: Harper Collins.
- Patel, R. (2009). (Guest Editor) Food Sovereignty, *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Volume 36, issue 3: 663-706
- Patel, R., & Delwiche, A., (2002). The profits of Famine: Southern Africa's Long Decade of Hunger. *Backgrounder, Food First* 8 (4)
- Paul, J.A. & Wahlberg, K., (2008). *A New Era of World Hunger? (July)*, New York, FES Briefing Paper: [www.fes-globalization.org](http://www.fes-globalization.org).
- Pinstrup-Andersen, P., (2009). Food security: definition and measurement. *Food Security (2009) 1: 5-7*.
- Pogge, T., (2003). *World Poverty And Human Rights*, Oxford: Polity.
- Ponte, S., (2001). *'The Latte Revolution?' Winners and losers in the restructuring of the global coffee*



- marketing chain*. CDR Working Paper 01.3 Centre for Development Research, Copenhagen.
- Porteous, T., (2006). *The Medicines not Working* (20 February 2006), *Agence Global*.
- Porteous, T., (2008). *Missing in Africa* (23rd April 2008). *The Guardian*.
- Powelson, J.P., (2000). *The Moral Economy*, University of Michigan Press. Ann Arbor, MI.
- Power, S., (2003). *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), New York: Basic Books.
- Pretty, J. et al, (2004). Resource-conserving agriculture increases yields in developing countries' *Environmental Science and Technology*, 2006, 40 (4) : 1114-1119.
- Raikes, P. & Gibbon, P., (2000). 'Globalisation' and African export crop agriculture', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 27 (2): 50-93.
- Rajagopal, B., (2000). From resistance to renewal: the third world, social movements and the expansion of international institutions. *Harvard International Law Journal*. Volume 4 issue 2: 529-578.
- Rangasami, A., (1985). 'Failure of Exchange Entitlements' Theory of Famine: A Response. *Economic and Political weekly*, Vol XX, No 41, October 12 1985.
- Ravallion, M., (1987). *Markets And Famines*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ravallion, M., (1996). *Famines and Economics (WPS1693)*, Policy Research Department, World Bank.
- Ravallion, M., (2004). *Pro-Poor Growth: A Primer (Mar)*, Washington DC: World Bank Policy Research Working Group Paper no 3242Group.
- Rawls, J., (1971). *A Theory Of Justice*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rawls, J., (1999). *The Law Of Peoples*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Raz, J., (1984). *The Morality of Freedom*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- REST, (1985). *Relief Society of Tigray Annual Report*, Khartoum.
- Rich, W., (1973). *Smaller Families Through Social And Economic Progress*. Overseas Development Council Number 7, Washington.
- Riddell, R.J., (2007). *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?*, Oxford: Oxford University press.
- Riddell, R.C. & M. Robinson (1992). *The Impact of NGO Poverty Alleviating Projects: Results of the Case Studies*. Working Paper No. 68. London: ODI
- Robertson, G., (1999). *Crimes Against Humanity: The Struggle For Global Justice*, London: Allen lane.
- Rono, J.K., (2002), The impact of the structural adjustment programmes on Kenyan society. *Journal of Social Development in Africa*. Vol 17, No 1
- Rosegrant, M., Msangi, S., Sulzar, T. & Ringler, C., (2007). *Future Scenarios for Agriculture: Plausible futures to 2030 and Key trends in Agricultural Growth*. Background paper prepared for the World Development Report 2008. World Bank.
- Rosset, M., Machin Sosa, B., Jaime, A., Lozano, D., (2011). The Campesino-to-Campesino agroecology movement of ANAP in Cuba: social process methodology in the construction of sustainable peasant agriculture and food sovereignty. *Journal of Peasant Studies*. Vol. 38;

Issue 1; Pages 161 – 191

- Rosset, P., (1999). Small Is Bountiful. *The Ecologist*, v.29, Dec99
- Rosset, P., (2006a). Food is Different: Why we must get the WTO out of agriculture. London: Zed Books.
- Rosset, P., (2006b). Agrarian Reform and Food Sovereignty: Inseparable parts of an Alternative Framework. CECCAM : Mexico
- Rosset, P., (2009). Agrofuels, Food Sovereignty, and the Contemporary Food Crisis. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 189-193.
- Rubin, O., (2009). The Niger Famine: A collapse of entitlements and democratic responsiveness. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* Vol. 44, No. 3, 279-298.
- Ryberg, J., (1997). A Comment On Hardins Lifeboat Ethics. *Journal Of Applied Philosophy*, Vol. 14 Number 3.
- Sachs, J., (2005). *The End Of Poverty. How We Can Make It Happen In Our Lifetime*, London: Penguin.
- Sachs, J. & Warner, A., (2001). The Curse of Natural Resources. *European Economic Review*, (45), 827-838.
- Saferworld, (2007). *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: A decade of Labour's arms exports. (May 2007)*, Saferworld.
- Sainath, P., (1996). *Everyone Loves A Good Drought*, India: Penguin.
- Sala-I-Martin, X., (2005). *The World Distribution of Income: Falling Poverty And Convergence, Period*, Columbia University.
- Salmon, K (2001). 'Where There are No Subsidies.' *New Internationalist* 334:22
- Sanchez, P.A., Denning, G.L. & Nziguheba, G., (2009). The African Green revolution moves forward. *Food Security (2009) 1: 37-44*.
- Sandbrook, R., & Barker, J. (1985). *The politics of Africa's economic stagnation*, Cambridge University Press.
- Sandbrook, R., (1986). Hobbled Leviathans: constraints on state formation in Africa. *International Journal*, 41(4), p.707.
- Sandbrook, R., (1991). Development for the People and the Environment. *Journal of International Affairs*, 44(2), P.403-420.
- Sandford, S. (2006). 'Too many people, too few livestock: the crisis affecting pastoralists in the Greater Horn of Africa', Future Agricultures Consortium debate, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies [[http://www.future-agricultures.org/pdf%20files/Sandford\\_thesis.pdf](http://www.future-agricultures.org/pdf%20files/Sandford_thesis.pdf)]
- Save The Children, (2007). *Exclusion of NGOs: Fundamental Flaws in the CERF. (Jan)*, Save The Children Fund.
- Scally, R.J., (1995). *The End of Hidden Ireland: Rebellion, Famine and Emigration*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Scoones, I., (2007). Can GM Crops Prevent Famine in Africa? Chapter 14 in Devereux, S. (ed). *The New Famines*. London: Routledge.

- Scott, J., (1994). *Power: Critical Concepts* London: Routledge.
- Schumacher, E.F., (2011). (first published 1973) *Small is Beautiful: A study of Economics as if People Mattered*. London, Vintage.
- Scrimshaw, N.S. & Behar, M., (1974). *Nutrition and Agricultural Development*, New York: Plenum Press.
- Sebastian, K. et al., (2000). *Pilot Analysis of Global Ecosystems : Agroecosystems*, International Food Policy Research Institute and World Resources Institute.
- Seglow, J., (2004). (ed) *The Ethics Of Altruism*, London: Frank Cass.
- Sen, A., (1981). *Poverty And Famine*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sen, A., (1986). *Food Economics And Entitlements*. In Lloyds Bank Review 160. April 1986.
- Sen, A., (1987). *Hunger and Entitlements: Research for Action*, UN Helsinki: World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER).
- Sen, A., (1988). *Points On Food, Cash And Entitlements*, Mimeo, University of Oxford, Oxford.
- Sen, A., (2001). *Development As Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A., (2010). *Child under-nourishment as a social predicament*, 3rd I.G. Patel Lecture. London School of Economics.
- Sender, J. & Johnston, D. (2004). 'Searching for a Weapon of Mass Production in Rural Africa: Unconvincing Arguments for Land Reform', *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 4 (1): 142-164.
- Sevilla Guzmán, E. & Martínez-Alier, J., (2006). *New rural social movements and agroecology*. In Cloke, P., Marsden, T. & Mooney, P. (eds), *Handbook of rural studies*, London: Sage.
- Shah, A., (2006). WTO Doha "Development" Trade Round Collapse, 2006. *Global Issues*.
- Shaw, J., & Clay, E.J., (1993). *World Food Aid: Experiences of Recipients and Donors*. London: James Currey Ltd., .
- Shiva, V., (1997). *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*, Boston MA: South End Press.
- Shiva, V., (2000a). *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*, Cambridge Mass: South End Press.
- Shiva, V., (2000b). *Poverty And Globalisation. Reith Lecture 11th November 2000*.
- Shiva, V., (2003). *Food Rights, Free Trade and Fascism*, chapter 3. In M. J. Gibney, (ed) *Globalising Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shiva, V., (2004). *The suicide economy of Corporate Globalisation*. (Feb 19). *ZNet Commentary*.
- Shue, H., (1996). *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence And US Foreign Policy (2nd edition)*, Chichester: Princeton University Press.
- Sielhorst, S., Molenaar, J.W. & Offermans, D., (2008). *Biofuels in Africa : An assessment of risks and benefits for African wetlands*, May 2008, Wetlands International at [www.wetlands.org](http://www.wetlands.org)
- Simon, J.L., (1977). *The Economics of Population Growth*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Simon, J.L., (1981). *The Ultimate Resource*, Oxford: Martin Robertson.
- Simon, J.L., (1992). *Population And Development In Poor Countries, Selected Essays*, Princeton: Princeton University press.
- Simon, J.L., (1996). *The Ultimate Resource 2*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Singer, H., Wood, J., Jennings, A., (1987). *Food aid: the challenge and the opportunity*. Clarendon Press
- Singer, P., (1974). Famine, Affluence, and Morality. *Philosophy and Public Affairs 1* Pages 229-243.
- Singer, P. (ed), (1993). *A Companion To Ethics*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Singer, P., (1993). *Practical Ethics (2nd Edition)*, Cambridge: University press.
- Singer, P., (2004). *One World: The ethics of globalization (2nd Edition)*, London: Yale University Press.
- Singer, P., (2009). A Life to Save: Direct Action on Poverty (13th May). *openDemocracy*.
- Smil, V., (2000). *Feeding The World. A Challenge For The 21St Century*, London: MIT Press.
- Smith, A., (1961). *An Inquiry Into The Causes Of The Wealth Of Nations*. (first published 1776), London: Methuen
- Smith, M., Pointing, J. & Maxwell, S. (1992). *Household Food Security, Concepts and Definitions: An Annotated Bibliography*, Development Bibliography No 8. Brighton: University of Sussex.
- Smucker, T., (2002). *Land Tenure Reform and Changes in land-use and land management in Semi-Arid Tharaka, Kenya*. LUCID Working Paper Series Number 11, November 2002
- Sobhan, R., (1993). *Agrarian Reform and Social transformation*, London: Zed books.
- Sobiana, N.W., (1988). Pastoral Migration And Colonial Policy: A Case Study From Northern Kenya, chapter 9 in *The Ecology Of Survival: Case Studies From Northeast African History* D. H. Johnson & D. M. Anderson, (eds), London: Lester Crook.
- SOFI, (2000). *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*. Rome: FAO.
- SOFI, (2003). *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*. Rome: FAO.
- SOFI, (2004). *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*. Rome: FAO.
- SOFI, (2005). *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*. Rome: FAO.
- SOFI, (2006). *Counting the Hungry: Trends in the Developing World and Countries in Transition*. Rome: FAO.
- SOFI, (2009). *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*. Rome: FAO.
- SOFI, (2007). *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*. Rome: FAO.
- SOFI, (2010). *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*. Rome: FAO.
- SOFI, (2011). *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2011. How does international price volatility affect domestic economies and food security?* Rome: FAO.

- Srinivasan, T.N., (1983). Review Of Sen (1981A). *The American Journal Of Economics*. February. (1983).
- Srinivasan, T.N., (1988). The Economics Of Famine. In G. Ainsworth Harrison, (ed) *Famine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stern, N., (2005). Now is the Time to support a Changing Africa (6 July). *www.epolitics.com*.
- Stiglitz, J., (2006). *Making Globalization Work: The Next Steps to Global Justice*, London, Allen Lane.
- Stiglitz, J. & Charlton, A., (2005). *Fair Trade For All: How Trade can Promote Development*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stiglitz, J. & Charlton, A., (2006). Aid For Trade: A Report for the Commonwealth Secretariat. Delivered at the WTO, Geneva (March 24).
- Stubbs, J., (2001). Gender and Development: A long-haul but we're getting there. In D. Eade & E. Ligteringen, (eds) *Debating Development*. Oxford: Oxfam International.
- Subramanian, A. & Sala-i-Martin, X., (2003). *Tackling the natural resource curse: An illustration from Nigeria. (May 2003) Columbia University, department of economics, discussion paper series 0203-15*, Columbia University.
- Sussman, C., (2000). *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender and British Slavery, 1713-1833*, Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.
- Svedberg, P., (1997). *Poverty and Under-nutrition: Theory and Measurement*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Swamy, G., (1994). *Adjustment in Africa: Lessons from Country Case Studies*, Washington, DC, World Bank.
- Tamir, Y., (1993). *Liberal Nationalism*, Princeton: Princeton University press.
- The Hunger Report, (2010). Bread for the World Institute
- The Hunger Report, (2011). Bread for the World Institute
- Thomasevski, K., (1994). Human Rights and Wars of Starvation, Chapter 4 in J. Macrae & A. Zwi, (eds) *War And Hunger. Rethinking International Responses To Complex Emergencies*. London: Zed Books.
- Thompson, E.P., (1971). The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the 18th Century. *Past and Present* 50, pages 76-136.
- Thornton, J. (1998). *Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic world: 1400-1800* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Trentmann, F., (2006). Empire, free trade, and the moral economies of food in the modern world, *Society and Space* 2007, volume 25, pages 1079-1102.
- Trentmann, F., (2007). *Free Trade Nation: Consumption, Civil Society and Commerce in Modern Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- UN & Government of Sudan, (1990). *Operation Lifeline Sudan Phase II*, Background Appeal Document, Khartoum.
- UN sub commission on the promotion and protection of human rights, (2000). *The Realization Of Economic, Social And Cultural Rights: Globalisation And Its Impact On The Full Enjoyment*

- Of Human Rights*. Preliminary Report, 52nd Session, 15 June,
- UNCTAD, (2004). *Linking International Trade with Poverty Reduction*. Geneva: UN
- UNDP, (1998). *Human Development Report 1998*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- UNDP, (2010). *Human Development Report 2010: The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- United Nations (UN), (2000). *Promoting And Consolidating Democracy, Commission On Human Rights Resolution 2000/47*,
- Uvin, P., (1994). *The International Organization Of Hunger*, London: Kegan Paul.
- Uvin, P., (1998). *Aiding Violence. The Development Enterprise In Rwanda*, West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press.
- Uvin, P., (1992). Regime, Surplus And Self Interest.: The International Politics of Food Aid, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol 36, No 3, Sept 1992, 293-312.
- Vanhanen, T., (1997). *Prospects for Democracy: a Study of 172 Countries*, London: Routledge.
- Varese, S. (1996). "The Ethnopolitics of Indian Resistance in Latin America." *Latin American Perspectives*, 23 (2): 58-71
- Venables, A.J., (2003). Winners and losers from regional integration agreements. *Economic Journal, Royal Economic Society*, vol. 113(490), pages 747-761, October
- Via Campesina, (1996). *The Right to produce and access to land*. Via Campesina - International Farmers' Movement - statement to the World Food Summit, Rome, Italy.
- Via Campesina, (2008). Vth Conference of Via Campesina, Mozambique, October
- Vorley, B., (2003). *FOOD INC: Corporate Concentration from Farm to Consumer*. UK Food Group.
- de Waal, A., (1989). *Famine That Kills: Darfur, Sudan, 1985-1985*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- de Waal, A., (1990). *Famine survival strategies in Wollo, Tigray, and Eritrea. A review of the Literature*, Oxford: Oxfam International.
- de Waal, A., (1994). Dangerous Precedents? Famine Relief in Somalia 1991-93, chapter 8 in J. Macrae & A. Zwi, (eds) *War And Hunger. Rethinking International Responses To Complex Emergencies*. London: Zed books.
- de Waal, A., (2000). *Democratic Political Process and The Fight Against Famine. (IDS Working Paper 107)*, Brighton: IDS Publications.
- de Waal, A., (2006). *Famine Crimes. Politics And The Disaster Relief Industry in Africa*, (fifth edition) Oxford: James Currey.
- de Waal, A., (2008). Sudan and the International Criminal Court: A guide to the controversy. *openDemocracy*.
- Wahlberg, K., (2008a). Are we Approaching a Global Food Crisis? (March). *Global Policy Forum*.
- Wahlberg, K., (2008b). Causes and Strategies on World Hunger (May). *Global Policy Forum*.
- Wahlberg, K., (2008c). Food Aid for the Hungry ? (January). *Global Policy Forum*.

- Wallerstein, I., (1993). *The Capitalist World Economy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Wallerstein, I., (2007). Ethiopia Rides the Tiger. (15th January). *Agence Global*.
- Wallerstein, I., (2008). *Kenya: Stable Democracy or Meltdown?* (15th January 2008), *Agence Global*.
- Wallis, M., (1990). *The Institutional Response To Drought*. Study Paper No 5 In Food Studies Group
- Walzer, M., (1983). *Spheres Of Justice*, New York: Basic Books.
- Walzer, M., (1992). *Just And Unjust Wars*, New York: Basic Books.
- Warnock, J.W., (1993). *The Politics Of Hunger*, London: Methuen.
- Warnock, M., (ed) (1985). *Utilitarianism and On Liberty. Including essay on Bentham and selections from the writings of Jeremy Bentham and John Austin*. London: Fontana.
- Watkins, K., (2002). *Cultivating Poverty: The impact of US Cotton Subsidies on Africa*, Oxfam Briefing Paper 30.
- Watts, M., (1983). Hazards and Crisis: A Political economy of Drought and famine in Northern Nigeria. *Antipode 15 (1): 24-34*
- Whiting, A., (2005). Why is Famine so Hard to Define? (16 September). *Global Policy Forum*.
- Williams, A., (2006). *Liberalism and War: The Victors and the Vanquished*, London, Routledge.
- Williams, D., (2000). Aid and sovereignty: quasi-states and the international financial institutions', *Review of International Studies*, 26 (4): 557-73.
- Wilson, S., (2006). *Human Rights and international development: does the language of human rights help or hinder debate*. Cumberland Lodge Commonwealth Conference Essay 84, Cumberland Lodge.
- Windfuhr, M. & Jonsén, J., (2005). *Food Sovereignty: Towards democracy in Localised Food Systems*. FIAN International
- World Bank, (1988). *The Challenge of Hunger in Africa: A Call to Action*, Washington DC: World Bank.
- World Bank, (1989). *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth: A Long-Term Perspective Study*, Washington DC: World Bank.
- World Bank, (1990). *World Debt Tables. 1990-1991 Edition. Volume 1. Analysis and Summary Tables*, Washington DC: World Bank.
- World Bank, (1993). *Price Prospects for Major Primary Commodities, 1990-2005*, Washington DC: World Bank.
- World Bank, (2008). *World Development Report*, Washington DC: World Bank.
- World Food Programme, (2005). *World Food Programme 2004 annual report. Global Food Aid Profile. Annex 1*, Rome: FAO.
- World Forum for Food Sovereignty, (2007). Theme 1 – Trade Policies and Local Markets, URL: <http://nyeleni2007.org/spip.php?article110>
- World Watch Institute, (2007). *Biofuels for Transport*, World Watch Institute: Earthscan Publications.

- Wright, A. & Wolford, W., (2003). *To Inherit the Earth: the landless movement and the struggle for a new Brazil*, Oakland, CA: Food First.
- Wright, K., (1983). *Famine in Tigray: An eyewitness account*, London: REST UK support Committee.
- Wrong, M., (2009). *It's Our Turn to Eat*. London. Fourth Estate Ltd.
- WTO, (2002). Trade Liberalisation and Food Security, Speech by Miguel Rodriguez Mendoza, Deputy Director-General of the WTO to the World Food Summit, Rome 11th June, URL:  
[http://www.wto.org/English/news\\_e/news02\\_e/speech\\_rodriguez\\_mendoza\\_11june02\\_e.ht](http://www.wto.org/English/news_e/news02_e/speech_rodriguez_mendoza_11june02_e.ht)
- Young, H. & Jaspers, S., (1995). Nutrition, Diseases And Death In Times Of Famine. *Disasters* 19 (2) 94:10.
- Zakaria, F., (1997). The rise of illiberal democracy, *Foreign Affairs* Volume 76, No 6.
- Zeigler, J., (2008). *Zeigler report 2008: Report of the UN special Rapporteur on the Right to Food*, UN.



## Websites and Online Sources

<http://europa.eu>  
<http://networkideas.org>  
<http://www.africaonline.com>  
<http://www.africa-union.org>  
<http://www.agenceglobal.com>  
<http://www.agrifood-forum.net>  
<http://www.careinternational.org.uk>  
<http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>  
<http://www.clubofrome.org>  
<http://www.commissionforafrica.org>  
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk>  
<http://www.econ.ox>  
<http://www.ecpp.co.uk>  
<http://www.epolitix.com>  
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves>  
<http://www.fao.org/SOF/sofi/>  
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/excredits/foodAid>  
<http://www.foodsovereignty.org>  
<http://www.freedomhouse.org>  
<http://www.ftn-coalition.org>  
<http://www.garretthardinsociety.org>  
<http://www.gatesfoundation.org>  
<http://www.geohive.com>  
<http://www.globalissues.org>  
<http://www.globalpolicy.org>  
<http://www.iatp.org>  
<http://www.icrc.org>  
<http://www.monbiot.com/archives>  
<http://www.networkideas.org>  
<http://www.nfonline.com>  
<http://www.odihpn.org>  
<http://www.oecd.org>  
<http://www.opendemocracy.net>  
<http://www.oxfam.org>  
<http://www.saferworld.org>  
<http://www.sarpn.org.za>  
<http://www.twinside.org>  
<http://www.un.org>  
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>  
<http://www.unfpa.org>  
<http://www.usaid.gov>  
<http://www.usda.gov>  
<http://www.vso.org.uk>  
<http://www.wemos.nl/en-GB>  
<http://www.worldhunger.org>  
<http://www.worldbank.org/research>  
<http://www.zmag.org>