Food Crises
Food Regimes
Food Movements

Eric Holt-Giménez, Food First
Food Crisis
“Riots” or Rebellions?

- Mexico, Italy, Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, Indonesia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Yemen, Egypt, Haiti (40+)
- Not lack of food, but high prices
- high prices + poverty + entitlement gap + lack of democracy
“The undernourished population has increased by 9% globally despite a 12% rise in global food production per capita since 1990.”
Record Harvests

Record Hunger

Record Profits

- Bumper harvests: 2007-08 +5%; highest corn crop in history
- 1 billion people hungry
- 2025: 1.2 billion people hungry—2X projection
- Bumper profits last quarter: ADM 20%; Monsanto 45%, Cargill 86%; General Foods 61%
1 billion hungry

Figure 7. Local Food Prices and Global Food Price Index, Jan. 2007-Jan. 2011
(local food prices in unweighted average index values; Jan. 2007=100 for both metrics)

Source: FAO (2010a and 2010f) and authors’ calculations

Note: The grey lines connect corresponding local and global food price ascents and descents, with the grey number representing the estimated global-to-local price transmission time number of months.
Proximate causes

- Climate; droughts
- Rising meat consumption India, China, Brazil
- 5% fall in cereal production 2005-06
- Low grain reserves (19—23% stocks-to-use)
- Higher oil prices: 2X transport, 3X fertilizer costs
- ½ world grain for industrial uses
- Weak dollar
- Financial Speculation; CIFs
Root Causes

• Vulnerable food system:
  – 91% cropland cotton, maize, wheat, rice & soy
  – Economic shock
  – Environmental shock

• Industrial Agri-foods Complex
  – Grain traders/processors
  – Seed & genetic engineering
  – Retail & distributors
Rise of the Industrial Agri-foods Complex

- Green Revolution 1960-80s
- Structural Adjustment Policies 80s-90s
  - removal tariff barriers
  - dismantling of marketing boards
  - non-food export crops
  - Dismantling of reserves
- Free Trade “mania” 1990s-present
  - WTO, FTAs (NAFTA, CAFTA)
  - Subsidies, Surplus, Dumping
The Green Revolution’s Food Security model:
Industrialization of agriculture through hybrids,
chemical inputs, machinery, irrigation, and credit

1970-1990:
- total food available per person in the world rose by 11 percent
- 16 percent drop in hungry people—from 942 million to 786 million

But, eliminate China (where # of hungry dropped from 406 million to 189 million):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Increase in Food Per Capita</th>
<th>Increase in # Hungry People</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World (minus China)</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>&gt;11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Green Revolution Central America

- Increase fertilizers 80 to 120/kg per ha. (1979-97) (CIECA, 2001)
- Increase in basic grains 45 million t/year (CIMMYT, 1992)
- Foreign germplasm contributes $10.2 billion/yr to maize & soy in US; 58% wheat; 1/3 CIMMYT seed goes to Pioneer Hy-Brid, Cargill, etc. (Ecologist, 1996)
- Average yield drops by 50% (1980-96) (CIECA, 2001)
- Constant per capita production, (expansion of agricultural frontier) (CIMMYT, 1992)
- Loss ½ tropical forests; 2-3%/yr, CO2 emissions up X 1.4 (Utting, 1996; Kaimowitz, 1996)
• Global South Food 1970-2001:
  $1 billion surplus—$11 billion deficit
• Industrial Agriculture: 20% GHG; 80% water
• Loss of 75% crop diversity
• Increase food per capita = increase hungry = 11%
• Cost of 20 years Trade liberalization sub-Saharan Africa = US$272 billion = amount that the region received in aid
• Immigration: 1.3 million Mexican smallholders bankrupt (1994-2004) 1 million immigrants to the U.S.
• GR: $10.2 billion/yr U.S. corn and soy production
• ADM, Cargill, Bunge 80% grain; Monsanto 1/5 seeds
Only 6 bl new money; Less than 1/20 given
Land Grabs & Agrarian Transition

- 88 million acres grabbed?
- Commodities boom
  - Industrial grain-livestock/agro-foods
  - Agrofuels
  - Palm oil
  - Minerals, natural gas
- Financialization ($30-40 billion)
- Anti-commons/ anti-smallholder
Combating Hunger?

- Feed the Future/Global Food Security Act
- Global Harvest Initiative
- Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
- G-20 promises/agreements (GAFSP, HLTF, CFA)
- New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition

- Increase production (70% by 2050)
  - Industrialization of agriculture (agrarian transition)
  - GMO-led Green Revolution (WEMA)
  - New focus on smallholders (land mobility)

- Market-led, aid-backed
  - WTO Doha Round, FTAs
  - Public-private partnerships
  - Globalization of land, input markets
“The way the world grows its food will have to change radically to better serve the poor and hungry if the world is to cope with growing population and climate change while avoiding social breakdown and environmental collapse.”

FAO, GEF, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, World Bank and WHO
What did experts find?

• GMOs not needed
  – Do not raise intrinsic yields
  – Unable to fully address climate resilience
    (IAASTD, USDA, Union of Concerned Scientists)

• Free Trade Agreements detrimental
  – 90% benefits go to Northern countries
  – Benefits to poor farmers $2/year/farmer
    (World Bank)

• Agroecology & local food system economies the way forward
  (IAASTD)

- **Reducing financial speculation on commodities markets**: Reforms have been limited, leaving commodities markets prone to wide price swings. Proposals to increase the use of food reserves to limit volatility have been largely rejected.

- **Halting “land grabs”**: As food-producing resources become more valuable, resource-constrained countries and speculative investors have bought or leased millions of acres of agricultural land. This unregulated new market compromises the long-term food-producing capacity of developing countries while dispossessing those who have traditionally worked the land.

- **Limiting the further expansion of biofuels**: Government incentives are spurring biofuel expansion, contributing to the underlying demand-growth that is driving agricultural prices steadily upward.

(Murphy & Wise 2012, IATP)
Can Sustainable Agriculture Feed the World?

University of Michigan

- 293 examples comparing alternative and conventional agriculture
- 91 studies
- Low estimates: organic agriculture could provide 2,641 (as opposed to 2,786 kilocalories/person/day after losses).
- Realistic estimate: organic agriculture could increase global food production by 50% to 4,381 kilocalories/person/day).
- Easily support a population peak of 10-11 billion people by 2100.
- No additional land required to obtain enough N to replace the current use of synthetic N fertilizers.
Organic agriculture can increase agricultural productivity and can raise incomes with low-cost, locally available and appropriate technologies, without causing environmental damage.

“Organic agriculture can increase agricultural productivity and can raise incomes with low-cost, locally available and appropriate technologies, without causing environmental damage.”
Campesino a Campesino: Latin America’s Farmer to Farmer Movement for Sustainable Agriculture

- Campesino alternative to the Green Revolution
- 30 years in Mesoamérica
- NGOs support
- Over 10,000 promotores/600,000 farmers
Small farms as a planetary ecological asset

- Key for the world’s food security
- More productive and resource conserving than large-scale monocultures
- Resilient models of sustainability
- Sanctuary of GMO-free agrobiodiversity
- Cool the planet

Altieri 2008
People’s right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.
The Corporate Food Regime

- A food regime is a “rule-governed structure of production and consumption of food on a world scale” (Friedman 1993).
- The corporate food regime, based on fossil fuels; dominated by global monopolies; characterized, *inter alia*, by the “supermarket revolution,” global animal protein chains, and GMOs (McMichael 2009).
Food Regime Management

- **Liberalization period** characterized by unregulated markets and breathtaking capital expansion, followed by devastating busts.

- **Reformist period** in which markets, supply, and consumption are regulated in an effort to re-stabilize the regime.

- While these phases may appear politically distinct, they are actually two sides of the same system.

- (Polanyi 1944)
# Politics, Production Models & Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLITICS</th>
<th>NEOLIBERAL</th>
<th>REFORMIST</th>
<th>TRANSITIONAL</th>
<th>TRANSFORMATIONAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>Food Enterprise</td>
<td>Food Security</td>
<td>Food Justice</td>
<td>Food Sovereignty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main Institutions</td>
<td>International Finance</td>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
<td>Alternative Fair Trade &amp; many Slow Foods chapters, many organizations in the Community Food Security Movement; CSAs; many Food Policy Councils &amp; Youth food and justice movements; many farmworker &amp; labor organizations</td>
<td>Via Campesina, International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty; Global March for Women; many Food Justice and rights-based movements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Entitlement</td>
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<td>MODEL</td>
<td>Overproduction; Corporate concentration; Unregulated markets and monopolies; Monocultures (including organic); GMOs; Agrofuels; mass global consumption of industrial food; phasing out of peasant &amp; family agriculture and local retail.</td>
<td>Mainstreaming/certification of niche markets (e.g. organic, fair, local, sustainable); maintaining northern agricultural subsidies; “sustainable” roundtables for agrofuels, soy, forest product, etc; market-led land reform</td>
<td>Agroecologically-produced local food; investment in underserved communities; new business models and community benefit packages for production, processing &amp; retail; better wages for ag. workers; solidarity economies; land access; regulated markets &amp; supply</td>
<td>Democratization of food system; Dismantle corporate agri-foods monopoly power; parity; redistributive land reform; community rights to water &amp; seed; Regionally-based food systems; sustainable livelihoods; protection from dumping/overproduction; Revival of agroecologically-managed peasant agriculture to distribute wealth and cool the planet</td>
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<td>Approach to the Food Crisis</td>
<td>Increased industrial production; unregulated corporate monopolies; land grabs; expansion of GMOs; public-private partnerships; Liberal markets; Int'l. sourced food aid;</td>
<td>Same as Neo-liberal but w/increased middle peasant production &amp; some locally-sourced food aid; more agricultural aid, but tied to GMOs &amp; “bio-fortified/climate-resistant” crops.</td>
<td>Right to food; Better safety nets; sustainably-produced, locally-sourced food; agroecologically-based agricultural development; guiding document: IAASTD</td>
<td>Human right to food sovereignty; Locally sourced, sustainably produced, culturally appropriate, democratically controlled focus on UN/FAO negotiations guiding document: Peoples’ comprehensive framework for action to eradicate hunger</td>
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Another Agrarian Transition is Possible

- **Rebuild smallholder agriculture**
  - Agriculture out of the WTO
  - Re-negotiate FTAs
  - Moratorium on agrofuels

- **Rebuild national food systems**
  - Re-regulation of Trade/and Finance
  - Farmers movements
  - Agroecological approaches
  - Strategic grain reserves
    - Local seeds
    - Farmer-owned

- **ICCARD, IAASTD, CFS**
Coping with Climate Change

• **Remediation**: address causes by reducing agriculture’s impacts *on* climate

• **Mitigation**: reduce impacts *of* climate change on agriculture and the environment.

• **Adaptation**: improve farmer’s ability to respond and adjust to the dramatic environmental changes that are inevitable and already underway
Land Dispossession

- Disenfranchisement
- Coercion
  - U.S. westward expansion/genocide
  - Jim Crow/KKK, Japanese-American internment
  - USDA discrimination *Pigford vs Glickman*
- Markets
  - Territorial purchase
  - NAFTA, CTA, TPP
  - Green Revolution/debt-farm crisis
**FIGURE 1:** Recent World Food Price Spikes